

POLITICS AS USUAL: Summer -- Politico Style

By Alison Collins-Mrakas

We are trapped in the midst of the summer doldrums ? politically speaking, of course ? where whatever air there is, is hot, still and clammy. I guess we should be thankful it isn't hot and blowing hard. Thank you for the small mercies.

Our politicians ? from the ?has-beens? to the ?wannabes? to the ?never, ever shoulda-beens? ? are hard at work on the bbq circuit waxing wise and pontificating wildly on all matters political.

From the local to the federal, we are treated to a bevy of the amusing musings of our fearless leaders (or hangers-on as the case may be) whose opinions on matters of state and government careen wildly between straining credulity to downright embarrassing.

My favourite? Opinions on foreign affairs. Where has-been and wannabe politicians alike bring arm chair quarterbacking to Olympian levels.

Crisis in the Middle East? Let's get the opinion of a mayoral candidate because that will be a truly informed and enlightened opinion now, won't it?

I would love to hear a candidate give an honest answer when faced with such a ridiculous and wildly out of context question. But ?honest answer? and ?politician? are rarely spoken of together.

Instead, they suck up the oxygen in the room and replace it with huge volumes of hot air. I believe there is an aphorism about truth that is most appropriate in the context of political discourse. I think the saying goes something like, ??there is more than one truth?. Indeed there is; unfortunately, many people seem to lay claim to it.

Everyone sees the world through their own lens; however, some folks are in desperate need of a corrective lens in order to see the reality that the rest of us see.

How else to explain the ranting of ?some? of our leaders current, past or future? When outcomes are unexpected, not to their liking, or do not fit neatly into their carefully constructed narrative and funhouse mirror world view, then it must be evidence of shenanigans of some sort. Or a conspiracy.

Witness Doug Ford's latest rant. In Councillor Ford's version of reality, of the ?truth? the subpoena soon to be served on current Mayor Ford is ?payback? by the Chief, for the failure of his contract renewal.

The reality that the rest of us see is that a person with whom the Mayor has had close personal ties is before the courts on multiple charges of extortion and thus the Mayor may have relevant information as it speaks to the court action.

There is no conspiracy. No ?payback?. Just the logical outcome of a police investigation.

But truth and politics do not fit neatly together in most circumstances. The truth is usually rather inconvenient.

Re-writing history is, therefore, a very popular past-time for politicians of all stripes and inclinations. It's not just the bailiwick of despotic tyrants. Even our ?best? leaders tend to shade the truth to ensure they are cast in the best light.

And during election season, the historical re-writing is fast and furious. Everyone wants to take credit for everything. Opinion pieces in major papers, news programs ? even social media sites ? are full of shameless credit-taking exercises. If they could they'd take credit for the sun rising and the grass growing.

The implied not too subtle supposition one is to draw is, of course, that if the has-been, wannabe or should never-been politician were in charge, things would be different.

On that point, I will have to agree. Things could be different if they were in charge. Things could always be worse.

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