

## FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE: Summer...

Summer Musings 2013

By Stephen Somerville

Before this column returns (after a short hiatus due to a summer vacation) to the local themes of people, politics and public affairs, below are some unconnected, stream-of-conscious and (most likely) incoherent musings and observations regarding the spring and early summer season in Aurora.

First, I thought that energy policy would have been a very important part of the public discourse during the fall 2011 provincial election, and except for the issue of wind turbines in a couple of the rural ridings, it was not.

The last time energy was even spoken about was in 2003 when the provincial Liberals promised to close the coal-fired plants in the province by 2007 (this is now scheduled to happen by the end of 2013), but this issue was not front and centre at the time.

I do expect that energy policy, and specifically the issues of pricing, supply mix, siting of gas fired and wind generation, plus the continued roles of nuclear generation to be part of the electoral equation come the next provincial vote.

But I don't believe it will be the major issue.

I think the next provincial election will be this fall and the Liberals will want it to be about transit.

Everyone agrees that something needs to be done about our aging transit infrastructure in the GTA, but there is no such consensus when it comes to how to pay for the \$50 billion price tag.

I can see the Premier starting to send up a lot of trial balloons over the next few weeks on different sources of transit funding and using different messaging and then vigorously polling to see if a clearer path will emerge before she potentially pulls the plug on her government this fall.

Second, Ron Wallace, the former editor and publisher of this newspaper, has been announced as the Aurora Citizen of the Year. Certainly well deserved.

I was disappointed that I was not available to see Ron eventually receive his award. I am indebted to Ron for giving me the opportunity to begin penning this column over seven years ago.

Besides being a reporter, politician, and entrepreneur, part of Ron's legacy will be that he has brought this community closer together and improved our democracy with this newspaper.

Although the population of Aurora is not that large at around 55,000, and although the physical dimensions of the town are not that vast, everyone is very busy trying to raise families, and to pay the bills. Ron's newspaper has made us feel closer by covering a large amount of community events and giving people the opportunity to air their views on issues of the day.

I wish Ron and Patti all the best!

The third item concerns my son.

Ryan finished grade four on June 28th. I was going through a folder of the work that he has been doing in various subjects over the past few months. It was interesting reading his short stories and the types of lessons that his class is being taught.

But what really caught my eye was a blue folder. Inside the folder was a section entitled, 'Eating healthy with Canada's food groups.'

After reading the materials, my rhetorical question is this: since Ryan seems to know all about the food groups, why does he consistently persist in stating that ice cream and Pringles chips are one of the basic food groups and should therefore be consumed on a daily basis?

An appropriate way to end this rambling soliloquy would be for me to make three of my patented, dead-on and fearless election predictions for the next few months. Here goes.

First, the provincial Tories will squeak through with a two seat minority in the closely and hotly contested ensuing election to be held this fall. The Liberals will finish second, five seats ahead of the NDP in the one hundred and seven seat Legislature.

\*Second, Tyler Bozak will resign with the Toronto Maple Leafs while Mikhail Grabowski will be traded in July. Phil Kessel will sign a long-term contract with the Leafs before Christmas, but Captain Dion Phaneuf will not.

And last, the Toronto Blue Jays will finish the year with 91 wins and be awarded one of the Wild Cards. They will then win the AL Crown and go to the World Series where they will lose to the 'my' Cincinnati Reds in six games.

Have a happy and safe summer everyone!

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\*Editor's note: Written before Stephen's vacation, he might now be on a hot streak with his predictions.