

## POLITICS AS USUAL: Games

The Games Have Not Yet Begun

By Alison Collins-Mrakas

This was a week of bombshell announcements in our community.

We learned on Tuesday that Frank Klees, MPP for Newmarket-Aurora, has decided that he is retiring and will not seek re-election. I have to say that was a complete shock to me. Perhaps insiders had an inkling, but to those of us on the outside, we saw our community representative at Queen's Park continue to fight on a daily basis for better government and for the betterment of our community in particular. No signs that he had grown weary of the battle. And now we are losing that champion. I, for one, am disappointed.

In my experience, he was committed, engaged and accessible. A call or email to his constituency office was always returned within 24 hours. His staff in particular is top notch. Full disclosure first folks. Lest you think this is some sort of love-in, I am not a supporter of the Progressive Conservatives.

I am a registered member of a different party. What I am a supporter of, however, is someone who did a great job for our community.

Recognizing the significant achievement that MPP Klees made to our community should be free from partisanship. I don't have to be PC to think he did a good job.

As an aside, extreme partisanship is part of the problem, frankly, with our political system. You can think the candidate for the ?other? side, would do a fantastic job, but you won't vote for him/her because, well, you don't think the Party will do a good job. That's how we get some real duds there in Ottawa and at Queen's Park.

Voting in your party's candidate, instead of the person that you think will really do the job?oh well, pardon my naiveté, that is politics as usual I guess. But, I digress.

Regardless of one's political stripes, one cannot deny Frank Klees did an incredible job for our community. Those are some pretty big shoes to fill.

And, my goodness, the jockeying to fill them has begun in earnest. Across the political spectrum, there is now extreme urgency in the nomination process as candidates both declared and those still waiting in the wings see a seat that they think is ?get-able?.

As we saw reported here in The Auroran, Newmarket Councillor Maddie Di Muccio is ?considering? a run for the nomination. Also considering the same thing is fellow Newmarket Councillor Jane Twinney. But, those are just two who have made their musings public. I have heard from sources that there are a number of folks who are also considering a run for the party's nomination. I'm not sure how true that is, but should be a very exciting nomination process regardless!

On the Liberal side, we have only one candidate thus far who has put his name forward for nomination ? Aurora Councillor Chris Ballard. He declared in late fall that he would be seeking the nomination. However, just like the PCs, I have heard of a number of fairly prominent folks who are similarly considering throwing their hat in the ring.

Again, we shall see who actually puts their name on the dotted line, but will make for some interesting times.

In the midst of all this jockeying, there is the wee fact that an election ? though expected, even imminent ? has not yet been called, let alone a writ been dropped. Given what will surely be a dramatic nomination process in both Party riding associations, I will bet my shoe collection that we are in for one heck of a wild ride in Aurora and Newmarket come election time!

Until next week, stay informed, stay involved because this is, after all, Our Town.