

POLITICS AS USUAL: Giving Thanks

By Alison Collins-Mrakas

I hope you all had a wonderful weekend celebrating Thanksgiving with family and friends.

It was a gorgeous weekend weatherwise and on street after street the trees (if I dare bring them up) were ablaze in colours of fiery red and burnt orange ? and my favourite - a deep plum.

I enjoyed a very long walk through the trail system with a good friend. It was amazing to be able to be immersed, as it were, in nature in the midst of our urban community. Lots of squirrels and chipmunks and many, many birds ? blue jays, cardinals and swallows?but no owls, unfortunately.

As we celebrated Thanksgiving I am sure that most of us took a few moments of time to reflect on that for which we are thankful. It goes without saying that we as a community have much to be thankful for. (Please note that by ?we? I mean that collectively, in the collective sense. I do not presume to speak for everyone or wish to overlook the many in our community that are suffering.)

The list of things to be thankful for, is indeed, very, very long. When you start trying to list all the wonderful things about our community, you realize how truly fortunate we are.

We have parks, and trails, and community centres, and sports centres and sports fields of all types. We have many and diverse places of worship. We have many wonderful schools for every age. We have a community of lovely houses and buildings, from heritage to ultra- modern. We have clean and functional streets. We have potable water. We have active service clubs doing good works on behalf of our youth and seniors.

We have dances in the parks. We have live music in every season. We have barbeques and corn roasts and parades.

We have our glorious Farmers' Market ? which has fast become a sort of modern version of the old time community square where people gather to share their time, their lives, their stories. It is a true community hub.

As I said, it is an extraordinary list, so I will leave it there as I have no wish to be sanctimonious ? I will leave that to certain serial letter writers.

I chastised our Council a few weeks ago for losing perspective. And this week, I chastise myself for losing perspective, taking for granted the gifts I have been given. My family, my friends, my home, my community. For all that, I am truly thankful.

I will leave you with a favourite quote of mine from John Fitzgerald Kennedy,

?As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.?

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