

THE CLIMATE REVOLUTION

A Plan to Rescue the Future



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Introduction

No wonder people are confused regarding the climate debate. On the same day that Greta Thurnberg warned the United Nations of impending doom, 500 of the world's most influential scientists said almost the opposite. They sent a letter advising the UN that climate change is natural and not nearly as serious as previously thought. They claim that CO₂ is “not pollution but plant food”, that “there is no need to panic” and “no climate emergency”. Here is part of what they had to say; the rest can be found online.

“The general-circulation models of climate on which international policy is at present founded are unfit for their purpose. Therefore, it is cruel as well as imprudent to advocate the squandering of trillions of dollars on the basis of results from such immature models. Current climate policies pointlessly and grievously undermine the economic system, putting lives at risk in countries denied access to affordable, reliable electrical energy. We urge you to follow a climate policy based on sound science, realistic economics and genuine concern for those harmed by costly but unnecessary attempts at mitigation.”

It seems that even Michael Moore now somewhat agrees with this assessment. In his soon-to-be-released movie, *Planet of the Humans*, he challenges the “false promises of the environmental movement” and points out the dramatic shortcomings of green energy, especially biofuel and biomass. Movie Director Jeff Gibbs says, “the wakeup call is about our own side”[the environmentalists]. Mr. Gibbs says, “It was kind of crushing to discover that the things I believed in weren't real ... solar panels and wind turbines are not going to save us and that eliminating fossil fuels will take many decades”. We must remember that our entire civilization is based on cheap energy going way back to the coal of the Industrial Revolution. And we love our civilization with its hot showers, warm homes, fast transportation and various electronic devices that are made from plastic. There will be no getting off fossil fuels without major lifestyle disruptions and a lot of discomfort if we fail to do it gradually. Those that think otherwise are woefully misinformed.

To help overcome the confusion surrounding the climate change/pollution issue, I am going to use the same formula as a quadratic equation in algebra. I will put in what we know, to help solve the problem and offer a solution.

Although many people believe that human activity is a primary cause of climate change, many others do not. They are constantly challenging scientific conclusions with what they say is a conflicting body of evidence as we have seen. However, no matter where

one stands on this issue, what can't be disputed is that air and water pollution is rampant in various parts of the world which is causing severe degradation of many ecosystems. Here in Canada, we have made great progress in cleaning up the environment but still have much room for improvement. In the 1960s and well into the 1970s, for example, the Saint John river was so polluted that you couldn't swim in it; now we can. Raw sewage was dumped into the river from almost every town and village along its banks. This was also true of many other places in Canada, but by the 1980s sewage treatment plants were being built across the country. Trains were converted from coal to diesel and the insecticide DDT was prohibited. This is not to say that we can't do more, but at least we are making progress. Our big downfall as individuals, and as a society, is overconsumption. We use, have and waste too much stuff. I will talk about this shortly.

Some commenters claim that we are so focused on climate change that we are not paying enough attention to forms of pollution other than CO₂. They say that plastics, pesticides and population growth should also be at the top of our agenda. Oceans are becoming more acidic, fish populations are being wiped out, bird populations have plummeted, pollinators are in serious decline and plastic particles are showing up in tea bags and baby formula. And the human population is increasing by 11,000 net people per hour; by 2100 there could be 12 billion of us compared to 6.5 billion today. When I was born, 71 years ago, the world had only about three billion people. It has more than doubled in my lifetime. Population growth is one of the biggest causes of pollution because urbanization along with the consumer class is increasing so rapidly in developing countries. They want to live like us and who could blame them. We have a great lifestyle ... even though it's killing the planet.

