



Scarborough Southwest NDP

November 2012 Newsletter

Moving Forward!

What an exciting month it has been in the political world! With the resignation of Premier McGuinty, a provincial election this spring seems unavoidable. We as Scarborough Southwest New Democrats need to be as ready as we can be. This means we need to raise money, build our profile, and be prepared to win SSW back from the Liberals. Not only that, we need to fight our hardest to ensure Tim Hudak and the conservatives don't destroy our province through their scary "Mike Harris Common Sense Revolution" like reforms that will punish the poor and oppressed, and make the rich more powerful and wealthy.

Now is the time to mobilize. If you haven't volunteered or contributed financially to the SSW NDP in a while, we need your support now. Join us at one of our upcoming events, or come out to help us spread our message to our friends and neighbours.

On October 23, 2012, the SSW NDP held another event entitled Jobs and Justice. Labour Council President John Cartwright gave a riveting talk about inequality in our society and how that affects the quality of life for all of us, and Paul Bocking's film opened our eyes to the negative effects globalization and corporatism have on people and workers. We look forward to planning our next community event and will keep you posted where and when it will be.

On a more personal note I, like many New Democrats am excited to see the reelection of US President Barack Obama and the rejection of the hyper conservative agenda that seemed to be gaining steam over the last few years.

I had the chance to visit Cleveland, Ohio and assist the Obama campaign get out the vote on E-Day. There was an infectious sense of hopefulness at people's doors and a sense of pride and ownership over being able to vote for Obama; a

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president that represented African Americans and working class Americans. More importantly, a president that is representative of the people.

This experience is a reminder for me that we must remain hopeful for change, and must keep working for social change in Canada. We must elect more women, people of diverse backgrounds, and sexual orientations not only to create change, but to reengage and get average Canadians to take an interest in voting and politics once again. The bottom line is: Everyone deserves to feel and be represented.



So please take a moment and think about how you can make a difference at home, at work, or in the community, and take action. Be mindful of how even the smallest action can effect change in a person's life or in our world.

As always, stay in touch, and visit our website at sswndp.ca.

Tom Grinnell,
Membership Organizer/ Provincial Chief Financial Officer
Scarborough Southwest NDP Riding Association

Money and Politics

By Dave Gracey – SSW Federal Vice-President

Anyone who watched the US presidential campaign can only be horrified by the billions spent-much of it on mendacious negative advertising. Big money dominates US politics and the results for working people have been devastating.

In Canada, we are fortunate in that there are spending limits and restrictions on donation amounts. The state intervenes to provide subsidies and tax credits. These factors have reduced the power of money in the political process.

But the reality remains that campaigns are expensive and we must raise the necessary funds (the spending limit for Scarborough Southwest is about \$80,000). NDP supporters have fewer financial resources than Liberals and Conservatives, and in Ontario, corporations can still donate substantial funds to our opponents.

It is almost certain that we will face a provincial election in the spring. I fully appreciate that you have been bombarded by requests- from the federal and provincial parties, leadership campaigns etc. But we must ask for your help in this riding. With the Liberals in trouble, we have a very realistic chance to win here.

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So when you are asked (and you will be!), please give all you can. Take advantage of the tax credit for 2012 (75 per cent) and help us build a bit of a reserve going into next year.

SSW NDP Member Profile: Grace Jin

By Katie Dibe – 4th Year Social Work Student in Dan Harris' Office

Grace is a newer member of the NDP however she has already gained the experience of volunteering in two election campaigns and today is an active volunteer with the SSW NDP and MP Dan Harris' office... and she's only 14 years old.

Grace is a grade 9 student at SATEC @ W.A Porter and she was recently voted in as the grade 9 representative on the school's administrative council. Grace describes herself as a typical teen. She plays piano and is involved in school sports. She is a part of Air Cadets where she learned leadership skills as well as the importance of being a good citizen.

Grace first got involved in volunteering for the NDP when MPP Candidate Bruce Budd went to her house while canvassing. Grace was not at home at the time but her mother saw this as something that Grace would be interested in. Grace then went to Bruce's office and became a volunteer and assisted in the provincial election in 2011 and the Hamilton Provincial Convention in April 2012. Here she met a variety of Members of Parliament and Members of Provincial Parliament. She was also excited to get the opportunity to meet K'naan who performed at the convention.

