

Campaign Corner by Bruce Hallsor

Before the last election, we reported that Elizabeth May's strategy would be to unite all of the non-Conservative voters in our riding behind her, and that if she could do this, she would beat us. Our campaign team's strategy was not to get involved in any public discourse that would accelerate her chances to polarize the electorate in that fashion, while at the same time, working hard to identify our supporters and get them out to vote on May 2. We stuck to that plan, executed it well, and delivered about the same number of votes that we usually do. I would like to acknowledge the hard work of all of our volunteers in helping us with this effort!

Our average vote in six elections under Gary Lunn is 24,777. Our 2011 result of 24,544 was only 233 votes shy of our average, or less than 1% off our typical vote.

On the other hand, the Liberal's average vote is 16,757, and they delivered just 4,208 votes on May 2, for a 12,549 vote drop, or about 75% off their typical vote.

The NDP also suffered a significant drop.

Your executive has conducted a thorough review of the campaign, and while we have identified many things that we could do better next time, the fact is that as long as Elizabeth May is able to garner 47% of the vote, we are very unlikely to beat her. We performed well in the last election. We could have done some things better, but the main reason we lost was not our own failure, but the very considerable and successful effort put in by the Green Party to add new voters to their column, either from new registrations or from convincing Liberals and New Democrats to consolidate their support behind the Green leader.

Our job in the next four years is going to be improving our organization so that we can increase our own vote. However, we will be aided, we hope, by the fact that it will be very difficult for Elizabeth May's team to repeat their own 47% vote in the next election. Here are some of the reasons we think we have a better chance next time:

Redistribution. Southern Vancouver Island will receive at least one additional seat as a result of redistribution. We presently have four seats, with a population of about 500,000 people. In order to create the extra seat, Saanich-Gulf Islands can expect to shrink by losing the area South of MacKenzie Avenue, by losing the Gulf Islands, by losing Gordon Head, or by some combination of these three areas. If you removed all three of these areas, and only had the area from Sidney to Broadmead, we would have won the last election. If you eliminate one of two of these areas, we would have had a neck-and-neck result. Any likely redistribution scenario will either make the results of the last election closer, or make us the winners.



Bruce Hallsor, Election Readiness Chairperson.

Elizabeth May. The Green Candidate was in the enviable position in the last election of having no record to defend. She came across very positively and was able to get away with impossible promises that electing her would make a big difference in Ottawa. Next time around, she will return to voters unable to show any record of accomplishment in Ottawa, or in Saanich–Gulf Islands. It is hard to imagine that she will be able to run as successfully on her messages next time around.

Liberals. The federal Liberals national tailspin in the last ten days of the 2011 election made it easier for traditional Liberal voters to abandon their party in favour of Elizabeth May. These voters are not Green converts, but people who still self-identify as Liberals. They will be likely to return to the fold if the Liberals are performing better with their new leader in the next election.

New Democrats. The NDP made no serious effort in Saanich-Gulf Islands in 2011. They hold all three of the other south Island seats; next time, when they are running as the Official Opposition, we can expect them to be funding a full-fledged campaign in the only south Island seat they do not hold. Nationally, the NDP has much more to fear from a Green Party presence than the Conservatives do. We can expect that the NDP will make a major pitch to Elizabeth May voters to switch to a party that shares the same values, but can do something about them.

While we cannot really control or predict how each of these four factors will play out, all of them have potential upside for our campaign. If we can focus on increasing our vote, and any one or two of the above factors break our way, we have good reason to believe that we will re-take our riding in the next election.

What we need now is for more members to get involved with the Association. We also need to ensure that we have a presence in the riding over the next four years, which will help us attract a good candidate and the money and volunteers for running a better campaign than we did in 2011.

Bruce Hallsor

Election Planning Chair



Volunteers are the cornerstone of the SGI EDA Conservatives.