

Vision drawing new supporters

One needn't look any further than Vision Vancouver's annual general meeting last Monday for incontrovertible proof of the ruling Non-Partisan Association's pending apocalypse.



alex tsakumis
REBEL WITH A CLAUSE

It was startling: 400 committed, enthusiastic members, in sync and empowered to bid Sam Sullivan's nothingness a celebrated farewell, in attendance at an otherwise administrative meeting where the clearly united board presented with purposeful clarity and conscience. Moreover, present without masquerade were more than three dozen former NPA members, almost 10 per cent of the room, and a surprisingly healthy contingent of former COPE members. Interesting too, the number of prominent federal Liberals, whose natural constituency you'd think would be the NPA: Mike Witherly, campaign boss for B.C.; Catherine Evans, former candidate; Ian Bailey, provincial director; Senator Larry Campbell, of course, and none other than Greg Wilson, ubiquitous ground war campaign tactician to the Grit (non)stars, and, immediate past campaign manager of the NPA. Mr. Wilson was also elected to the newly expanded board of directors.

This was no ordinary show of strength.

So much for the necessity of a deal between Vision and the ultra-left blowhards at the rapidly (thankfully) disintegrating COPE. With this much momentum, skill and organization already in the tank, Vision will be almost impossible to beat for council. The notion that they are the farm team for the NDP is laughable. What does that make COPE? I'll tell you. The witness protection program for dogmatic has-beens, who'd rather talk about Marx than Main Street. Think about their priorities for a rapidly devolving Vancouver: Nuclear-free zones, Dubya's political donors and flute players at council meetings. While our city crumbled they fondled with their incessant need to pontificate about inconsequential matters that served absolutely no purpose. The average 'Joe', who they claim to protect, they abandoned in favour of the sound of their own voices. Anne Roberts, Ellen Woodsworth, Fred Bass and particularly Tim Louis, who favours wearing the picture of murderous thug Che Guevara on the back of his wheelchair, would do well to take one-way tickets to Venezuela for tea with Hugo, instead of considering a return. And if David Cadman had any sense at all, he'd swiftly bolt from COPE to Vision.

But I digress ...

Of particular note was Vision's decision to run their own mayoral candidate and it is here that the calculus gets interesting. Coun. Raymond Louie (who told me he enjoys this column – clearly against his better judgment) is thinking about running for mayor, as is, surprise, former NPA Parks Commissioner Al De Genova, who left the AGM early to join his parks board colleagues in session. Neither of these men will do anything but serve to divide Vision. Neither has the cache to beat Mayor Sullivan's vicious machine.

The only potential candidate who could beat Sam Sullivan, handily, is a fellow named Gregor Robertson, the man at the Vision AGM who received a stunning ovation. Young, intelligent and affable, Mr. Robertson exudes hope and promise – something we haven't seen in a very long time. "Sam's approach on everything he's touched since he became mayor has resulted in confrontation and not one real accomplishment. It's pretty shocking that the city has no leadership at such a critical time ... Sam's got it all wrong on everything from density to the Downtown Eastside ... what happened to policing and treatment?" says Mr. Robertson. And while he makes great sense, he's still thinking about running, apparently.

But it sounds mayoral, doesn't it?

A. G. Tsakumis' column appears every second Friday.



- 24 hours file photo

Where does MLA Gregor Robertson fit in the puzzle of Vancouver politics?