The next campaign that Grace was involved in was Craig Scott's by-election campaign for Toronto-Danforth in early 2012. She assisted in canvassing the area as well as putting up signs and talking to residents in the riding. Now Grace is a valued volunteer for Dan Harris MP – Scarborough Southwest and has been since last fall, after the Bruce Budd campaign.



One thing that Grace is aspiring to do is to get more youth involved in politics as she believes that it is important. She enjoys being a part of the NDP as she's observed how New Democrats value equality and how everyone gets to have their say. She says the NDP is the party that truly puts people first.

SSW New Democrats are happy to have Grace as one of the newest and youngest members of our team!

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Why We Should All Be Concerned About the Elimination of Community Start-Up Benefits

By Yvette Roberts

The Liberal government's 2012 Budget Report called for the elimination of the Community Start-up Benefit and Maintenance Program. If you are a family or individual living in a shelter, on social assistance trying to move out of unsafe or unsuitable housing or a taxpaying citizen of Ontario then you need to know and be concerned about the upcoming elimination of the Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefits (CSUMB). 900,000 people in Ontario rely on Social Assistance and approximately 16,000 apply to CSUMB every month.

*102,195 people live in Scarborough Southwest
27,435 live in poverty – 27.2%*
44.7% are renters
Social Planning Network Ontario, www.spno.ca*

Up until the end of this year a family dependent on social assistance or ODSP trying to move out of a shelter, institution or unsafe living situation such as domestic violence or fire/flooding could apply for Community Start Up Benefits (maximum of \$1500.00) –including rental deposit to secure housing and monies to cover moving expenses, connecting phone and hydro and to buy furniture/household supplies. Families or individuals living in Toronto's shelter system were supported with a Personal Needs Allowance for food and personal needs. Families facing risk of eviction due to rent arrears or needing emergency house repairs or help with hydro payments could also seek support from the CSUMB to avoid becoming homeless. As of January 1, 2013 these supports will end.

The fact that the Liberals made this decision while Frances Lankin and Munir Sheikh, co-authors of *Brighter Prospects: Transforming Social Assistance in Ontario*, were still working on completing their report following almost a year of consulting with hundreds of social assistance clients, front line staff and other invested partners shows such disregard and disrespect to the commission and those who felt their voices would be heard. Their report recommends an immediate increase to social assistance rates of \$100 a month. The Liberals one percent increase equals about \$7.00 to \$12.00 a month.

Our provincial government has plans to contribute only 50% of CSUMB funds with funding from five other housing and homelessness programs into a new consolidated fund under the Consolidated Housing and Homelessness program. Municipalities will set their own local priorities for this fund, which will be spread over a larger pool of potential clients. However, municipalities have until 2014 to put their new programs in place.

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The current government will tell you that these cuts will save the province over 14 million dollars a year. Consider this: a family could ask for up to \$1500 in CSUMB supports to assist them in moving out of a shelter. Without the Start Up assistance service providers know that many more families will face homelessness and longer stays in city shelters. Every day that a family remains in a shelter costs about \$200.00 (\$6000 a month), \$56 a day for an individual (\$1580 a month). Our city spends almost \$1 Million dollars a year on hotel costs for families too large or hard to place within regular shelters. According to a May 8, 2012 City of Toronto Staff Report on per diem rates over 160 individuals a day are placed in motels mainly in Scarborough (two in Ward 44 and one in Ward 36).



The current government will tell you it is helping those relying on social assistance by installing a 1% increase to welfare rates. However, at this current time the monthly allowance for a couple with 1 child is the same as it was in 1986 – about \$1174.00. As of November the 2 parent one child family will receive \$1186. In 1986 the average cost to rent a 2 bedroom apartment in Toronto was \$750. Today the average rent of a 2 bedroom in Toronto is above \$1000. Yet knowing this the government continues to allot only \$640 a month for shelter costs resulting in families having to spend almost their entire allowance on rent and utilities. These low

and unrealistic rates are what lead families to become homeless, under nourished, broken.

The Liberals may have increased overall rates by about 13% during their time in office but they have not come close to repairing the 23% cuts to welfare rates made by the Harris Conservatives during their time at the helm. And their increases have come nowhere close to matching the increased cost of living especially in big cities like Toronto. As well, the Liberals decided to not increase amounts of the Ontario Child Benefit during 2012 something they had originally promised to do. And they do this all at the same time that they state a goal of reducing family and child poverty by 25% by 2013 (All parties in the legislature supported poverty reduction by unanimously approving Bill 152, the Poverty Reduction Act, in May 2009).

