

Advance poll crowds frustrate voters



THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE: This Monday, October 19, there is no shortage of choice for Aurora voters. On the ballot for voters living on the north side of Wellington in Newmarket-Aurora are, from left, Dorian Baxter (Progressive Canadian), Lois Brown (Conservative), Yvonne Kelly (NDP), Vanessa Long (Green) and Kyle Peterson (Liberal). South of Wellington in the riding of Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill, candidates are, from left, Leona Alleslev (Liberal), Kyle Bowles (Environmental Voters), Costas Menegakis (Conservative), Brenda Power (NDP), and Randi Ramdeen (Green).

By Brock Weir

On what was supposed to be an otherwise calm Thanksgiving weekend, some voters were left red-faced in frustration after taking a break from their family festivities to cast their vote ahead of the October 19 Federal Election.

Staggering numbers of electors came out over the long weekend across the country to exercise their democratic rights, and the same held true in both advance polling stations in Aurora ? with some waiting nearly two hours to mark their ballots for their candidate of choice.

Newmarket-Aurora voters were invited to Aurora Town Hall to do their early voting, while Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill were able to do the same at the Aurora Public Library.

But come Monday afternoon, some voters waited up to 90 minutes to mark their ballots.

Some packed it in when they learned they had a long wait ahead of them, vowing to hit their polling station on Election Day itself. Some others were determined to cast their vote, whether strategic or otherwise.

?We knew who we wanted to vote for and we thought [advance polls] might have a convenience factor,? said Terry, one Newmarket-Aurora voter. ?When you see what is going on in the news in other places like Vancouver, they are waiting two to three hours. I thought it would be a lot easier than this, but you might as well wait it out!?

Also waiting it out was Lyndsay, a 21-year-old university student who wanted to vote in her home riding, rather than in her university town. Her 90 minute wait was tempered by the fact she was sitting next to one of her neighbours, but she said it was worth the wait.

?I did some research on the political parties and decided to come out,? she said. ?I voted for the Liberal party because of my background on childcare and I leaned more towards their childcare platform. I didn't think the Conservatives were the best for the childcare platform and I thought the Liberals had the best chance of getting them out over the NDP or the Green Party, and that

swayed my opinion.?

While Irene and Jim also voted for the Liberal party for their platform on seniors, Gary's vote went in the other direction.

?I probably made the wrong decision [to vote in the advance polls] because it was much longer than we anticipated,? said the Conservative voter. ?You walk in the door and you see about 15 people and you think that isn't too bad, but when you get into the Council chambers, holy crap! We probably should have waited until Election Day when people were out working.

?I see a lot of people talking about taxes going up and, in particular, two other candidates talking about taxes going up, and there is one saying they will hold the line. I want to hold the line. I see things getting worse with the other two candidates, tax-wise. They preach a lot of suffering and how bad it has been under the Conservative reign, but I don't think it has been too bad.?