

FEATURE BUZZ



HEARD ON THE HILL

BY DEREK ABMA

MP Raitt marries longtime partner



Conservative MP Lisa Raitt was set to get married to longtime partner Bruce Wood on Sept. 2. Photograph courtesy of Lisa Raitt

Conservative MP **Lisa Raitt** tied the knot on the weekend with **Bruce Wood**, whom she's been in a relationship with for the last seven years.

Ms. Raitt and Mr. Wood were to marry on Sept. 2 in Cape Breton, N.S., with guests making the trip in from places as far away as Ottawa, Montreal, Edmonton, and even Jacksonville, Fla., to witness the nuptials.

Mr. Wood is president and CEO of the Hamilton Port Authority. Ms. Raitt is the MP for Milton, Ont., though she was born in Sydney, N.S. She's also the former CEO of the Toronto Port Authority.

Among those wishing the couple well on social media last week was **Don Martin**, host of CTV's *Power Play*, who tweeted, "Well, it's about time. MP @lraitt is tying the knot with super guy Bruce Wood this weekend in lovely Cape Breton. Congrats!"

Novel by Liberal staffer due out next month



Liberal staffer John Delacourt has written his second novel. *The Hill Times* photograph by Jake Wright

Being a communications director for the Liberal Research Bureau, one might sometimes feel constrained by the requirement to, how should we say, deal within reality.

That's no problem for **John Delacourt**, who's found an outlet for alternate truths by writing novels. His second of such proj-

ects, a book called *Black Irises*, is due out on Oct. 1. It's a murder mystery with some political intrigue thrown in: a favoured candidate in a federal byelection in small-town Ontario draws suspicions after the death of a young woman, in a case that bears similarities to a murder that happened decades before.

This follows Mr. Delacourt's 2014 book called *Ocular Proof*, which is a tale about dark secrets involving forgery and Nazi threats

in relation to the world of high-priced art.

Before joining the Liberal Research Bureau this year, Mr. Delacourt worked on the Liberal election campaign last year and **Justin Trudeau's** Liberal leadership campaign in 2013.

He was in business for himself as a communications consultant in Toronto for the previous few years. And Mr. Delacourt did a previous stint on the Hill when he was former Liberal leader **Michael Ignatieff's** director of multicultural outreach between 2010 and 2011.

He is also the brother of *Toronto Star* and *iPolitics* columnist **Susan Delacourt**.

A launch party for the book, to be published by Blue Denim Press, is planned for the Métropolitain Brasserie on Oct. 18. Mr. Delacourt pointed out that if the party goes past midnight, which we suspect it might, it could turn into a one-year anniversary celebration of the Liberals' election victory on Oct. 19 last year.

Ontario government to ban elected officials from fundraisers

There was some surprise last week when the Ontario Liberal government, which has been criticized for high priced "cash-for access" fundraisers involving the premier and others, announced it would outright ban all legislators from attending fundraising events.

The move caught opposition parties by surprise. Some commentators said it went too far, emphasizing there's a dif-

ference between local riding events that cost \$100-a-head or so to attend versus the events in which some have reportedly paid as much as \$10,000 to schmooze Ontario Premier **Kathleen Wynne** and other cabinet ministers.

There would appear to be no plans afoot for Ms. Wynne's Liberal federal cousins to do anything similar.

When asked about this, **Jean-Bruno Villeneuve**, spokesman for Democratic Institutions Minister **Maryam Monsef**, said in an email: "There are existing stringent rules that govern limits on contributions at the federal level."

As for future changes, he referred to the mandate later from Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** to Ms. Monsef that directed her to "review the limits on the amounts political parties and third parties can spend during elections, and propose measures to ensure that spending between elections is subject to reasonable limits as well."

Former Harper lawyer describes Twitter bot attack



Benjamin Perrin was legal counsel for former prime minister Stephen Harper. *The Hill Times* photograph by Jake Wright

Benjamin Perrin, who served as a legal counsel for former prime minister **Stephen Harper**, received a lot of negative feedback on Twitter related to a post he made about his former boss quitting. Turns out, the sentiment was exaggerated through the use of Twitter bots.

Mr. Perrin explained in an article he wrote for *The Globe and Mail* last week how, after Mr. Harper resigned as an MP on Aug. 26, he tweeted, "#GoodRiddance-Harper is trending in Canada #cdnpoli."