There can be no doubt that we have serious problems, just not necessarily the one upon which we are focused. There have been huge climate changes and even ice ages prior to the emergence of industrialized humans. But now we are here and together we must face our current problems before they get a whole lot worse. And blaming past generations will accomplish nothing. All generations are the same. Humans, like all animal species, will go to excess unless they are somehow restrained. No one told my generation, or my parents' generation, that we should not strive for constantly better living conditions: bigger houses, bigger cars, colour TVs, more meat and more vacations. Quite the opposite. After the Second World War, advertising went into high gear based on the theory that making more stuff would keep the factories going and prevent another depression. 'Planned obsolescence' became the production paradigm; use it, chuck it, and make more ... just like with the electronic devices today. The problem is that planned obsolescence and overconsumption is killing the planet. As stated previously, we simply have too many people using too much stuff.

So, what can we do? Let's start by agreeing that globally pollution is serious and climate change is happening even if the human contribution is disputed in some circles. Hopefully, we can also agree that the situation is far too serious for more political posturing and nice sounding platitudes. For years the issue, which I will treat as one, has been ignored, swept under the carpet or passed from committee to study group and then back to committees. I spent a year on a government sponsored environmental study which, in the end, accomplished very little. All 12 volumes are now collecting dust somewhere. This is not to say that some very good work has been done by governments and certainly by environmental groups. I have been involved with Ducks Unlimited, the World Wildlife Fund and supported several other environmental groups for 50 years. None of this has been enough to prevent further degradation of our planet. The situation requires more effort from more people and from more countries. But let's start here at home. What can Canadians do to show that we are serious about the pollution/overconsumption issue?

According to Dr. Blair Feltmate, one of Canada's foremost climatologists, in a CBC interview last year, we only contribute 1.6% of the world's CO₂ and absorb 2.3% due to our expansive forests. That looks very encouraging until we learn that per person, we are one of the biggest consumers on the planet. We use far more than our fair share of the world's resources. In fact, if everyone in the world lived like Canadians, it would require the resources of 4.2 planet earths. This is brought forth by Prof. Annie Leonard in her book *THE STORY OF STUFF*. In terms of consumption, we are second only to Americans who require 5.4 planets worth of resources. And, unfortunately, so called 'green technologies' will not in and of themselves solve the overconsumption problem. That will require drastic action. I contend that it will require a revolution.

Where to begin? Recognizing that we are restricted to only one planet, it would seem as if we have three choices: voluntarily reduce consumption, prevent other people from enjoying our lifestyle, or wait for global collapse. None of these options seem very palatable. Suggesting a reduction in consumption will be perceived by many as an attack on our way of living. It will be labelled as socialism in some circles and therefore downright unacceptable. Preventing others from improving their standard of living while we continue with ours is both immoral and impossible. And sitting idly by and waiting for a societal collapse is to give up and sell out future generations. I don't know about you, but I don't want that on my record. I would sooner go down fighting than hang my hat with those doing nothing. That is why I am proposing a peaceful, but powerful revolution.

Please let me explain my proposal before writing me off as just another 60s kid on a ludicrous scheme to save the world. While it is true that I am indeed a 60s kid, I also have something valuable to contribute to the current debate: experience and insight.

Greta Thurnberg and her people have the enthusiasm; me and my people have years in the trenches. We know how difficult changing the status quo can be and, more importantly, we know that it cannot be done by one demographic. To win in the current debacle will require reasonable people from every age group working together with a common goal. Protests won't do it. Neither will virtue signaling.

Hypocrisy is rampant among environmentalists and must cease if we are to be effective. Good examples are the CO²/climate change debate and the use of fossil fuels. Alberta produces less than 1% of global greenhouse gases and China produces 27%; would it not make more sense for Greta to go there instead of picking on Alberta? That is like having a cancer on your face and a blemish on your backside and focusing on the blemish. Here in New Brunswick, the Green people are against fracking and vehemently oppose a pipeline from Alberta, yet many heat their homes with natural gas, fly in jets, drive big vehicles and readily accept huge subsidies from the fracking/fossil fuel industry.