It is not too late to express your concerns about the cuts to Community Start Up. Contact your local MP, MPP. You can download a Lobby Kit or sign an on line petition available at www.sareview.ca

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Keeping You Informed

By Coline Garhouse, Bob Spencer, and Ian Roberts

The following motion was passed unanimously by your SSW NDP executive on October 9, 2012:

Whereas, there would be **no Ontario deficit** if the tax cuts for wealthy individuals and corporations had not been implemented over the last few decades;

and

whereas, we are losing approximately **\$15 billion** a year in provincial government revenues due to these harmful tax cuts;

and

whereas, the ONDP caucus needs to propose a positive alternative to the Liberal and Conservatives austerity agendas and attacks on the entire public sector;

and

whereas, the Doctors for Fair Taxation have proposed very reasonable new tax brackets for those with **taxable** incomes over \$100,000 (approx. \$110,000-\$150,000 overall income) and above, leaving tax rates unchanged for **90 percent** of taxpayers.

be it resolved that

the SSW NDP executive strongly urges the ONDP to publicly advocate now for the urgently needed changes to the marginal tax rates similar to those proposed by the Doctors for Fair Taxation.



REPORT FROM NDP PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

Candace Jazvac, Yvette Roberts, Guled Arale and I (Bob Spencer) attended council. We gave out leaflets about the Nov 9 Mulcair visit, the Nov 30 Dan Harris event and the SSW NDP tax fairness resolution to all delegates. Coline Gardhouse was kind enough to print 300 copies of our SSW resolution for that distribution. We need to follow up with a presentation to the resolution committee of executive before February council.

The NDP provincial council authorized the opening of nominations for provincial candidates as of January 1, 2013. The vote was close with several strong speeches on both sides. The main argument for the early beginning of the nomination process was made by Northern Council representatives who argued that they needed to be ready should the government call a snap election instead of returning to the legislature.

Second, Toronto MPP's Cheri Dinovo and Peter Tabuns successfully urged council to unanimously support teachers and board staff in their fight against unjust provincial labour legislation (Bill 115) and the cynical moves against education by the Liberals. Bill Signal and Sid Ryan took the debate to another level by linking the attack on Ontario public sector workers to the recent events to stifle all union bargaining rights in Wisconsin. The Federal Deputy NDP Leader,

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Dave Christofferson, linked the fight with the Ontario Liberals to the work the NDP was doing federally to fight the federal Conservative's anti-labour agenda. The speeches were powerful and convincing and I was proud to join the rest of the council in endorsing the national fight for good public services and labour rights.

On behalf of our riding, I supported two emergency resolutions:

The first was to fight the Ontario Liberal's attempt to shut down horse racing and its 60,000 rural jobs by giving Paul Godfrey (a Tory?) control over all gaming in Ontario. The argument for the jockeys and farm workers was put eloquently by delegate Darren Kennedy (He is quite willing to send out background material). The underlying real issue is corporate control and lobbyist power. The resolution passed.

The second resolution addressed the terrible situation at the Six Nations reserve school. The provincial council unanimously supported the demand for emergency funding for the 6 nations reserve school. The Tories and Liberals have left that first nations community school and other's like it across the country to languish in disrepair with no pay for basic staffing needs. It is indicative of their disdain for the rights of our first people's. It is just one more reason to end their rule federally and provincially.

We must win the province back for all working people. We owe that struggle to our nation, our community, our children and our grand children.



Scarborough [South]West has a strong history of being represented by New Democrats in the Ontario Legislature. Starting with Stephen Lewis who became MPP in 1963 when the riding was first created. Lewis became leader of the Ontario NDP in 1970 and served until 1978. Lewis came from a family with strong progressive roots. His father David was the leader of the Federal NDP for much of the same time as his son was leading the Ontario NDP in the early 1970s. Lewis is well-known for his work post-politics as the United Nations Special Envoy for HIV and AIDS in Africa. He is someone who inspires all New Democrats, not only those in Scarborough Southwest!

Richard Johnston was the next New Democrat to represent Scarborough West, serving from 1979 to 1990. He inspired Scarborough West New Democrats by taking a tough stand on tenant's issues and attempting to live on a "welfare" diet to show how hard people had to work to make ends meet. Many long-time NDP

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executive members and activists in our riding have fond memories of Richard and his time in the legislature.