Ottawa Citizen reporter **Jason Fekete** retweeted this, adding a comment about Mr. Perrin's former job, to which Mr. Perrin replied with a link to a CBC article during last year's election campaign, in which he was quoted as saying the Harper government had "lost the moral authority to govern."

That's when things got nasty. Someone tweeted something negative about Mr. Perrin, and within an hour it was retweeted or liked more than 100 times, and that number ballooned to 1,000 by that evening.

Mr. Perrin said he clicked on the profile of one of his many attackers and found it was a basketball team in Georgia, for whom a "sudden interest in Canadian politics seemed odd."

After finding most of the attacking Twitter accounts were based in the U.S., many using identical words in their admonish-

ments of him, he remembered hearing about how China uses automated Twitter accounts to spread government propaganda, and noted how the *The Wall Street Journal* reported about this kind of Twitter use by **Donald Trump** supporters, among other examples.

"There were not thousands of people suddenly hating me," Mr. Perrin wrote. "It was someone in their mother's basement (or work office) using a ham-fisted social media scam to make me think the world was suddenly against me. I've never laughed so hard."

Mr. Perrin only joined Twitter a few months ago. Despite his amusement at what happened, he noted how such activity could be really, really bad if it involved a cyber-bullying campaign against a young person.

Anyway, for those interested in entertaining and sometimes-informative Twitter posts from someone who doesn't seem to like their old boss that much, his handle is @ProfBenPerrin.

Great census, people. Can't wait for results

Canadians were being congratulated last week for their high participation rate in this year's census.

Wayne Smith, Canada's chief statistician, issued an online note saying that there was a 98.4 per cent overall participation rate in this year's census, including 97.8 per cent on the long-form census questions, completion for which became mandatory again almost as soon as the Liberals assumed office last November. The prior Conservative government had instead opted for a voluntary national household survey.

This year made for the "best census since 1666," Mr. Smith said in the posting.

Isn't that great; the best census since ... wait, what year? Surely, that was a typo. I mean, there was no internet, Excel, or even calculators back then. Certainly, they had neither the means nor the desire to create a census.

Well, turns out they did. Statistics Canada spokesman **William Garland** told *The Hill Times* that 1666 was when the first census of what is now Canada and was then New France—with a population of 3,215 people—was taken.

So, considering the population is more than 10,000 times as large now, we're not doing too badly. The 2016 census results are to start being released on Feb. 8, 2017.

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CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS, THE HILL TIMES

Re: "Former Citizen bureau chief Kennedy scooped by PMO" (*The Hill Times*, Aug. 29, p. 23). The story incorrectly said Dwight Duncan was defeated in the 2013 Ontario election. He, in fact, resigned.

The Hill Times has incorrectly referred to Tuesday, Aug. 16, several times as the date longtime Liberal MP Mauril Bélanger passed away. It was in fact Monday, Aug. 15.

Re: "New medical marijuana regs show need for broader legalization policy, say producers" (*The Hill Times*, Aug. 22, p. 1). The story incorrectly stated Tilray's Philippe Lucas predicted the global industry could reach up to \$11-billion. In fact he said \$100-billion.

Re: "Portrait-gallery plan popular as government consults on fate of old U.S. embassy" (*The Hill Times*, Aug. 22, p. 1). The story incorrectly attributed a group handing out pamphlets as being based in Kingston, Ont., when in fact it was based in Ottawa but with some members from Kingston.

Announcing Sustainable Development Technology Canada's ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING 2016

On October 6th, SDTC will hold a public meeting to review our activities and performance in 2015 funding and supporting Canadian clean technology.

Please join us for the live webcast:
Thursday, October 6th at 4PM EST

www.sdtec.ca/en/annual-public-meeting



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TDDC annonce la tenue de sa RÉUNION PUBLIQUE ANNUELLE DE 2016

Le 6 octobre, TDDC tiendra une réunion publique pour faire état de ses activités de financement et de soutien des technologies propres canadiennes et de son rendement en 2015.

Joignez-vous à nous pour cette réunion qui sera diffusée en direct sur le Web **Le jeudi 6 octobre à 16 h HNE**

www.sdtec.ca/fr/assemblee-publique