

I attended a meeting in Halifax Chaired by Anne McLellan. I am President of the Nova Scotia Women's Liberal Commission. Although I am writing as President I have not consulted with my executive on this issue as our next meeting will be scheduled in September....Therefore these opinions will be mine alone.

From a personal perspective I can tell you that I would love to run some day but find the idea daunting in that I live in a rural riding where the attitude even among women is " a woman can't win the South Shore" ....I doubt that is a fact, however, finding the right woman to run would be the task at hand.

Women are task masters and like to get things done. Many view the political process as long and often futile in accomplishing goals for their area. Personally I would shy away from debating opposition candidates. I do not like confrontational situations and I believe I am not alone in this.

The hurdle for women is winning the seat. Once that has been successful the work can be done.

Child care/family is a major factor. Dedication to the constituents, the Party often conflict with dedication to family. So much time is taken from family women wonder if it is worth it in the end. Public scrutiny of private lives is very difficult for children in any situation, but to have their mother "torn to shreds" publicly is a notion that most mothers would avoid.

Designating women candidates in some ridings lends itself to the view that women are weak and can't win on their own.

How do we overcome these barriers?

1. The debating factor – PTA/Territorial Campaign Colleges that include debating techniques would be helpful. I don't think the colleges need to be just for women but for everyone. That would attract me.
2. Child care/ family - I do not have an answer for that as much depends on the support you have at home from the beginning.
3. Policy - Issues that attract women to politics because they want to make a difference would be critical. I don't think I am putting forward anything that is new or startling really, but at the end of the day if women believed that the community in which they live support them they will run. That is the initial barrier that I think must be overcome.

Sharon Davis, President NSWLC