

Bill Rea ? You could still run for election

History will have all of time to puzzle out whether Prime Minister Stephen Harper made a mistake by dissolving Parliament as early as he did.

At this stage, it's far too early to say. In fact, it's far too early to say much of anything about the election.

There are plenty of people on vacation. Those with children have probably had the start of a new school year on their minds.

True, the candidates themselves have been busy, and we're seeing election signs on lawns and on the sides of roads. Don't worry, we'll see a lot more before Oct. 19.

There hasn't been a lot of word from the various parties yet, but there has been some. I get daily emails from the Green Party, telling me what Leader Elizabeth May is going to be up to. And there have been lots of statements from the Liberals and Justin Trudeau. I haven't heard much from the Conservatives. Harper was in neighbouring King Township last week, but there was very little advance notice of that. Our King paper was informed of the visit late the previous evening. I haven't heard anything from NDP Leader Tom Mulcair yet. I wonder if he's mad at me.

As of this writing, there are four declared candidates in Dufferin-Caledon, although I have been in this business long enough to know there's plenty of time for others to get in the game. I'm looking around. I even have a call into the Communist Party of Canada, but no one has got back to me, yet.

I've checked the Elections Canada website, and found there are 20 registered parties. Conceivably, that could mean there's room for 16 other candidates in this riding, and that's not considering the possibility of independents giving it a try. There are, of course limits to what's likely to happen. While I have been covering elections since 1984, and following them a lot longer, and have learned that there's plenty of room for surprises in just about any campaign, there are some surprises that would be just too . . . well . . . surprising. With that in mind, I am not anxiously waiting for a press release from the aspiring Bloc Québécois candidate in Dufferin-Caledon.

We have the Animal Alliance Environment Voters Party of Canada, which, as the name implies, is dedicated to the protections of animals and the environment. I had always thought the Greens had that area covered. But that issue is addressed in the FAQ section of the Party's website ? The Green Party, while promoting many sound policies, has grown substantially over the years. They have become much more of a mainstream party and the closer a party gets to power, the farther away they get from promoting change.? That leads into an interesting philosophical discussion. One would think the more support a movement can attract, the more successful it is. But it is also true that a party has to have a broader appeal to attract many votes, which presumably means watering down their product. One can see the desire, on behalf of a political party, not to do that. But if a movement can't grow, than what does it accomplish?

The Canadian Action Party proclaims it's an alternative to the three main parties ?that the privately owned media portray as your only viable choice,? further arguing that the main media doesn't want you to know what the real issues are. One of the main issues, according to the party's website, are the massive debts and deficits that government runs up, and the accompanying interest payments that have to be made on said debt.

That's always been an issue. It's one I've written about many times. It bugs the hell out of me that a lot of my tax dollars go toward interest payments because government overspent.

The Democratic Advancement Party of Canada (DAPC) was formed in 2013 in association with the Foundation for Democratic Advancement.

?The basic DAPC philosophy is that sovereign authority over political affairs rests, fundamentally, with the people, not with the government or elected officials,? reads the party's website. ?In practice, this authority is exercised through democratic processes which give the Canadian people substantive political say and influence both during and between elections.?

This sounds like a most lofty message. The problem is it seems to be predicated on people being interested in the process. It would be nice to see, but the reality is a lot of Canadians are not interested.

According to Elections Canada, 61.1 per cent of the eligible voters actually voted in the 2011 election, which was notably better than the 58.8 per cent who got out to vote in 2008. That's shameful, considering there was a time when turnout figures in federal elections ranged between 70 and 75 per cent. The last time the figures were in that field in a general election was in 1988, when Brian Mulroney was handed his second majority.

There's nothing wrong with ?what? DAPC proposes. The big question is ?how.?

Of course, we have the Rhinoceros Party, which has lots of appealing stuff in its platform, such as repealing the law of gravity, which would certainly give me a lift. Groan.

As well, the party has always advocated moving the Rockies to the Great Lakes. There's no word on where they plan to put all the water. But all that proves is they haven't thought through all the details yet ? typical political party.

The Rhinos also promise to privatize the Queen, evidently cashing in on anticipated profits (no, I don't know how that will work), and tax the black market. As well, there are plans to set up a lottery system to award seats in the Senate (unlike Harper, at least the Rhinos are planning to fill the Constitutionally mandated upper house of Parliament).

There are other parties too, like the Marijuana Party, Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada, the Party for Accountability, Competency and Transparency, and the Pirate Party of Canada.

That means there are lots of opportunities for the field in Dufferin-Caledon to grow before the ballots have to be printed.

Since I strongly believe in the concept of democracy, I'm happy to have as wide a field as possible. That very first election I covered in 1984 even included an independent candidate in the riding where I was working.

I'd like to help, but I'm afraid my line of work precludes me from throwing my proverbial hat in the ring. Besides, I have too much respect for the monarchy to see the Queen privatized, so the Rhinos probably don't want me (when you think about it, being turned down by them is probably the ultimate in rejection).

But there's room for a lot of you out there, who would like to see the law of gravity repealed (no more puns, I promise). Most of the party websites I looked at contain details on how to join, and even how to put your name forward as a candidate.

What's stopping you

