

All good things?.

by SHERALYN ROMAN

It seems I'm fond of quotes these last few weeks and after Monday night's decisive election victory for Mayor-Elect Christina Early, I'm reminded of another: "Good things come to those who wait." And my goodness, Caledon, have we ever been waiting! It wasn't made easy, either, what with problems with paper ballots and extended polling hours, we truly did have to wait until the 11th hour to hear the good news. Change is coming, and not a moment too soon.

In my first time calling an election, it was both exhilarating and exhausting to be in the hot seat, live to air and talking about all the candidates, sharing tidbits of information on incumbents vs. newcomers, and sharing with local audiences what some of the key election concerns facing Caledon residents were. In a show that was planned for 90 minutes, having to stretch it out for a little over an additional 60+ minutes was challenging! When numbers finally started to appear at around 10:20 p.m., there were initially a few "neck and neck" races, particularly in Wards One and Six and briefly too, for the mayoral contest. However, it didn't take very long to begin to notice the tidal wave of change.

It was reassuring to know that more Caledon residents than in recent memory knew the importance of this election to our future and took the time to vote. I'm sure final, fully vetted numbers won't appear for a few more days, but voter turnout was pegged at around 23,250 (or 34.17%). That beats 2022 numbers by a small, but noticeable margin. Would more voter turnout have been better? Yes, but enough of you clearly recognized it was time for a change, so thank you for taking some of your time to come out and participate in democracy! The results speak for themselves and judging by the overall behaviour, comportment and performance of those now elected, during the long campaign season, good times are on the horizon.

To be clear, I'm not so naive as to suggest the future will be smooth sailing. Change is coming and our new Mayor-Elect acknowledged that throughout her campaign. What IS coming is a change in leadership style, a change in the level of cooperation, the level of information sharing, and dare I say it, perhaps even some stability in the Town offices. From the date of registration to election night, Mayor-Elect Early conducted her campaign with the dignity and respect one should demand of the office. She was on point in debates, answered the questions honestly, even when challenged on potentially difficult or unpopular decisions she has made in the past were discussed. She said "No" to Strong Mayor powers from the start, "No" to developer dollars from the start, and "No" when asked if Caledon was the right place for a data centre.

From the beginning of the Swan Lake fiasco, Mayor-Elect Early supported the community-led initiative of another election night success story, Keri Parfitt, who won a seat in Ward One after the retirement of Lynn Kiernan. Unlike what one third party advertiser might have you believe, Early even went so far as to meet with the developer who owned the land in an attempt to negotiate a possible deal that would have enabled the CVC to purchase and maintain the fully rehabilitated lake. I'm glad to see, as written about last week, that Caledon voters were not fooled again by a heavily edited photo of that day (or any other "shenanigans") that attempted to link her to the developer in an implied unsavoury manner.

In the end, Caledon voters did indeed see through all of the election hoopla and in a decisive victory, Mayor-Elect Christina Early beat Regional Councillor Mario Russo, capturing 54+% of the decided vote to his 38%. (12,650 votes - 8,934). In Ward One, the margin of victory was a little closer with aforementioned Keri Parfitt beating the next closest candidate, Tom Sweeney, by around 200 votes. In Ward Five, Diana Mollicone secured almost 1,000 more votes than her nearest competitor Anthony Caputo, and Dave Sheen might possibly lay claim to the most decisive victory of all by securing 7,037 votes, which was more than both of the other candidates vying for the position combined. Congratulations to Stan Cameron and Heather French, who also won handily; to Regional Councillor Tony Rosa who was acclaimed, and also, to Cosimo Napoli who secured a victory with only a little over 300 votes separating him from Carmela Palkowski, one of the three hard-working ladies of CCRSA fame. Finally in Ward Two, a hard fought battle was eventually won by Jagraj Sekhon.

I'm sure my colleagues at the paper will provide you with an admirable breakdown of all the numbers and stats including school

trustees and any other details I may have glossed over here.

Election night was tiring and no doubt candidates are now madly also driving around town collecting signs to ensure they are in compliance. What won't get tiring, at least not anytime soon, is writing these few words: Congratulations Mayor-Elect Christina Early!