Thirty-eight cents of every dollar in the New Brunswick budget comes as a subsidy from the federal government who get it primarily from the three western provinces and British Columbia – all of whom frack, drill and mine fossil fuels. British Columbia is one of the world's largest exporters of coal. The other three provinces are major producers of oil, bitumen and natural gas. All four of them employ fracking to harvest fossil fuels. Of the 38 cents we receive from Ottawa, 60% of it comes from the fossil fuel industry which equals 22 cents of every dollar received. Should we not in good conscience reject this amount? Would not doing otherwise make us supreme hypocrites? Wouldn't it be like campaigning against prostitution and then owning shares in a whore house? I put this out to the Green people; will you agree that we should refuse this dirty money from 'out west'? Sure, it will mean cutting the healthcare budget, the education budget, the transportation budget and every other function of government by 22% but is it not worth it to have a clear conscience?

The same logic applies to pipelines. Should we not, during the transition to renewable energy, use our own ethical oil rather than importing it from countries where women have no rights and slavery still exists? Often, we environmental people are great crusaders for women's rights and yet fund the very regimes that in some cases won't allow them even basic human rights. Is this not hypocrisy on steroids? This nuttiness must stop. As Michael Moore points out, saving the planet requires that we rethink some of our positions and act responsibly. Funding the suppression of women while rejecting our own ethically produced oil is nothing short of a disgrace.

We can't afford to be like Maude Barlow and other Champaign environmentalists. She came here two years ago to lecture us on the evils of building a pipeline from Alberta to Saint John. When I asked her how she got here she responded, "By West Jet". It seems

that jet fuel is fine for Maude, but not for the rest of us. People who oppose pipelines and fossil fuels must stop flying, get rid of their electronic devices, forego hot showers, lower their home heat and dump their gas-powered vehicles. If not, like the 'limousine liberals', they risk being ridiculed for being hypocrites.

Winning the pollution battle will require a revolution. But not the bloody kind. The revolutionary formula that I will explain momentarily is one that calls for a massive cooperative effort that is unprecedented in human history. And there is probably only one place in the world where my idea could possibly be demonstrated - Canada. We have the history, the political system and the temperament to pull this off. But before we proceed to my plan let me explain why a revolution is necessary and why protests have little hope of long-term success.

I think we agree that our current situation is too serious for further procrastination. A permanent solution will require pragmatism, compromise and progressive thinking; elements that cannot be developed through protests. Protest movements can, however, be a great way to get public attention. They can also bring about specific, though often ephemeral, change. People, and societies, do not like change and will usually resist it even if it would be to their benefit. Therefore, reformers often end up as pariahs. Throughout history, real change has required force. Ensclosed elites and power brokers fear change like the plague and the general public is little better. Most people will settle for the status quo if conditions are even reasonably tolerable. They complain and blame those in authority, but seldom join revolutionary movements or do anything concrete to ameliorate the situation. Protest movements and revolutions look large, but almost never involve more than ten percent of the public and only about three and a half percent will ever be active. All protest movements, even big ones, ultimately fall victim to public apathy and morph into a somewhat altered status quo. Momentum is unsustainable over time. However, on a positive note, Steve Jobs reminded us that, "Those who are crazy enough to think that they can change the world, often do". We dare not give up.

Another reason that social movements fail is that after a while special interest groups and big money close ranks and work across party lines to defeat them. The war in Vietnam, for example, was primarily ended due to massive protests and public outcry but most of the wars since then have been just as ill-advised. And the military industrial complex did not suffer. It is larger than it was then and supported by all major parties in most countries.

Not to drag this out, but I must ask: Are Black people in the United States better off since desegregation? Marginally. They can now sit where they choose and eat with white folk, but they still don't have equal access to decent jobs or adequate healthcare.

