

Anatomy of an NPA loss

I have spent the last week, laughing, sometimes aloud, at many of the pundits and armchair, or better yet, cobblestone journalists and blogosphere pudding makers, who are attempting to do an autopsy of the NPA carcass.



REBEL WITH
A CLAUSE
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There is no shortage of folly ranging from conspiracies that rival the assassination of President Kennedy, in their complexity and frivolousness, to sheer lunacy when one local member of the media actually related that he thought the NPA would have won, if they were “smart enough to keep Sam.”

Oh, the poor chap must be off his medication.

But let's you and I have a closer look at the reasons for the NPA failure, shall we?

■ **Caucus:** B.C. Lee, Suzanne Anton, Kim Capri and Elizabeth Ball should hang their heads in shame. Their utterly blind acceptance of the madness that for three years free-flowed from the office of Sam Sullivan is the very bedrock of their party's loss.

And if Suzanne Anton thinks the party is now hers because she won, I've got news for her: She was part of the reason others lost – hanging on to Sam's ridiculousness.

The voting public didn't just want the NPA to lose; they wanted them to pay dearly for the political sins of Sam Sullivan, of which there were a multitude.

So, can you imagine what would have happened if the NPA had Sam running? He might have come in somewhere between Betty Krawczyk, the grand-standing octogenarian, and the mayoral candidate for the Nude Garden Party.

■ **Board/Staff:** The NPA waited far too long into the last term to resolve Sam's absent leadership. Mind, Sam was shielded by his resume advancement crew and middling understudies, who did the NPA no favours by outright fibbing as to how ‘popular’ the mayor was.

In 2007, one of his staff was famously quoted as saying that Sam was ‘in the sixties’: Meaning a 60 per cent approval rating. I think he probably meant that Sam might have been born and existed in the sixties.

■ **Peter Ladner:** He waited far too long to move against Sam. Although Peter was clearly the better candidate for mayor – he was both knowledgeable and experienced – his entry to challenge for the NPA chalice was far too late, and in the end, the \$100-million loan to Millennium didn't help either.

But when Peter taunted the electorate with the line, “I'd rather lose an election than talk about what happened in-camera during the meeting [Millennium's loan was approved],” this was akin to John McCain's

“I'd rather lose an election than a war.”

And the electorate obliged both of them accordingly. If Peter Ladner had sat as an independent NPAer from January of 2007, there would have never been such sonorous calls for a Mayor Carole Taylor and Gregor would probably still be over in Victoria. But Peter sat there and accepted the crazy-making.

■ **Policies:** CAST, Sam's drug strategy about beautiful nonsense, was heavily criticized by many of the top addictionologists in the province.

Eco-Density (or Ego-Duncity), to this day, doesn't have a definitive transportation component. Never mind how you build neighbourhoods, how the hell do you get in and out of them with minimal impact to the environment?

And of course, everyone's favourite: Civil City was a complete failure, as instead of a reduction in open drug activity, homelessness and street violence, we've seen a significant increase in every last one of them. Not to mention shameless fabrications about the number of new cops and units of social housing, and it was all over long ago.

■ **Organization:** Vision won this election as much as the NPA lost it. With a 25 to 30 per cent turnout, the NPA should have won, and Peter certainly should have been mayor. The NPA campaign was out-worked and out-foxed: They were still using the dated method of having runners retrieve polling information bingo sheets, while Vision had a slick daily tracking poll and on E-Day, they had text messaging by Blackberry rather than waiting around for runners with hard copies.

In the end, the core NPA west-side vote largely stayed home. Disgruntled with Peter's late entry into the leadership race and disgusted with three years of Sullivan foam, they weren't motivated to vote for their own. But the NPA future could be bright if they embrace star candidates like survivor Ian Robertson, Michael Geller, Heather Holden and Sean Bickerton.

Otherwise, even if Vision fails to live up to its ridiculously overblown promises, the NPA drift could extend to yet another term.

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