

Pondering the Election

by SHERALYN ROMAN

If anyone out there is actually a regular reader of this column you'll already know that I think this election is a cheap attempt to obtain a political majority. I think conducting an election during a global pandemic (particularly with cases on the rise again) is irresponsible at best, potentially a "super spreader" at worst.

Right now what bothers me even more however (other than the promise of paid sick days that should have happened months ago) is that regardless of which party you support you may or may not have a candidate to vote for.

Elections should be about choice. Do the citizens of Dufferin-Caledon have one?

It's no secret this area tends to lean heavily toward the Conservative party who are indeed already represented federally by Kyle Seeback. The Liberals have backed Lisa Post, a long time resident of the area whose family roots extend back through many generations and who currently sits on Orangeville Town Council. Jenni Le Forestier, a local environmental activist has thrown her hat in the ring representing the Green Party. Just yesterday, I learned about the candidacy of Anthony Zambito from the PPC, yet Brian Frazer was listed as the PPC candidate for our area as recently as August 19th and his profile is active on the PPC website. As for Zambito's, it's "coming soon." Confused? Yes me too. Meanwhile, what of the NDP? There is no candidate listed for Dufferin-Caledon so if that's the way you lean politically, what choice do you have? It appears none at all.

In its most simplistic form, our electoral system is a "first past the post" scenario meaning you vote for a local candidate to represent you at the federal level, not necessarily for the person who leads your party of choice. Of course, typically that vote is actually closely aligned and if one chose to support Seeback, for example, they are "choosing" Erin O'Toole, or in supporting Lisa Post you are "choosing" Trudeau. It appears currently that if you support Jagmeet Singh, you're out of luck. When many Canadians complain that we seem to simply switch governing power back and forth between the Liberals and Conservatives, not running a candidate for the third major political party in our country seems to support that continued narrative.

Did you know that there are in fact a total of 20 registered political parties? According to Elections Canada these include the Maverick Party, the Animal Protection Party of Canada, Free Party Canada, the Rhinoceros Party, of course, and many more. A quick search tells me we won't find a local candidate for the Mavericks as they are all about the western provinces and the Free Party (or Parti Libre) website was almost entirely in French so...I'm not sure we'll find a local candidate for this party either! I'm not too concerned frankly and I'm sure you won't be either but again, not having the option to vote for the party of your choice, never mind one of the four, more typically considered mainstream political parties, just isn't right.

Discussions in our house are often centred around what is going on in the world. We talk politics, climate change, the rights of women and girls, LGBTQ2S rights and more recently, issues such as the residential school system and its generational consequences. I consider it a badge of good parenting that we can have a wide range of diverse opinions on these subjects and learn valuable lessons from one another rather than the indoctrination of all members of the household by one member. I'm glad my kids don't feel like they have to support the same political party that I support and with this election in particular, I value the discussions we are having that may find any one of us changing our affiliations. I suppose that's why I am taking the lack of at least one major political party candidate so personally.

It's hard to address the issue of choice when you don't have one.