

Nancy Morrison to carry New Democrat colours in York – Simcoe

By Bill Rea

York — Simcoe New Democrats are getting themselves revved for the next provincial election, expected in October.

They spent Thursday night nominating their candidate, acclaiming Bradford resident Nancy Morrison. There were some heavy endorsements to back up the nomination, as both party Leader Howard Hampton and MPP Shelley Martel, NDP critic for health and long-term care, seniors and autism issues, were on hand.

The 48-year-old is the mother of twins, and one of the eight-year-olds was diagnosed with autism in 2002. It's the ordeal of seeing to his care that led to Morrison becoming politically active and involved with the party.

This is her first time in the political arena, and before the meeting Morrison admitted she was "nervous, excited, anxious" at the prospect.

"I am passionate about this area, this community and things that matter to it," she added.

Morrison is a civilian employee with the South Simcoe Police Service.

She was nominated by Innisfil resident Keith Lindsay, who praised her for her "passion," and for calling on Premier Dalton McGuinty to be accountable for promises made for autistic children.

"She's not just a one-issue candidate," he added.

The nomination was seconded by riding association vice-president Bob Ridley. "All of us are behind you, Nancy," he declared.

Morrison said she started getting involved with the party after meeting Martel while seeking help for her son.

"The NDP have been such strong advocates for children," she declared during her acceptance address.

But she stressed autism is not her only issue.

She backed the party position that the minimum wage needs to be increased to \$10 per hour. She pointed out the Liberal government at Queen's Park raised MPPs' salaries to \$110,000, and the premier now makes \$196,000. "They just don't understand the working class," she commented.

Morrison said the Liberals' record of broken promises and the Progressive Conservatives' tendency for inaction are going to be what the upcoming election is all about. "Let's paint this province

orange in October," she declared.

Martel told the audience she asked Morrison to consider running about a year ago, having been so impressed with her advocacy work.

"Nancy Morrison is going to make a great MPP," she declared. "She is a great candidate."

Martel recalled asking her to get a group of parents together to go to Queen's Park to lobby to stop having treatment for autistic children cut off when they turn six. Morrison got 100 of them together in June 2002.

"It didn't stop there," Martel said, mentioning that Morrison filed a complaint with the Ontario Human Rights commission in January 2003, on behalf of autistic children. There were 50 families involved with that effort, and Martel said both the Tories and Grits have fought their efforts.

Martel also praised Morrison for her "keen political instincts."

She said that in 2003, Morrison wrote to all three parties for their positions on autism, and she received a

reply from McGuinty, stating the lack of funding was unfair and discriminatory.

"It speaks volumes about Dalton McGuinty, and I don't mean that in a positive way," she said, adding the letter showed McGuinty would have said anything to get elected.

As well, Martel complimented Morrison's ability as a communicator, commenting that she has set up an e-mail network for parents of autistic kids. In five years, she said she has received weekly updates, and sometimes even more frequent than that. "She has kept parents very much aware of what has been going on," she remarked.

On top of that, Martel said Morrison is a "tremendously hard worker."

"Any riding would be happy and pleased and proud to have an MPP ready to work so hard," she declared.

Hampton came prepared with a pep talk for the party faithful.

"We are living in times which demand that all of us take a step back and think

about where we're going and where the world is going," he commented.

He said he's been reading about how the economy is performing so well, and that millions are being made in the stock market. But he also travels from community to community and sees families that have to work longer and harder to make ends meet.

"I see a great divide," he said, adding studies continue to point to a society where some are better off while many are struggling harder than ever. "I think there's something wrong with that."

Hampton also addressed environmental issues, and climatic changes in Northern Ontario, where he's from. He remembered sub-zero temperatures as early as Halloween, and usable outdoor skating rinks as late as April. Now, they're lucky if they have five weeks in the winter for outdoor skating. He also remembered a time of warm summers, when tornadoes and floods were unheard of, or being able to drive around his riding in the summer without air conditioning.

There are some

fundamental issues to be dealt with, he warned.

"We owe it to people to speak openly and frankly to people about what we want to do to face these challenges," Hampton declared, adding people can't continue down the same road.

He remarked that election campaigns are not always fought on the real issues, as they are often decided on who has the catchiest slogans or best ads. But he believes people want the parties to address issues openly and honestly. "New Democrats try to do that," he said.

Hampton added they have not just discovered environmental issues. "We've raised them constantly," he said.

He also warned that the environment can't be sustained by putting people out of work, and people today can't take care of

themselves by telling their children to pick up the bills and clean up the mess.

Dealing with energy supplies needs attention too, Hampton said.

He charged that McGuinty has issued calls to "go nuclear," but the last nuclear plant at Darlington was supposed to cost about \$4 billion, but it came in at \$14.7 billion. That means consumers have to pay for debt reduction to cover that overrun. As well, nuclear waste has to be stored for thousands of years, and that's going to be costly too. Hampton said McGuinty seems content to let today's kids worry about that.

"It's not acceptable," he declared.

Hampton said he's not expected the party to win the coming election, but he wants to elect enough MPPs to give the party substantial say on what the agenda will be.



Nancy Morrison, the newly nominated NDP candidate for York — Simcoe in the next provincial election, was flanked at Thursday's nomination meeting in Bradford by party leader Howard Hampton and Shelley Martel, NDP critic for health and long-term care, seniors and autism issues.

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