Nor are they proportionally represented in the boardrooms of major businesses and prestigious universities. Their plight will never change until Black people fill major positions in the party structure of both the Republican and Democratic parties. In the end, one of the biggest protest movements in history did little to improve the lives of Black people. And here in Canada indigenous people have a long way to go before they can be considered equal. You only need to read the book *Indian Fall* by D'Arcy Jenish for confirmation of that.

The same fate awaits the climate change movement. Eventually, lack of urgency e.g. "it was hot this year, but cold last year so there is no problem..." will inoculate the public. Also, the restrictions that will be required to reduce pollution to acceptable levels will spark a public backlash. Guaranteed. As I write (2019-10-18), people in England are kicking climate protesters off the subway and Greta is being challenged by hundreds of oil workers in Edmonton. Tolerance often gives way to violence and it will be no different this time. Before the climate battle is over there could be blood in the streets.

Try telling people that speed limits are being reduced to 90 kph to reduce fuel emissions. Carbon will be taxed at an ever-increasing rate which will cause a dramatic increase in food and fuel prices. Taxes will be dramatically increased and there will be no more big half ton trucks or SUVs. Flying will be discouraged through price escalation; meat will be virtually eliminated; and there will be no more pets to pollute the planet with their poop as they gobble up tons of food. The production of electronic devices will be severely limited, and shopping – especially for women's clothes – will be restricted. These are all steps that might have to be legislated if the climate agenda is implemented. That said, if we are to adequately address the over consumption/pollution problem, these restrictions, and even more drastic ones, may be warranted.

Whatever the case, conservation must be legislated to be effective. This is the focal point of the Green Movement. Why? Because I won't give up my SUV unless my neighbor gets rid of his first. We must both be forced to get rid of them. We must also, through higher prices or rationing, be forced to use public transportation, accept a smaller vehicle and drive less. This will not go well. Case in point: Last week my wife was going to Moncton to see her sister. I suggested that since there was a nice comfortable bus just ten minutes away that she should consider taking it. She refused, saying that "It is more convenient to have my own vehicle". Being a wimp, I was not about to push the issue. But someone must. To be fair, however, she has taken the bus a few times previously. Overall though, without legislated incentives people are simply not going to do what is required to bring about a more equitable distribution of resources and a more human friendly planet. Reasonable people must bring this about

in a fair and balanced manner. That is the key to solving most problems in society - reasonable people working together toward a common goal.

Reasonable people from all parts of the political spectrum must work toward saving our planet. And the only feasible way of doing this is by more of these people taking an active part in political parties. The political chaos we now have is primarily because the political parties are influenced by established elites and/or ill-informed special interest groups. The average person is not a card-carrying member of any party, so they have no say in policy or candidate selection. Lack of participation, especially by well-informed young adults is creating a huge political deficit. And yet this is the only viable solution.

For example, when in June of 2019 the Conservative Party in Fredericton held their candidate selection convention, there were only three candidates, all unknowns, and only 138 members cast ballots. So, in a constituency of 70,000 people, this little group potentially decided who was going to represent all of them in Ottawa. Democracy in Canada is dying. And yet the most effective means of winning the pollution/consumption struggle is through the democratic process - the forum developed by our ancient ancestors and passed down to us so that we can solve our problems without bloodshed. Our absolute best solution for treating societal ills is a democratic revolution by reasonable people from all walks of life. Ultimately, nothing else will work. As Margret Mead pointed out in one of her Massey Lectures, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has".

The American Revolution began with a few people meeting together in a tavern. The English Revolution of 1648 began when a handful of like-minded people decided to challenge the king's authority. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 was bloodless but laid the foundation for our current British parliamentary system and set an example for the world. The little band of people who organized the Canadian Rebellion of 1837 won freedom of the press and responsible government for future generations. Now it's our turn. Reasonable people from every walk of life must once again change history through revolution.

