

NAME THIS NEWSLETTER CONTEST

Help LPC(O) brand its newsletter

The entries were plentiful and numerous – 164 in total – but they have been narrowed down to 9 options by LPC(O) Executive Board and the Communications Committee. You can vote for your favourite between now and the next newsletter in March.

[Please have a look and help name this newsletter!](#)

Jason Cherniak, Vice President - Communications, LPC(O)

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

[Season's Greetings](#)

- Howard Stevenson, President, LPC(O)

On behalf of the LPC(O) Staff and Management, colleagues on Management Committee and myself, please accept our very best wishes for a safe and enjoyable Holiday Season with family and friends.

Whether you celebrate here at home, or in some other locale, history tells us it is a time of the year that seems to bring out the best in many of us. The world slows down a little. Many communities celebrate traditions that open our minds and hearts to the simple pleasures of a shared meal, a child's joy, or a reminder that giving really does make us feel good and somehow goodwill begets goodwill.....

Whether it is our collective good fortune or good sense that finds us living in this bountiful Ontario, in a country as grand as Canada, (despite the current management), we are wise enough to know that our world can be an even better place, if while counting our blessings, we find the way to better mine the human resources within our Liberal Party. We must embrace and commit to the tasks in 2013 and forward that will allow our next Leader to lead us back to a place where Liberal values and policy help shape the Canada of this century as they did in the last.Pound the Ground!.....

With warmth, dedication and thanks for the enormous contributions you all make,

Howard

IDEAS FROM CAUCUS

Cutbacks to Prison Chaplaincy

- Ted Hsu, MP

The federal government has decided to eliminate all 49 part-time contracts for federal prison chaplains. This will not only reduce the number of chaplains, but will also have the effect of eliminating most non-Christian chaplains (79 of the remaining 80 full time chaplains are Christian).

The decision is prejudicial to persons from minority communities and faiths and shows disrespect for the Constitutional rights of minority persons who happen to be in prison. As bad, however, as the Constitutional and Charter issues, is the government's attitude toward the role of chaplaincy – and religious and spiritual healing – in successful pro-social community reintegration.

I believe in rehabilitation and redemption. This Conservative government does not.

The long experience of correctional experts in Canada and elsewhere is that Chaplaincy is an important component of the reintegrative process because it bridges the transition from prison to community. Meeting the religious and spiritual needs of offenders contributes to the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society.

This government is caught in a contradiction: upholding and defending religious freedoms abroad while downplaying their importance at home. It is cutting funds where more funding for programs is needed while, at the same time, growing the rate of incarceration. The government is demonstrating through its decisions that its commitment to reintegration is secondary to its commitment to punishment.

The government claims this is a money-saving decision, but it clearly has discriminatory human rights consequences for the religious and multicultural makeup of Canada's incarcerated population.

Ted Hsu is Liberal MP for Kingston and the Islands, critic for science and technology, and holds a PhD in physics. He is currently the chair of the Ontario Liberal Caucus.

TABLE OFFICERS REPORTS

Policy in action

- Carol Golench, Vice-President Policy, LPC(O)

Over the past few months, the provincial Policy Committee has been active both regionally and locally.

LPC(O) held a well-attended round of six regional meetings across the province this fall. Each of the six meetings included a policy session at which the training document, *Policy That Works*, was presented to attendees. The policy development process outlined during the session focused on the Liberal Party's commitment to a process that encourages broad citizen engagement and grass roots participation. To enhance this involvement, Area Policy Representatives are now liaising regularly with electoral district associations (EDAs) and their respective Vice Presidents of Policy, providing support and encouragement for capacity building and community outreach.

More specifically, Area Policy Representatives are available to assist EDAs in several ways:

Organization

- provide advice on the policy process
- help in the establishment of EDA Policy Committees and facilitation of inaugural meetings

Training

- deliver workshops (e.g., Policy That Works training package)

Research

- source research material upon request
- identify research or expertise for association events and activities
- coordinate the delivery and collection of survey information

Events

- participate in events organized at the association level
- organize joint EDA policy events
- chair policy events in regions

Area Policy Representatives are playing a valuable role in supporting policy development in ridings and regions. For additional information, please feel free to contact vppolicy@lpc.ca.

Ongoing Communications

- Jason Cherniak, Vice-President Communications, LPC(O)

As some of you will already know, the September newsletter arrived in your inboxes as I was on the way to my own wedding. I don't know if this was a coincidence or a practical joke from the folks in Ottawa who hit "send", but I do know that there were far too many auto responses from people out of the office for me to delete them all before heading off on the honeymoon!

With this newsletter, I'm pleased to check off one campaign promise that remains completed (and will continue to be completed until the end of my term). Along with using the Communications Committee and starting the twitter account (LPC(O) staff deserve all credit for keeping it active), I believe that puts me at least 15 ahead of Stephen Harper.

In light of my communications role, I have decided that I will remain neutral in the federal leadership contest. This will not stop me from giving the occasional opinion online or in person, but I'll do my best to remain completely objective when giving such opinions. When all is said and done, I will not endorse anybody or be clear about who I will be voting for. I also drafted a set of guidelines for LPC(O) staff in their online activities that they have all been very diligent in following. I thank them for their commitment to the Liberal Party.

In the coming year, the communications committee will be working more closely with ridings and regional presidents to create communications products at the regional and local levels. If you are not sure who your local contact might be, please email me at vpcommunications@lpco.ca and I will be happy to help you.

