

VOTE '99: Municipal and regional bylaws have made it tougher for election signs to run rampant

Signs of the times

Campaign managers have orders for signs ranging from 35 for the Green Party in Markham, to almost 4,000 for York North's Tory candidate

BY ROY GREEN
Staff Writer

Once upon an election time, the call to the polls meant there would be dozens — or hundreds — of tattered, torn and weather-beaten election signs clumped in ugly bunches at major intersections everywhere.

Campaign workers were kept busy defacing and destroying opponents' posters at the same time as they replaced or repaired their candidates' signs that opponents' workers had defaced and destroyed.

Campaigns were longer then and there would always be at least one day, usually in the middle of the campaign, when all the signs of all the candidates would be bright and shiny and standing tall — blocking sight-lines and causing traffic accidents everywhere.

Then it would rain and the cardboard signs would bleed red and blue and orange on lawns and sidewalks.

Ahh, for the good old days.

In the good old days, campaign workers were kept busy defacing and destroying opponents' signs, while at the same time repairing their own signs which had been defaced by their opponents.

One of the major changes regarding election signage in this provincial election, on the eve of the millennium, is that signs are now forbidden in many public places.

"They aren't allowed on regional or municipal roads," said Jan Dymond, campaign manager for PC candidate Julia Munro in York North.

"We are permitted to put them on private property and near provincial highways."

But that doesn't mean candidates will be using fewer signs this time around. Dymond said they'll be ordering up to 3,000 small signs and as many as 500 large ones. And that's after we use the 300 or so signs we had from 1995.

Seth Rudin, campaign manager for Liberal Dan Ronen in the new Thornhill riding, said they're having trouble keeping up with requests.

"We'll need thousands. We're getting calls from people asking us to come back and put

up a bigger sign," Rudin said.

At the other end of the spectrum — the extreme other end — is the situation Markham riding's Green Party candidate Bernadette Manning finds herself in.

Green Party candidate would prefer to plant small trees in biodegradable cups.

"I'm getting stickers made up with my name on them for the 35 signs given to me by the party," Manning said. "What I'd really like to do is plant bio-degradable cups with small trees in them, but I haven't got the money for that."

While she doesn't agree with signs in general, she said they are necessary because it's the first time the Green Party has fielded a candidate in the riding. "With only 35 signs, I'll try to get them in prominent places along Hwy. 7," Manning said.

Another sign of the times for election signs is that they're now made of the right stuff — corrugated plastic for the most part.

"There are all different sorts," Rudin said. "You can spend anywhere from 88 cents to \$7 for election signs. And the corrugated ones, of course, are the most expensive."

But they also last much longer and can be used again and again. And they won't bleed blue, red and orange after a hard rain.

Ahh, for the good old days.



Residents can prepare for a jump in the number of lawn signs this election, as our cartoonist Steve Nease points out.

Advance poll dates for Markham and Oak Ridges

A week from today, Markham and Stouffville voters can start casting their provincial ballot at advance polling stations.

Advance polls will be open in the ridings of Markham (covering the town south of 16th Avenue) and in neighbouring Oak Ridges, which includes Whitchurch-Stouffville, Richmond Hill and Markham north of 16th Avenue, on May 22.

Except for a pause next Sunday, local advance polling will continue through May 28.

Election day is June 3.

Here are advance poll locations for the

Markham and Oak Ridges ridings.

In Markham, a poll on May 22, 24 and 25 will be open at St. Andrew's United Church, 32 Main Street, Markham.

On May 26, 27 and 28, however, Markham polls will be at Buttonville Public School on John Button Boulevard, Highgate Public School on Highgate Drive and at the Box Grove Community Centre on Ninth Line.

For Oak Ridges voters, a poll on May 22, and again from May 24 to 28, will operate in the returning office at 250 West Beaver Creek Road, Richmond Hill.

But from May 26 to 28, advance polls will also be open at Bayview Hill Community

Centre, Richvale Community Centre, and the Ed Sackfield Arena in Richmond Hill and at the Stouffville Recreation Centre on Ninth Line.

Hours for all advance polls in both ridings are 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Voters need to bring their voting card, which they should get in the mail soon.

If they don't receive a card by Wednesday, they should visit their local returning office, Elections Ontario said yesterday.

The Markham office can be reached at 294-3844.

The number for the Oak Ridges office at 763-6623.

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