The process is not complicated, but for most people it will require an adjustment to their thought process and the courage to come out of their comfort zone. But only by reasonable people getting involved in the political process can a realistic environmental compromise succeed. Prof. Deepak Bhargava says that we must be there to "... clarify what's at stake, force people and politicians to choose sides ... make moral arguments with clarity and passion ... and break through a sclerotic political system rigged in favor of powerful interests". These powerful interest groups must be replaced with compassionate people who support a science-based, people focused approach to the

global environmental problem. Instead of partisan diatribe, we need meaningful dialogue. And myopic thinking must be replaced by a broader vision for a better world.

My plan for a peaceful, but powerful, revolution can deliver everything we need for success. Guaranteed. I am going to present a practical blueprint for becoming an effective political revolutionary. One that is uniquely Canadian and is open to all of us.

How our system works

Canada and her provinces have adopted the basic principles of the British Parliamentary system of government; a system that originated with the ancient Saxons and was improved by the Norman/French Vikings after their conquest of Britain in 1066. In adopting the British system of government, we became a Constitutional Monarchy of French-English origin. The Queen, represented by the Governor General federally, and the Lieutenant Governor provincially, is our Head of State and the symbol of parliamentary authority as laid out in the Canadian Constitution. She is the living embodiment of our long tradition of democratic liberty, which evolved over many centuries through both revolution and convention. The monarch holds in trust the liberty of the people and is a symbolic repository of our inalienable rights. Unlike our American neighbors, who rely heavily on their constitution, we place our trust in a long tradition of civil liberty symbolized by whomever sits on the British throne. Unlike the old monarchy where the king ruled, the current monarchy functions by and with the consent of an elected parliament. The Crown is basically an umpire in the political process bringing decorum and civility to what is sometimes a tumultuous process.

The real power in our country and province lies ultimately with the people. Through the free vote of the people, democracy lives. Democracy, from the Greek word *demokratia*, is a combination of *demos*, people and *kratos*, power. This ultimate power while residing with the voting public, is exercised on their behalf by their chosen representatives. Federally, these representatives are Members of Parliament and provincially, Members of the Legislative Assembly. This delegation of power can be further refined to show that almost all power in our system is exercised by the prime minister and the premiers; a major weakness, because too much power is concentrated in the hands of a few people. Premiers and the prime minister are the people who choose the cabinet ministers and to whom the ministers owe their allegiance. They are appointed for the sole purpose of carrying out the prime minister's or premier's agenda and depend on him, or her, for their big salary and the other trappings of office. The platform they implement is supposed to be the one presented during the election campaign as a party platform. It is this platform that will provide the governing principles for the administration and is what the people actually vote for, or against. At

least in theory, that is how it is supposed to work. People often get hoodwinked and end up with something quite other than what they were promised.

Prime ministers often rule much like kings of old with a few flunkies to advise them and MPs who lack the courage to confront them. Only the people can change this.

Why get involved?

Enough about the system for a moment – let's talk about you and me and political participation through party membership. In our system, it is the relatively small group of people who have a party membership card, as mentioned previously, who ultimately decide our fate. They are the ones who choose the person who will represent our constituency in the next election and set party policy at policy conventions. These are also the same people who choose the party leader at the leadership convention and thus potentially the next premier or prime minister. You and I only get to choose from among those people selected by the party membership. This is the greatest weakness in our system. Because only a small number of people have a membership card, and even fewer participate in party events, we end up with a leader that has been chosen by a very small number of people. And, unfortunately, we also get policies that are focused on the small group that proposed them.

Increased party membership is the cure for many, if not most, of our current problems. If more people get involved in the inner workings of our political system, we will have more widely accepted policies and more control of the overall process. Those we choose to lead would be forced to reckon with our strength and comply with our stated wishes. This would automatically result in a more publicly focused and representative government. The only hope for good government is increased numbers of ordinary people doing their democratic duty by getting involved. There is simply no other practical solution.

So why don't ordinary people get involved in politics? Primarily because they are not interested, are often uninformed, and many are just plain lazy. The great majority of people are content to sit back and let others do what needs to be done and then complain about the way they do it. But if people don't take part, they have no right to complain.

