

FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE: Fall Musings

By Stephen Somerville

Before this column returns 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 early part of the fall season in Aurora. First, I attended the inaugural Aurora Sports Hall of Fame induction ceremonies at the Mansion Banquet Hall last week. Joe DiNardo, the owner of The Mansion, and the event organizers, had things looking great.

The Ceremony was a classy affair attended by over 200 people. The speeches were touching and I really liked the video tributes of the Inductees. Only one small suggestion to the event organizers for the future: I would begin to serve dinner earlier while the inductions are being made. The audience is paying attention and this will shorten the evening a bit.

Second, I don't think one element of the media treatment given Rob Ford is right or fair. I certainly do not condone the Mayor's behavior in any way whatsoever and I think he should have taken a leave of absence back in May when the news about the crack video originally came out. With the current events, I think he should resign.

However, one aspect that I did not like was the media camping out on the sidewalk in front of the Mayor's home and confronting him on his driveway every morning. They could have waited until the Mayor got to his office and then asked their questions.

The media never went to former Premier Dalton McGuinty's house in Rosedale and barked questions to him about the Gas Plant Cancellation costs, E-Health or the ORNGE scandals. And remember, a number of people died as a result of the Executive and Board misconduct and lack of oversight at ORNGE. I believe that this is a huge double standard exhibited by some members of the media.

Third, as a fourteen year member of the Aurora Leisure Complex, I have followed the renovations process and, like a lot of others, I have not been impressed.

I know that the youth need a location in town and I don't mind the inconvenience of having to go over to the Stronach Centre for a year or so while the renovations are being made to accommodate our youth, but a couple of things have left a bad taste in my mouth. If you are going to make renovations at the Leisure Complex and inconvenience people for one year, and you know that the population of Aurora is going to increase greatly in the near future, then why not increase the foot print of the exercise area? As it stands, I believe the gym footprint will even decrease slightly. This is akin to only installing one highway lane when growth projections show a near term future need for two or three such lanes.

I was also not happy with the way that things have been communicated to members or that members input was not asked for during the process. A meeting was held back in October but it was really just to provide an update and we were basically told that things were a fait accompli.

The only two good pieces of news is that we have been told the town has built a couple of similar sized projects and that these have come in on time and under budget.

My wife and I have developed many friends over the years at the Leisure Complex. We also very much like the staff and fitness/cyclefit instructors, the convenience of the location and the variety of the equipment that is available at the Aurora Leisure Complex.

Therefore, we will most likely stick it out during the renovations. Kudos to staff for coming up with a Loyalty Program for those renewing their memberships.

Hopefully, the renovation will go smoothly and quicker than planned.

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