I hope you all enjoy the holidays. May the Mayan predictions (of the world ending on December 21) be wrong and your New Year be sweet.

FOCUS ON A RIDING

Coffee, Policy & Politics: Thornhill's Great New Grassroots Initiative

- Ehssan Taghavi, Director at Large, TFLRA

It all started on a Thursday evening! Well, Thursday, August 16th, 2012, to be exact.

A week prior, I had received an e-blast, thanks to the mighty Liberalist, from the Thornhill Federal Liberal Riding Association (TFLRA), inviting me to "a wide ranging discussion open to any and all interested in polite debate about the serious issues facing Canada and the world." Oh, and it didn't stop there. "It should be a fun one," the e-flyer proceeded to point out. And "bring a friend".

"Open discussion and polite debate" on politics? "It should be a fun one!?" To this day, I'm still having trouble comprehending the association between the two!

Long story short, I decided to go to the so called "wide ranging discussion."

And now fast forward three months and ten days, and here's a succinct version of my whirlwind involvement with the Liberal Party in the past little while. It also serves as a brief update on what the TFLRA has been up to for the last few months:

- Became a member of the Liberal Party of Canada around mid-September for the first time.
- Attended the TFLRA AGM on September 23rd and the immediately there-after AGM Town Hall meeting on “Sustaining our Medicare System” featuring MPs Dr. Hedy Fry and Jim Karygiannis.
- Subsequently became a board member of the TFLRA executive.
- Minimally assisted in organizing a fundraiser on “Research Today Builds Our Tomorrow: Restoring a Role for Research in Public Policy.” The reception and informative roundtable that followed featured Dr. Ted Hsu, MP for Kingston and the Islands, Dr. Helena Jaczek, MPP for Oak Ridges-Markham and Chris Bentley, Ontario’s Minister of Energy.
- Attended my first LPC (O) board meeting just this past weekend (November 30th – December 2nd) in Cambridge and met lots of exotic folks.
- Currently working on organizing the TFLRA holiday celebration – we like to call it our annual “*Holiday Schmooze!*” In attendance will be most, if not all, federal and provincial Liberal leadership candidates.
- And ultimately, at this very moment - 5:00 pm on Thursday, December 6th- I’m writing for the LPCO quarterly newsletter, taking a stab at bringing “*Focus*” to the Thornhill “Riding”.

Now let’s rewind to Thursday, August 16th, yet again, when it all began [for me]. About two dozen people met, for the very first time, at Panera Bread in Thornhill, well essentially in the ‘Vaughan’ constituent of Thornhill.

Since then, we have held two more “Coffee and Politics” gatherings, each better attended and engaging than its predecessor, devoted to discussing issues in a warm, friendly environment. Now we have Liberal members and supporters, and frankly many non-members as well, from various ridings across GTA attending the monthly occurrence to converse and debate on topics ranging from Foreign Affairs, to Immigration, to the Economy, to Leadership.

The long and the short of it: here in Thornhill, we have been, effectively, making politics [more] fun on the third-Thursday-of-each-month at a time, and we have only just begun.

Before concluding my ramblings and pitching a call to action, I want you to read what I, completely randomly (truth be told!), came across on the web while writing this piece:

Dear Wikipedia readers: We are the small non-profit that runs the #5 website in the world Wikipedia is something special. It is like a library or a public park. It is like **a temple for the mind, a place we can all go to think and learn.** To protect our independence, we’ll never run ads. We take no government funds. We run on donations **If everyone reading this gave the price of a cup of coffee, our fundraiser would be**

done within an hour. If Wikipedia is useful to you, take one minute to keep it online

The main point I'm trying to make here: if Wikipedia can see the magic in a "cup of coffee," so can the Liberal Party. TFLRA has certainly realized this and leveraged it to create an environment where everyone can talk, share, think, debate and learn from one another. Together we can rebuild this party from the ground up!

FOCUS ON A REGION

[A quick update on the Golden Horseshoe Region](#)

- Nokha Dakroub, President, Golden Horseshoe Region, LPC(O)

Our Regional Day in October was a busy day that included Liberalist training, a discussion on redistribution, a policy as well as a fundraising workshop and much, much more! We are also glad to report that over the past few months, we have improved communications in the region by sending out a monthly newsletter that highlights activities and includes upcoming event information.

Of the three areas in the Golden Horseshoe Region, Area One has seen a tremendous increase in Liberal activity. A few monthly events have been started and have grown in popularity - such as Sauga Sundays and Brampton Sundays. Our FLAs have also organized a number of special events like the healthcare town hall with The Honourable Dr. Carolyn Bennett, M.P., P.C., which took place in October, and the Mississauga-Erindale FLA's Holiday Social and Leadership Overview in November. In Area Two, a highlight was the Red Tie gala which was well received. In Area Three, we enjoyed great events such as Breakfast at Betty's and a number of BBQs.

Young Liberals in the Golden Horseshoe have been exceptionally active. The University of Toronto Mississauga Liberals and the McMaster Young Liberals have hosted numerous events with distinguished guests such as The Honourable John McCallum, M.P., P.C. and Member of Parliament Kirsty Duncan. The Young Liberals of Canada's Multicultural Committee, United Red, also hosted an iftar (a meal to break the fast in Ramadan) in our region in August.

Surely, the New Year will continue be an active one in the Golden Horseshoe.