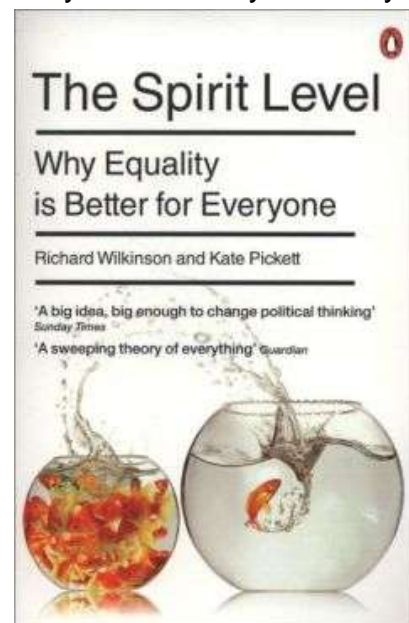
Coline's Corner - Recommended Reading

By Coline Gardhouse

The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett

In this groundbreaking book, based on years of research, the authors provide hard evidence to demonstrate how almost everything- from life expectancy to mental illness, crime rates to illiteracy- is affected not by how wealthy a society is, but how equal it is. Societies with a bigger gap between rich and poor are bad for everyone including the more well-off. The authors clearly demonstrate that at almost any level of income it is better to live in a more equal place.

While Canada ranks more equal than a country like the US, the trend in Canada over the last decades is in the wrong direction. In Canada in the 1950's the ratio between a CEO's income and a worker in that industry was 20 to 1. Today it is 400 to 1. The broken societies and broken economies we see here and around the world have resulted from the growth of inequality.



Unlike what we have seen in the recent US election, the authors argue that we need to engage in 'Evidence –based Politics'. The solid evidence in this well written book validates the arguments that New Democrats can use if we choose to present a real vision of a more equal and just society in the political campaigns that lie ahead. I highly recommend this book and it is available in paperback and at the Toronto Public Library.

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Upcoming Events

SSW NDP Members Canvass – Saturday November 17, 2012

Join the SSW NDP and MP Dan Harris as we canvass the Birchcliff neighbourhood to get the word out about the NDP. With a provincial election just around the corner we need to contact as many people as we can before the election starts to lay the foundation for success.

12 - 3 PM Saturday November 17, 2012

Assemble at Dan Harris' Office
1674 Kingston Road (Kingston & Birchcliff)
Scarborough, ON

SCARBOROUGH SOUTHWEST NDP HOLIDAY RECEPTION WITH MEGAN LESLIE, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION – FRIDAY NOVEMBER 30, 2012

7 PM Friday November 30, 2012

Plumbers and Steamfitters Union Hall Local 46
936 Warden Ave
Scarborough, ON

Dan Harris Member of Parliament
Scarborough Southwest

Holiday Reception
with special guest

Megan Leslie

Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition

Friday November 30, 2012 · Doors open 7:00 p.m.

Complimentary bar service & hors d'oeuvres

Plumbers & Steamfitters Union Hall Local 46

936 Warden Avenue, Scarborough

Tickets · \$60 each or \$100 per couple



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Your Scarborough Southwest NDP Team

President
Federal VP
Provincial VP
Provincial CFO / Membership Organizer
Federal Treasurer
Secretary
Provincial Council Rep.
Provincial Council Rep.
Youth Rep
Youth Rep
Youth Rep
Member at large
Member at large
Member at large
Member at large
Member at large
Member at large
Member at large
Member at large
Member at large
Member at large
Member at large
Incumbent MP for SSW

Dan Danielson
David Gracey
Candace Jazvac
Tom Grinnell
David Harris
Rosemary Dale
Robert Spencer
Yvette Roberts
Guled Arale
Balthazar Crane
Grace Jin
Paul Bocking
Bruce Budd
Michelle Chateauvert
Pia Christensen
Coline Gardhouse
Debessai Ghermatzion
Jason Hellsten
Jeremy Lu
Diana McLaren
Phil Piltch
Ian Roberts
Dan Harris, M.P.

For SSW NDP inquiries and information on how to make a financial contribution to the SSW NDP please contact:

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Website: <http://sswndp.ca>



*Please note there will be no December 2012 edition

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