

## FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE: Final Federal Thoughts

**By Stephen Somerville**

Some final musings and observations from the recently completed campaign trail.

The results were far different from what I forecast.

I know for loyal readers of this column that statement will completely surprise you as my electoral forecasting ability is world-renown. That is, yours truly is 'world renown' for never ever being right!

As you may recall, I predicted that Conservative incumbent Lois Brown would retain her Newmarket-Aurora seat by a very small 250 vote plurality. Naturally, Ms. Brown lost by almost 1,300 votes to Liberal Kyle Peterson.

I also predicted that Liberal Leona Alleslev would win the Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill riding over incumbent Conservative Costas Menegakis by a comfortable margin; about 3,000 votes.

Ms. Alleslev did win, but by only about 1,100 votes.

I also predicted that it would be a Liberal minority government with the Tories within a few seats, in the closest election since 1972 when the Liberals won 109 seats and the Progressive Conservatives won 107 seats.

I wrote that the Liberals will win 131 seats as compared to 124 for the Tories and 66 for the NDP, while the Bloc Quebecois will win 16 seats and the Green one seat.

I was only off in my predictions by 49 seats for the Liberal and 25 for the Tories. If this were a game of horse shoes or hand grenades, then my predictions wouldn't seem that bad, though.

And who can forget the final prediction that I made in my last column. I stated that the Toronto Blue Jays would defeat the Kansas City Royals in five games to win the American League Championship and then go on to defeat the Chicago Cubs in six games to win the World Series!

Ok, moving on then.

A couple of non-related observations from the election.

On Election Day, during the evening I was situated at Devins Drive Public School. Six polls were held within the school. The local people employed by Elections Canada were great. Collectively, they were friendly and efficient.

Near about 6 p.m., the gymnasium was jammed with voters. As I watched and listened to them talking and laughing with their neighbours while they waited to cast a vote, I was struck by, for all its faults, how well our democratic system works.

There were no armed guards outside the school, no one was coerced into voting one way or another, there was no UN inspectors monitoring the proceedings to ensure fairness and no one was fearing for their life (apart from me as a result of the death stare cast in my direction by my sister-in-law when she came in to vote).

One thing that surprised me from the campaign was the paucity of lawn signs. Sure, there were a bunch of these on public property, but there did not seem to be as many on residential properties that there usually is.

The amount of signs that one sees doesn't correlate exactly to a winning campaign of course, but they do provide clues as to the organizational strength of the candidate, provide visibility and name recognition and, as the campaign moves along, the more signs shown popping up on people's lawns, shows momentum.

Lastly, to the hundreds of candidates who sought office and to the thousands of campaign volunteers who toiled on their behalf during the 78 day campaign, my thanks for sustaining our democracy and also for offering the people of Canada strong choices in their political representation.

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