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- ◊ SUBSCRIPTIONS
- ◊ ADVERTISING
- ◊ ABOUT HT

Search  search Advanced Options

**PUBLIC SECTION**

- Cover Stories
- Policy Briefings
- Letters
- Classifieds
- Vacation
- Links
- Home Page

**MEMBERS SECTION**

- Logout
- Members Services
- Weekly PDFs
- Archives
- Surveys
- Lists
- FAQ

**NEWS**

- News Stories
- Heard on the Hill
- Legislative Column
- Hill Climbers
- Civil Circles

**OPINIONS**

- Editorial
- Op-eds
- Letters

**COLUMNISTS**

- Andrew Cardozo
- Richard Cl  roux
- Jenefer Curtis
- Aaron Freeman
- Philippe Gagnon
- Chantal H  bert
- David Jones
- Joe Jordan
- Warren Kinsella
- Tom Korski
- Brad Lavigne
- Don Lenihan
- Denis Massicotte
- Arthur Milnes
- Angelo Persichilli
- Tim Powers
- Ken Rubin
- Mike Storaesha
- Leslie Swartman
- James Travers

**FEATURES**

- Policy Briefings
- Spin Doctors
- Parliamentary
- Calendar

The Hill Times, March 10th, 2008

# Baird does Alice in Wonderland, Kavanagh runs, Harris promoted, CPAC on top of it...

By Bea Vongdouangchanh

Environment Minister **John Baird** helped kick off the Fund for a New Generation's annual Ottawa Gala last Tuesday by serving breakfast at Telus House. The Ottawa West-Nepean, Ont., MP was last year's James Bond-themed gala's honorary chair and will hold the title again this year. "I truly enjoy being a part of the Ottawa Gala, which has definitely become one of the city's most popular events," Mr. Baird said in a press release. "Every year these volunteers impress me with what they are able to accomplish for children at risk in our community."

The event, which acts as a fundraiser for the Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation's School Breakfast Program for children, takes place at the Government Conference Centre on April 12 with an *Alice in Wonderland* theme. Tickets are \$55 or two for \$100, or, for those who want the "royal treatment" at the black tie optional shindig, you can dish out \$120 for dedicated VIP service including catered hors d'oeuvres, special entertainment and an open bar until 11 p.m. Guests also have the chance to win a \$7,500 diamond ring from Howard Fine Jewellers and two Air Canada tickets to anywhere in North America. Ooh la la.

## This just in ... Kavanagh to start running on Hill program again

NDP staffer and ironwoman **Theresa Kavanagh** will start her annual Running on the Hill program every Monday for nine weeks beginning March 24. The program will end during the National Capital Race weekend on May 26 and is designed to allow beginner runners to compete in the five-kilometre race. Ms. Kavanagh, who is a personal trainer and has completed more than 55 races including two Ironman distance triathlons, told **HOH** there will another group for "more seasoned runners" and is open to all Parliamentarians in addition to Hill staff. Ms. Kavanagh said there will be a \$20 voluntary donation to the United Way as a program fee.

## CPAC to get biweekly Nanos Research polls, more of a pulse

CPAC will now be tracking Canadians' vote intentions every two weeks, thanks to polling firm Nanos Research. The two paired up during the last two general elections, but will now offer viewers "free, up-to-date poll results, web-exclusive polling videocasts [and] podcasts," both online and on air.

1 "Together CPAC and Nanos Research made history during the 2004 and 2006 campaigns with the introduction of the first publicly available nightly election tracking poll," CPAC executive producer **Peter Van Dusen** said in a press release. "We hope to extend that success to everyday politics by making regular polling results and analysis a staple of our coverage."

The latest poll on CPAC's website measures Canadians' comfort level with a **Stephen Harper**-led Conservative majority government or a **St  phane Dion**-led Liberal one. The survey says ... 45.8 per cent are comfortable or somewhat comfortable with a Harper majority while 39.3 per cent are comfortable with a Dion majority. When it comes to minority governments, however, 57.9 per cent are comfortable or somewhat comfortable with a Harper-led minority while 42.8 per cent feel the same with a Dion-led minority.