Often ordinary people avoid politics because they feel inferior or unqualified. Many erroneously believe that only doctors, lawyers and other professionals get actively involved in politics. Nothing could be further from the truth. We have had farmers, fishermen, schoolteachers, housewives, hairdressers and just about any other occupation you can think of, as MLAs and MPs over the years. There is no excuse for you

and me not getting actively involved. The smooth functioning of democracy requires ordinary people working together for a common purpose. And if you wish to set an example for others, there is no better way to do it than through participation in the political process.

When this happens, bad laws can be changed, and better ones enacted. Cooperation can replace confrontation and dialogue can replace debate. But for this to happen, reasonable people must occupy the middle ground across the political spectrum. However, if reasonable people fail to participate in the process, they will have to be content with whatever policies are enacted by the special interest groups who control most political parties. That said, special interest groups can sometimes be beneficial, and are sometimes necessary. And although many have done great work, they are not a substitute for grassroots political involvement by ordinary people. We are precisely where we are today because not enough people got involved 50 years ago.

Progressive action can best be accomplished, as suggested previously, by increased political participation by all stakeholders. Only then can we choose representatives who are committed to finding a workable solution to our environmental problems. Secret machinations and clandestine maneuvers by special interest groups must be replaced by open, active participation in the democratic process. Science-based environmental policy developed by an all-party committee and supported by the government, would be acceptable to reasonable people of all political stripes. This is the best way to approach our pollution/over consumption problem. Protests and confrontation will ultimately bring about a stultifying backlash from the public which will stymie progressive change. A political revolution is the answer.

Where do I start?

Begin by joining one of the political parties. Then get involved with the inner workings, especially policy formulation and leadership selection. The policy process for most political parties is very straightforward. Prior to a policy convention, which is held every few years, individuals and groups submit new ideas and/or proposed changes to their local riding association executive. After the proposals are discussed, they are voted on by the local membership at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). If the ideas get a majority vote, they are sent to the policy committee of the party. This committee collects all submissions from the ridings (constituencies) and sends the entire list to each individual constituency so that all members can be aware of what changes and/or additions are being proposed for the party. You and your friends could easily control every aspect of this process because the number of people involved is small. That way party policies are your policies and the progressive change you seek can be enacted by your government. You win, and the powerful interest groups lose.

The policy process, as you can see, is simple and open. The problem is that relatively few people attend these conventions. This is how the Liberal Party, for example, ended up supporting publicly funded abortions even though most of the party membership was opposed to this policy. It shows how a relatively small group of people can set an entirely new path for a political party – both positive and negative.

How do I choose my political party?

In terms of actual ideology, for the most part, there are only subtle differences between Liberals and Conservatives. They try to sound different, but successive governments demonstrate my point. Liberals tend to be a bit more involved in social issues and Conservatives a little more focused on economic issues but both parties have run deficits and increased the public debt. Although the other parties offer their own unique perspectives, so far, they have only appealed to a minority of voters. This could change in the future, however, if more people become dissatisfied with the two traditional parties. Whatever the future holds, we need more people taking an active part in all political parties as quickly as possible. As President Kennedy asked, “If not us, who? If not now, when?”

What should determine your choice of party is their commitment to the betterment of our province and country. It is essential that governments have a reasonable, clearly defined plan to address issues such as environmental degradation, economic development and fiscal responsibility. According to former publisher, Art Doyle, the world is crying out for “citizen centered, performance driven government that is focused on fairness”. This is not possible without people like you and me being actively involved in the political process. Without us, big money and special interest groups rule the roost.

Your personality, natural predilections, socialization, education and family history will also play a role in your choice of party. But the focal point of this presentation is to encourage a ‘revolution of reasonableness’. No matter what party you join, it is essential that you get together with those who are reasonable in your party and dialogue with reasonable people in other parties. This is where democracy happens. E.E Schartschneider, writing in *The Atlantic* magazine, states that, “Democracy is not found in the parties, but between the parties”. How true. People like you and me must become the catalyst for this new ‘reign of reason’.

