

Mrs. Harper fires up local Conservatives while NDP hold "day of action"



By Brock Weir

It had been less than a week since her husband met with the Governor General triggering the latest Federal election, but Lauren Harper wasted no time hitting the Aurora area to fire up local Conservatives.

Mrs. Harper visited the Oak Ridges campaign office of Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill Conservative candidate Costas Menegakis last Wednesday afternoon on a whistle-stop tour of southern Ontario while Stephen Harper, along with the other Federal leaders, prepared for the following evening's debate, hosted by Macleans.

'I know a lot of you could be on vacation and things, but when you're a political junkie, you just can't wait to get started,' said Ms. Harper. 'Some people are smiling at that, I know, lots of people are groaning, but lots of people who love politics are happy. We have campaigned over Christmas, at Easter, in the fall, and I think the only time we have not campaigned is over the summer, so now we have done the four seasons!'

With Mr. Menegakis describing the layout of the newly-minted riding of Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill, which comprises all of Aurora from the south side of Wellington Street East down to as far as Major Mackenzie Drive in Richmond Hill, Ms. Harper stressed the importance of getting to know your local candidates.

'My husband is one Member of Parliament,' she explained, as she met residents from Aurora and Richmond Hill, along with a large contingent of Russian veterans now calling Canada home, including a 97-year-old man who served in the Siege of Leningrad. 'We don't get to vote for Prime Ministers in this country. We vote for our local representatives and he couldn't do it if we didn't have lots of Members of Parliament like Costas behind us and then Costas wouldn't be where he is unless he had hundreds of people behind him door-knocking, being the greeters, and every campaign has to have their greeters and sign guys.'

'There is nothing more fun and rewarding for Canadians than to get out to their local campaigns. It doesn't matter what colour ? of all the different colours, I am partial to blue ? but I think for Canadians, it is a lot of fun to join your local campaign, meet people who you would normally never meet, and get out of your little neighbourhood and into a bigger part of your community.'

Aurorans living on the north side of Wellington Street will vote in the reconfigured riding of Newmarket-Aurora and the northern riding's NDP candidate, Yvonne Kelly certainly aimed at being a bigger part of their community.

Ms. Kelly and local NDP supporters spent Saturday hosting a Day of Action, part of a Canada-wide initiative to highlight party leader Tom Mulcair's economic platforms.

'After 10 years of Stephen Harper, middle class families can't afford another four years of working harder and not getting further

ahead," said Ms. Kelly. "That is why Canadians are looking for change and the NDP is ready to bring positive change in Ottawa. Stephen Harper's plan isn't working and he's out of touch with what's important to York Region and all Canadians. The NDP's plan is built on the enduring values of respect, accountability and an unwavering commitment to focus the government's priorities on helping the middle class get ahead."



Laureen Harper meets Aurora resident Art Hagopian