NEW COMMUNICATIONS



Andrew Cardozo

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### Harris named Sun Media's Parliament Hill bureau chief

Sun Media reporter **Kathleen Harris** was named the Hill bureau chief recently. Ms. Harris has been on the Hill since 2003 covering public safety, justice, and defence. After graduating from the University of Western Ontario with a masters in journalism, she worked at *The Woodstock Sentinel-Review* and later joined the *Ottawa Sun* in 1997. Ms. Harris will lead a team of two reporters, including **Christina Spencer** and **Peter Zimonjic**, and national affairs columnist **Greg Weston**. The position had been vacant since former bureau chief **Bill Rodgers** left to become Industry Minister **Jim Prentice's** communications director in 2006.

### Senate adopts motion to mark February as Black History Month

Five days after February ended, the Senate adopted Nova Scotia Conservative Senator **Don Oliver's** motion to officially recognize the month as Black History Month. Sen. Oliver introduced the motion on Feb. 13, stating that Canadians were under the assumption that Parliament had already recognized February as Black History Month, "but this assumption was false."

He said that while the House of Commons made the recognition on Dec. 14, 1995 on a motion by then-Liberal MP **Jean Augustine**, the first black female MP in Canadian history, the Senate had not done so. In his speech in the Upper Chamber, Sen. Oliver pointed out accomplished black Canadians, such as the first black medical doctor **Anderson Ruffin**, jazz musician **Oscar Peterson** and **Lincoln MacCauley Alexander**, who was the first black person to be elected to the House in 1968.

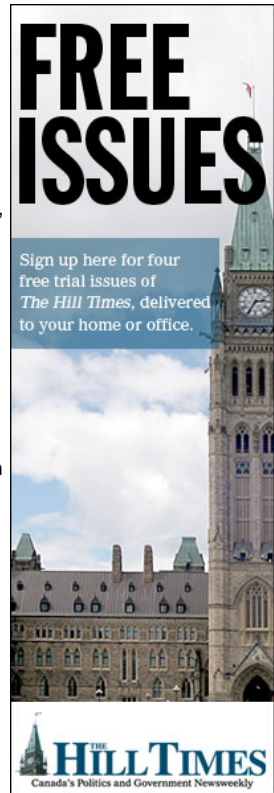
Last Tuesday, fellow Conservative Senator **David Tkachuk** pointed out an accomplished black Canadian in his own speech to support Sen. Oliver's motion. "It is only fitting that this motion was tabled by Sen. Oliver. He is the only Afro-Canadian in our caucus and is the first black man summoned to the Senate of Canada," he said, adding that Sen. Oliver's paternal grandfather was born into a family of former slaves in Virginia in 1874. Sen. Oliver's maternal grandfather was the first black man to graduate from Acadia University in 1903 and was also the only black man to serve as an officer in the British army. Sen. Oliver's aunt, **Portia White**, declared "a person of national historical significance" by the Canadian government, was a well-known contralto.

Sen. Oliver's uncle, **William White**, was the first black Canadian to run in a federal election. "He was a composer and a social justice advocate. He was appointed an officer of the Order of Canada in 1970. Unfortunately, he ran for the NDP, which was the CCF at that time," Sen. Tkachuk said, adding that Sen. Oliver's mother was also an accomplished musician. "I hope I have not embarrassed Sen. Oliver, but I thought everyone needed a little history lesson. There are many such stories out there that perhaps our children will learn."

Sen. Oliver said in the Red Chamber that it was important to recognize black history to help end racism and discrimination by educating people. "Every year, I identify the reasons for celebrating Black History Month because I believe that by recognizing the black community you too can help to eliminate racism. Black History Month is our opportunity to confidently state that racism has no place in Canada," Sen. Oliver said. The Senate unanimously supported the motion.

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