

FEATURE

HEARD ON THE HILL

BY KADY O'MALLEY



Grit lobbyists doing quite well in Conservative town

Who says you need to be a Tory to try your luck as a lobbyist in this town? Not **Richard Phillips**, who was a senior political adviser to former Treasury Board President **Reg Alcock**.

Now he's president of his very own government relations firm, **On The Hill Consulting**, which earlier this month made its debut appearance in the Lobbyists Registry by filing on behalf of the **Canola Council of Canada**. He'll be helping to persuade the government to set up a new biodiesel grant program, as well as providing support on other issues, including national and international trade barriers, not to mention the health benefits of canola oil in the brave new trans-fat free world of the future. The file is a natural fit for Mr. Phillips, who worked with Mr. Alcock during his tenure as the Canadian Wheat Board point man, and who also served on the board of the Canola Council itself, along with the Western Grains Research Foundation, and United Grain Growers.

Last week's announcement by the Conservatives on a renewable fuels strategy suggests that he is also either the fastest-working lobbyist in Ottawa, or maybe just has impeccable timing. Either way, when it comes to savvy lobbying, the Harper government's newfound fondness for the bio-fuel sector suggests that Liberal red is perfectly acceptable—as long as it is balanced by the right kind of green.

The number of former Liberal staffers at **Impact Public Affairs** has also been steadily increasing over the last year. On the corporate masthead these days: **Cynara Corbin**, who first arrived on the Hill in 1999 as a Senate page, and went on to work for former Liberal MPs **Don Boudria** and **Gary Pillitteri** and former CBC journalist turned Liberal research staffer **Kelly Crowe**.

Another member of Team Impact is **Scott Thurlow**, who served as former Natural Resources minister **John Efford's** director of Parliamentary affairs until last December. Impact is headed up by staunch Tory **Huw Williams**, who is himself a former senior staffer to various Mulroney-era Cabinet ministers. After spending more than a decade as a Tory in a Liberal town, apparently he doesn't hold with the theory that the lobby business depends on having an in with the party in power.

That doesn't mean that there's any shortage of card-carrying Conservatives in the roster of the recently registered, of course. The **Association of Canadian Distillers**, or, **Spirits Canada**, is sending their Queen's Park lobbyist **Vic Gupta** to Ottawa to monitor the excise duties that were announced in the budget. Mr. Gupta, a principal at Toronto-based **Prime Strategies Group**, was recently elected treasurer of the **Ontario PC Party**, and was involved in party leader **John Tory's** unsuccessful mayoral campaign. According to media reports, he's now advising yet another Toronto mayoral candidate, **Jane Pitfield**, who is planning to challenge Toronto Mayor **David Miller** in the upcoming civic elections, which aroused some controversy in Toronto political circles earlier this month after Mr. Gupta registered to lobby Ottawa on behalf of the **Toronto Port Authority**, which is partially funded by the city. In an interview with *The Globe and Mail*, Mr. Gupta stated that he won't be advising Ms. Pitfield on any matters related to the Toronto Airport, which is looking for infrastructure money from the federal government.

In an email to HOH, Mr. Gupta noted that he will be helping both organizations "educate" the new Conservative government on their respective issues of concern. He's also actively involved in the pre-election prep for Mr. Tory, who Mr. Harper recently referred to as the next premier of Ontario, leaving HOH to wonder what current premier **Dalton McGuinty** thinks about all this.

Over at **Hill and Knowlton**, Conservative war room alumni **Ken Boessenkool**, who also served as Prime Minister **Stephen Harper's** senior policy adviser while he was in opposition, has registered on behalf of the **Canadian Olympic Committee**, which has been with the firm for several years.

Another H&K associate, unsuccessful Conservative candidate **John Capobianco**, is also back on the job. He has recently filed on behalf of several H&K clients, including **Grant Forest Products**, the **Canadian Cardiovascular Society** and

York Region Rapid Transit.

Meanwhile, sitting Conservative MP **Gary Goodyear** has the dubious honour of being mentioned by name in a recent filing, thanks to his successful committee motion last October, which called on the then-Liberal government to pay back the GST collected from Ontario and Quebec school boards after a court ruling found in their favour. Consultataxe president **Francis Boisvert** has registered on behalf of 36 school boards in both Ontario and Quebec, to persuade the new government to do just that.

Meanwhile, several major textile industry players, including **Cannon Knitting**, **Multy Industries**, **Strudex Fibres**, **Dorothea Knitting**, and **Bella Hosiery** have hired management consultant **Elliot Schiller**, of **Teeger Schiller**, to lobby for CANTex grants, and provide advice on developing the program further. The industry's struggle has been a major topic in the House.

Finally, if being rejected by a Parliamentary committee wasn't bad enough, the lobby registration filings for **EnCana** vice-chair **Gwyn Morgan** have been caught up in a nightmare of registry red tape for months.

It all started last fall, when Mr. Morgan, then chair and CEO of the company, filed as the company's primary registrant, but due to the change in the requirements, failed to include past public office-holder experience, which delayed registration by several months. Less than a month after the filing finally went through, he was replaced as chair by **Randall Eresman**, which prompted yet another filing on March 23. A snafu at the registry, however, resulted in Mr. Morgan being removed from the registry altogether, a mistake, since he still holds the vice-chair position.

He was re-listed on the main corporate filing on May 11, just two days before his now infamous appearance before the Government Operations Committee. Mr. Morgan now has the registry's stamp of approval to lobby the government on a wide variety of energy-related issues, including the regulation of greenhouse gas emissions by LFEs. But given his last experience on the Hill, HOH wouldn't be surprised if he decides to stay out of the capital for a while.

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David Teeger

Director

David Teeger C.A., C.A. (S.A.) graduated as a Chartered Accountant in South Africa, and upon arrival in Canada he obtained his Canadian C.A. designation and joined Richter & Associates, a management consulting firm, where he concentrated his practice on various business sectors including household goods, fashion, automotive parts, public associations, and retail chains. He performed many roles in his 15 years at Richter, including managing the professional services organization in North America and all business operations throughout Europe.

David's professional capabilities include computer audits, feasibility studies, system analyses and assistance in the selection, negotiation and implementation of computerized solutions.

As a founding partner of Teeger Schiller Inc., he has focused his practice on consulting to management. His team of professionals has helped businesses select and successfully install a variety of ERP business solutions and add-on systems including business intelligence solutions to give new life to existing computer systems. David's clients not only rely on him to successfully manage the implementation of their new systems, but to manage the change that occurs in their organizations as a result of the use of these new tools.



Elliot Schiller

Director

Elliot Schiller, Ph.D., C.M.C. began his career as a Chemical Engineer working for Grumman Aircraft, in Long Island, New York. He obtained his Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh with funding from the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, and, after being awarded a Presidential Fellowship, he went on to perform research and development activities at Brookhaven National Laboratory.

Since coming to Canada, he has primarily assisted consumer products and retail organizations in a variety of strategic management initiatives, traveling around the globe on behalf of his clients. In 1987, Elliot joined Richter & Associates, and it is here that he first met David Teeger.

As a founding partner of Teeger Schiller Inc., he has focused the SR&ED / Grant Division on obtaining grants and tax incentives for over 100 companies in the small to medium sized business sector. His team has provided services to the discrete / processing manufacturing, material development, textiles, apparel, automotive and computer sciences sectors. Annually, Teeger Schiller Inc. secures more than \$5 million in government funding to assist its clients in having their business initiatives supported by government funding.



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