

Corner Brook Status of Women Council

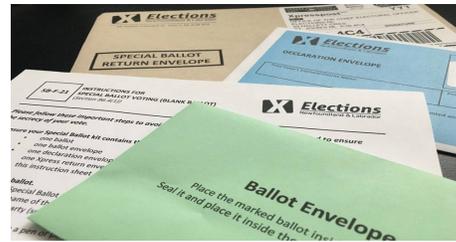
NEWSLETTER - April 2021

NL Votes, 2021

So on Saturday, March 27th, Elections NL finally announced the results of the provincial election. It found a victory for the Liberal Party, led by Premier Andrew Furey. Not a surprising result but it certainly was an election with many twists and learning points.

The election was first called in January with an election date of Feb 13th. With a pandemic in full force and an outbreak in the Eastern Health region that led to the shutdown of the province, changes to the original plan had to take shape fast. In the early stages of the outbreak, it was suggested that residents in the eastern health region could do a drive-by vote at Confederation Building. This, of course, disadvantaged anyone without a personal vehicle and was quickly denounced by the Chief Medical Officer.

The volleying of responsibility for managing the next steps for the election continued between NL Chief Electoral Officer, the Premier and the Office for the Chief Medical Officer. Finally, all in-person voting was cancelled for the entire province. Mail-in ballots were going to be made available. However instead of simply mailing out ballots to all eligible voters, people had to contact the NL Elections office which was short staffed (due to staff being in isolation or refusing unsafe working conditions) leading to long wait times, busy lines, website crashes and overall difficulty in accessing the office.



The ballots were then to be mailed out. Weather and delays with Canada Post meant that these ballots took much longer than usual to arrive and in some cases did not arrive in time. Even once the ballots were sent out, the rules continued to change. At first ballots had to be postmarked by March 1st, then the 5th and then the 12th. This was then once again changed to state that ballots had to be returned to the office by March 25th. Then it comes to light that some people were permitted to vote by phone, which has since been deemed unauthorized.

Add to that the difficulties with extended power and internet outages in parts of Labrador, ferry cancellations due to weather, lack of translation of election materials and we have one of the strangest elections in the history of the province and country. While the newly elected government may feel secure with its majority, it has happened at the conclusion of an election with the lowest voter count (just 48%), higher than average spoiled ballots, and claims of voter suppression.

In regards to representation, despite 41 female and one non-binary candidate running (the highest percentage yet), we remain with just 9 women in elected positions. The barriers regarding compensation, child care and elder care remain the barriers for women considering politics.

Electoral reform is needed and cannot wait another four years.

Upcoming:

Our Feminist Book Club is expanding every month. This month's book is *The Woman in the Attic* by Newfoundland author Emily Hepditch. The virtual/in-person meeting will be 7pm, Tuesday, April 13th. Call us for more details, there is still time to join.

Thursday, April 1st - April Fool's Day - Just a reminder to be a little extra cautious about what you see, hear and read today, if you'd like to avoid becoming an April Fool.

Friday, April 2nd - Good Friday - Our office will be closed on this day and will reopen at 8:30am Monday, April 5th.

Friday, April 2nd - World Autism Awareness Day - Joined by the international community, hundreds of thousands of landmarks, buildings, homes and communities around the world come together to Light It Up Blue in recognition of people with autism and those who love and support them.

Sunday, April 4th - Easter - Quick survey; is Easter the chocolateiest time of the year in your house or is it Valentines, Christmas, Halloween or any day that ends in "y"?

Wednesday, April 7th - Green Shirt Day - On April 7, 2018, Humboldt Broncos defenceman Logan Boulet succumbed to his injuries. His parents, Bernadine and Toby Boulet offered to donate his organs so that six lives could live on. They did so because Logan told his parents he was registering as an organ donor. Green Shirt Day was created to honour, remember, and recognize all the victims and families of that fatal Humboldt crash and to continue Logan's legacy by inspiring Canadians to talk to their families and register as organ donors.

Wednesday, April 7th - World Health Day - Building a fairer, healthier world. Our world is an unequal one. As COVID-19 has highlighted, some people are able to live healthier lives and have better access to health services than others - entirely due to the conditions in which they are born, grow, live, work and age. This is not only unfair: it is preventable. That's why we are calling on leaders to ensure that everyone has living and working conditions that are conducive to good health. At the same time we urge leaders to monitor health inequities, and to ensure that all people are able to access quality health services when and where they need them.

April 18th-24th - Canadian Infertility Awareness Week - The purpose of this day is to empower you and change the conversation around infertility. All too often myths and misinformation appear in media stories or influence lawmakers and companies to enforce policies that create barriers for people who need help building their family. And still people feel isolated when they struggle to build a family, so we want to empower them to share their story and find a community that cares.

Wednesday, April 28th - National Day of Mourning - dedicated to remembering those who have lost their lives, or suffered injury or illness on the job or due to a work-related tragedy.

The Final Word:

It didn't take a lot of backtracking to find a year with more warm winter days than this year. In fact in Corner Brook, 2018 there were 40 days in the months of January, February and March that surpassed 0c (this year we've only had 35 days). Still this is not the weather I grew up experiencing. I'm not complaining but I am concerned. See you next year, winter.