

POLITICS AS USUAL: The Odyssey Ends

By Alison Collins-Mrakas

Well, it is finally all over.

The campaign flyers.

The multitude of signs.

The advertisements.

The Twittering and the nattering.

The ?Debates.?

All done.

Praise the heavens.

I think the candidates must be exhausted ? I know I am! 298 days of campaigning is ridiculous. Queen's Park agrees. There is a proposal being floated around that the Municipal Election period is going to be drastically reduced.

I hope it is cut down to three months (or six months, max). That seems far more reasonable to me. We shall see.

The last few days, the last push as it were of the municipal campaign, was marred with some ugliness, which is to be expected. Folks get snarky when they read the tea leaves and the portents are not good. It happens every time. At least there wasn't a lawsuit this time. Small mercies, I guess.

When the campaign gets down to the wire, instead of working harder, some simply work dirtier.

Case in point, nasty flyers were created and delivered to people's homes in the last 10 days of the campaign; flyers full of ? to be polite ? distortions and ?un-truths?.

I had a look at these supposed ?attack ad? flyers and had to laugh. They did seem like amateur hour stuff, to be frank. The quality of the flyers from the graphics, to the printing to the ?message? itself, looked like it had been thrown together very quickly with little thought about the potential outcome.

Luckily, the flyers had the complete opposite effect than the intended campaign kyboshing: It garnered support for the intended ?victims.? One targeted candidate got four sign requests because of that flyer to show support!

It also afforded the candidates who were targeted the opportunity to come out with a positive message to combat the negative. It seemed to work in their favour.

And then there was the never- ending sign drama.

Signs being destroyed on a near nightly basis. Slashed. Smashed. And Stolen. Right off peoples' lawns. Just crazy.

I have never understood that, I have to say. What goes through someone's mind when they go about trashing someone's signs? Is it out of spite? Do they get some sort of release by the physical action of shredding up someone's sign?

If the purpose of stealing the signs or slashing/smashing them is to blunt support for a candidate, I hate to tell you but it doesn't work. Organized campaigns monitor their signs, replace them and repair them as needed. It is a ridiculous amount of work to stay on top of it.

Of course there is the issue of expense. Signs are expensive. And continuously having to replace your signs, and the posts and the wire frames, etc., can end up being a rather costly affair.

Finally, there is the drama of signs near polling stations.

On Monday as the polls opened, a few candidates chose to disregard any semblance of common courtesy or fair play and put up huge signs to block other candidates signs that were already there.

Bad form. But what can you do? Many candidates don't play fair. I guess that's politics as usual.

Speaking of which, given my relationship to one of the newly elected Aurora Town Councillors ? still unofficial at press time ? I will no longer cover Aurora Council matters, lest I be accused of any bias.

I will now focus on Provincial and Federal riding related matters. Still politics, but it will be anything but usual.

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