

BROCK'S BANTER: A Nice, Healthy Glow

By Brock Weir

Whether or not you are personally happy over Newmarket-Aurora turning Red after last month's Provincial Election, you have to admit the results have given Aurora a nice, healthy, rosy glow as far as civic involvement is concerned.

Although the final list will be formally approved by Town Clerk Stephen Huycke later this week, a whopping 18 Aurora residents have answered the call of duty (let's go with ?duty? for the moment) to take over the Council seat left vacant by MPP Chris Ballard on July 29.

With 16 of the 18 candidates slated to come forward to make their respective pitches to Council next Tuesday, the meeting in question promises to be a doozy, currently slated to start at 3 p.m. to give each candidate a chance to make their three-minute pitch on why Mayor Dawe and the remaining seven Councillors should choose them, after taking the opportunity give each candidate a once-over in the form of two questions.

Their choice at the moment is anyone's guess ? but judging by this week's results from our ongoing poll, a significant majority of readers are looking for someone with experience to fill the void. After experience comes vision, but there only a trickle for fresh blood for the sake of fresh blood.

Looking over the final list, I have to say some of my early prognostication was a bit off-base. Some of the individuals I was sure would put their name forward have stayed relatively silent on the matter. There are three former councillors in the running in the form of, in order of registration, Bob McRoberts, Grace Marsh, and Don Constable. Of those vying for a seat at the Council table in the October 27 election, just Svetla Topouzova, James Hoyes, and Harold Kim have put themselves out there going for the opportunity presented to them.

This leaves 12 relative newcomers to the race. Some might be more seasoned armchair politicians, or have contributed in other ways to the running of Town Hall and its civic affairs, but the majority of the rest have put themselves out there with a vision of how they can have an impact on the community.

During the last two weeks, I have had a chance to meet the majority of these candidates, or speak to them at the very least. In taking these opportunities with each candidate, what has struck me is the genuine vision each person has of what they can bring to the table.

Some of the candidates, for instance, have a vested interest in Aurora's Strategic Plan and making sure this is kept on course. Others have a particular affinity to Aurora's youth and making sure their voices are not only heard at the table, but also have an impact on Aurora's decision-making process.

Some have lived here for decades and view this as an opportunity to give back to the community that has given them quite a bit, while others have a drive to sit at that table to make sure the resources and programs enjoyed by their kids, and their friends, are safeguarded for the future. Others still would dearly like to be at the table to encourage Council to take a more holistic approach to decision-making, whether it is a greater emphasis on physical and mental health, wellbeing, or the environment around them.

What also unites a significant chunk of these candidates outside of holding an individual vision, is the reticence to put themselves out there as possible candidates for the October 27 election. Of course, these individuals might simply be smart, sensing which way the wind was blowing (and, in the event you haven't been following Council debates on the matter, the wind was blowing firmly against picking a candidate interested in a seat at the table for the next four years) and deciding to remain coy about their future intentions.

On the other hand, they might have genuine concerns about not being able to commit to a full four-year term and see this as a chance to make a difference in whatever way they can.

At the end of the day, there can be only one. For the 17 people who will be going back to their day jobs on Wednesday, July 30, don't be too shy ? or too practical ? and seriously evaluate whether this was the only opportunity for you to affect change.

If you have a vision on how you, as a potential Councillor, could make a difference in this Town, get yourselves out there. Consider putting yourselves on the ballot for October 27 and see if your fellow residents agree with the direction you would like to take.

If that just won't work for you, explore the possibility of applying for one of Aurora's Citizen Advisory Committees when the next Council is installed, or, at the very least, drag yourself out to a few meetings on a Tuesday night, come to the podium, and put your ideas out there to the people who can actually take action.

DONTOPEDALOGY

Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, once described the word above as 'the science of opening your mouth and putting your foot in it.' It is a science that I personally have been honing for years, leading to many a red face, an occasional cold sweat, and a mea culpa or two.

But thank the powers that be that 'dontology' exists in this world because, let's face it, last week it can sometimes add a bit of fun to what can otherwise be a miserable day or, truth be told, a miserable week, which last week was.

With continued significant unrest in the Middle East between Israel and Gaza, then coupled with the utter tragedy of Flight MH17 over Ukraine, with people all over the world wondering if, 100 years on, this will be this generation's 'Franz Ferdinand' moment, there wasn't much to smile about.

Indeed, I have to admit, I barely cracked a smile myself, but that changed on Sunday afternoon when I was attending the 100th anniversary of the Aurora Lawn Bowling Club.

Rain had delayed proceedings a bit, so I left to run a few errands, and on my return I was greeted by a very exuberant group of people revelling in the milestone of their own sports club. In fact, one woman approached me, introduced herself, and I introduced myself.

Evidently she recognized my name and replied, 'Oh, you look just like your picture in the paper!' quickly followed by, 'Isn't that awful?'

Now, I have a thick skin, but? In all honesty, I knew what she meant? after all, if you can recognize someone from a thumbnail size photo, it says something about the frequency in which you see it! But, she quickly righted the ship by asking me if I had any eligible uncles to fix her up with (for the record, I do not) but that inadvertently funny remark has kept a smile on my face for days. So, thank you.

Watch this space next week, however, for an updated head shot?just in case that is not what she meant!

AND A WELCOME

As a final note, I would like to welcome Jake Courtepatte to our team here at The Auroran. He joins us this week as our new sports reporter, taking over from Jeff Doner who is pursuing other opportunities. If you have any questions or story ideas for Jake, he can be reached at jakecourtepatte@gmail.com. And, of course, I extend my thanks to Jeff for the hard work he put in shining a light on Aurora's countless sport teams and accomplished athletes.