

One Ruff campaign

Monday's wacky publication schedule means a Tuesday election—like the one you may or may not remember from May 12—leaves us about a week behind putting results and analysis out in print form.

But to recap briefly, Gordo's back, the NDP blew it, the Green Party still doesn't have a seat in the rockpile, BC-STV sank and voter turnout plumbed new depths.

Longtime B.C. politics watcher and UVic professor emeritus **Norman Ruff** offered this assessment of a particularly moribund campaign.

"What went through my mind, is that when you look at the high turnout and sort of the energized politics that we saw in the [United] States, it was about hope, and it was about change, and the word I picked up—authenticity," says Ruff.

"Our election was not about hope," he told *Monday*. "It was about uncertainty. It was not about change. It was about no change. And most important of all, the voters that connected with **Obama**, they connected with what the commentators called his authenticity and that was the thing that I remember most about [his] campaign. I think that's something that was lacking with Campbell and with James. There was a lack of authenticity, which is another way of saying they did not make a connection."

Greens get mean

Hanging out at Green Party headquarters on Fort Street last Tuesday, *Monday* witnessed the strange spectacle of local environmental activist **Bobby Arbess** being strong-armed out the door and toward the

sidewalk by Green Party of Canada B.C. and Yukon organizer **Rob Hines**.

Arbess had arrived at the Green Party celebration/wake just in time to watch the preliminary election results flash across the screen. Arbess let out a cheer whenever one of **Carole James'** BC-NDP candidates was shown to be ahead of **Gordon Campbell's** BC Liberals in the polls. Evidently the Greens on hand to watch the party fail once again to win a seat in the legislature weren't too keen on having someone cheerleading the other side.

Arbess wasn't so keen on what transpired next.

"That was definitely the most unusual encounter I've ever had in my 25 years in the environmental movement," Arbess told *Monday* afterwards by e-mail. "I guess I was naive in figuring I wouldn't be the only one cheering the only serious contender to unseat the Liberals."

Perhaps Arbess hit a little too close to home with his commentary on the party's election-fighting efforts.

"When I explained that only an NDP-Green alliance could overthrow Campbell's corporate agenda, I was shoved out the door," he says. "Only a covert Liberal in Green clothing could do that to an inveterate tree-hugger like me. What ever happened to the Green commitment to non-violence?"

Martell on the move

A well-known neighbourhood organizer appears destined for new endeavours as the Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group began advertising this week to fill its executive director position.

The post is currently occupied by **Roberta Martell**, who was hired in January 2004 at a time when Fernwood was living up a little too well to its reputation as an inner city neighbourhood.

Unable to reach Martell by press time, we asked Fernwood NRG board chair **Lee Herrin** why Martell is leaving the organization.

"She's retiring," says Herrin with a laugh. "She put a lot of work and effort into the neighbourhood and is now taking a bit of a pause before considering what the next big step is. But she's achieved, I would say, almost everything that was put on the table for her to achieve when we hired her."

Martell helped launch several high-profile, and at times contentious, projects in the community.

These included a property swap with controversial landlord **Robin Kimpton** that gave the non-profit NRG control over the Cornerstone building at Fernwood and Gladstone streets, which is now home to a much-loved coffee shop.

Martell was also instrumental in laying the groundwork for the Park Place low-income family housing unit recently built on Yukon Street.

We asked Herrin what's next for the NRG without Martell's influence.

"We don't have any one specific program or project tomorrow," says Herrin. "We have a track record and a reputation for being a cutting edge organization that is really focussed on serving the neighbourhood, so we're going to do our best to find the next great person, and then we'll figure out what to do next."

—Jason Youmans