Leadership selection is a good place to begin. My friend, the late Bob McCready, Speaker of the New Brunswick Legislature, stated that “When you are looking for a leader the best is none too good”. The only way to get good leaders is for reasonable

people to control the selection committee and have a vote at the leadership convention. It is essential that we have a vote on the leader of our chosen party. We can only do this, however, if we have a party membership card and attend the nominating convention. This involvement must supersede all other political activities. Selecting the future leader makes our vote contribute more to democracy than just a vote in the general election. Of all our democratic rights, this one is the most important - and the easiest one in which to participate.

Once a few individuals are persuaded to seek the leadership, a nomination convention is planned. Leadership candidates must be a member of the party for at least a month to be considered. This allows members to approach people from outside the party to seek the nomination. Since good leaders are much easier recruited by an active and vibrant party, the quality and size of the membership is important. Who wants to lead a bunch of deadbeats? Once approved, candidates must seek support from among the party members and sell new memberships to people they know will support them. That is the easy part. The real work is to get supporters to the convention to do the actual voting. At best, half will show up to vote. As Winston Churchill so sagely stated, "If democracy survives it will do so by the actions of the concerned few and not the indifferent many".

The leadership process is grassroots democracy in action, and I urge everyone to participate. Make your vote count by supporting the candidate you choose and enjoy yourself while you are doing it. Only through this age-old process can democracy survive.

The leadership convention

The leadership convention, like the policy convention, is usually a one-day or weekend event. The excitement and camaraderie of these events make them something that party members look forward to. Yes, there is rivalry but since all voters are members of the same party, it is somewhat muted. All recognize that to win the next election they must support the new leader whether or not they voted for him or her.

No one really knows the strength of a candidate until they see how many of his or her supporters register before the day of the leadership vote. Sometimes it looks like an easy win for a candidate until busloads of new supporters arrive. This is what happened in New Brunswick when Bernard Lord became PC Party leader in 1997. He was a new member himself and signed up hundreds of other new members, mostly from the Université de Moncton. This approach gave him the leverage to out-manuever the other leadership contenders and win the race. This proves that it takes a relatively small number of people to change the course of political history.

Most members, as mentioned, don't attend the convention or, almost as bad, leave the convention after the first round of voting. This can sometimes allow a substandard candidate to win on a second or third ballot. Therefore, it is essential to stay at the convention until a leader has been announced. Unless there is a preferential ballot, which only requires one vote, stay with your candidate. A friend of mine who was running for public office lost by four votes on a second ballot because he let some of his supporters slip away. They went home because they were sure that he would win without them. They were wrong.

I hope by now that you are convinced of two things: 1) that you should get actively involved with a political party, and 2) that it only takes a relatively small number of people to make a significant difference.

Following is a 3-step plan that will ensure the survival of democracy, address current environmental issues and give you a great sense of accomplishment.

1. Buy a membership in the party of your choice. They usually cost about \$10 and are available online or from party headquarters.
2. Attend the AGMs of your local riding association for both the provincial and federal branch of the party. Since nominations are open from the floor, you and your friends can easily elect the executive officers of your choice. Repeat this in every constituency and you control the entire party.
3. Attend both the policy convention and the leadership convention. These are held every few years and can provide a great opportunity for you and your group to make a difference. A leadership convention is the most important political activity in which we can participate.

Political parties consist of an incorporated group of like-minded people working together for better government. They were established to provide a framework for the democratic process. All they need to accomplish this is our involvement. It is through this political process that our ancestors passed the tradition of parliamentary democracy on to our generation. Should we not pass it on to the generations that will succeed us? I contend that we can do none other. Please join 'The Great Canadian Revolution'.

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