

Free Opinion

What Would Tommy Douglas Do?

The late Tommy Douglas never made promises when running for office. Instead, the long time premier of Saskatchewan, who in 2004 was named the greatest Canadian ever for his role in bringing universal health care to this country, pledged that if elected he would deal with every issue to the best of his ability based upon the circumstances of the day.

Making political promises is a mug's game for any aspiring politician. Ever changing realities can make it almost impossible to follow through on campaign pledges made in the heat of the battle in an attempt to attract a broad range of voters. The current federal election has seen a host of promises made as the three front running leaders try to differentiate themselves from one another. Each leader has tried to set the narrative as to what Canadians want, and then offered to give it to them in spades.

Meanwhile the voters try to make sense of the key economic issues around which the leaders are trying to fabricate their platforms: Is Canada in a recession and if so what does that actually mean? Should Canada run a deficit and will there actually be a small surplus this year? Is Canada's economic performance over the past few years exemplary, or sadly lacking? Are new jobs being created by the thousands

or irretrievably lost?

The truth of the matter is that when it comes to the economy, governments would like to think they have a major influence over the direction it will go. But they are kidding themselves, and their citizenry. What governments do have control over is the shape of our democracy and how it is to be instituted on a day to day basis. Many would say this election is primarily about the kind of country Canada should be and that the voters should assess the leaders with that in mind.

It all starts with the character and the personal track records of the candidates in your riding. Who can forget the embarrassment we all felt when the unknown Jag Bhaduria rode to victory here in 1993, only to have his obvious personal shortcomings surface shortly after the election?

It is up to the voters to check out the resumes of the candidate they would mark an X for. With all four leading candidates in the Markham-Stouffville riding home it shouldn't be hard to get the info you need.

So sidestep the grandiose promises, see through the red herrings, and vote based upon who you feel truly has the best interests of this riding, and this wonderful country, at heart.

Blue Jay a Sign of Joy for Bereaved Family

A Guest Submission
by Diane Ward

Last year as I was judging front yards for Stouffville Garden Club's Happy Place Competition, something made me turn off Main St. and go along Commercial St. where I spotted an extraordinary front garden. I returned to place a sign acknowledging this lovely creation. At this year's garden tour I ended up hosting at that same property. Tracy Vernon, who created the garden, told me that she and her family had been mourning the loss of her daughter and had decided to move to Stouffville a couple of years ago and start gardening. When she arrived home to see the sign I had placed on her property the year before, it was during a particularly difficult time for her. She called her Mom to tell her about the nice thing that happened that day.

She told me how she and her husband had adopted a dog who was trained to fight and kill. Last year the dog had found a baby blue jay on the back patio. This 'killer' dog was very gentle with the baby bird. Tracy took the bird into the house and her son researched how to feed it. As it grew, she took it outside where it

hopped around the back yard. One day she noticed it hopped onto the dog's back and when the dog got up, it fluttered to the ground. This 'fighting dog' returned to allow 'Blue Bell' to climb on his back. They continued until the little bird learned to fly. They kept the back door open all day to allow Blue Bell to fly out and spend the day. He usually returned at night, but not always. Then one day he came back with a mate.

I told Tracy I thought this was a sign from her daughter, telling her that although Tracy couldn't change the outcome of her daughter's life, she had cared for her with love. Tracy did the same for the blue jay and now it was time for the bird to leave. This year, Blue Bell has been around and even visited a neighbour, whose friends couldn't believe a blue jay would come and land on his shoulder. I felt something had made me drive along her street rather than Main St. that day a year earlier.

Has anyone else in town had an unusual visit from a Blue Jay?

Diane Ward is a Whitchurch-Stouffville resident. She was the Town's Citizen of the Year in 2009 and continues to be involved in numerous volunteer organizations including the Markham Fair.

Free Thoughts

An all candidates meeting for Markham-Stouffville will be held October 5th at East Ridge Evangelical Church...



Please feel free to send emails to us at: stouffvillefreepress@bell.net

Out In Write Field

Election Overload? Just Park It for a Spell

By Bruce Stapley
Stouffville Free Press

With over two weeks still left to endure of a federal election campaign that has become a classic exercise in obfuscation, it's time to give our addled brains a much needed break.

So even if just for a few hours each day, unplug from the campaign chatter and enjoy the simple pleasures of life. Like the Blue Jays and their glorious emergence into serious playoff contention this summer. Sure, baseball is designed to break your heart. It begins each year with the eternal hope that comes with springtime, only to leave fans in 29 of the 30 major league cities feeling like jilted lovers left out in the cold as the autumn chill sets in late in October and there is only one team left standing on the diamond.

But oh that the Jays could be that team this year, even though they're in tough given the number of high octane outfits they are up against. Look how it took 10 seasons of near and nearer misses before the blue birds finally won their first World Series back in 1992.

But win or lose, they have enabled us to rediscover the magic of a leisurely game that is played under sunny summer skies with no time limits, but which at any given time can suddenly explode with the excitement that comes with a home run blast or a ballet-style leap by a shortstop.

Once the Jays have finally hung them up for the season we'll have the reincarnated

Maple Leafs to immerse ourselves in as all eyes look for that ray of hope that came with the air lift of game changer administrators the past year or so. Although after last season's unprecedented plummet, many citizens of Leafs Nation will need more than a hint of a reversal of the trend of recent years in order to come out of hiding.

Of course for those who don't need to have their sports fix provided by mega millionaires from around the planet, the Stouffville Spirit are already entertaining the town faithful with a group of high energy kids skating their hearts out. And the team is as close as your radio for home and road games, thanks to the colourful Whistle Radio broadcast team headed up by the one and only Rick 'The Stash' Callaghan.

Aside from things sporting, this town has a never ending list of other attractions to serve as a distraction from all that election noise. Just check out our Up and Coming spot in this edition of the Free Press for a sampling of options for October.

Remember, however, that after you have succeeded in clearing your election campaign-scrambled senses for a spell, it is essential that when October 19 finally arrives you get out and vote. Oh and if by some chance the Jays are playing that night, make sure to vote early so you don't miss a pitch!

"To be evasive, unclear or confusing," as defined by Merriam-Webster. It fits doesn't it?

UP AND COMING

The Stouffville Free Press welcomes community event listings from non-profit groups and organizations. Please send a brief synopsis of upcoming events by email to stouffvillefreepress@rogers.com.

Stouffville Free Press
Whitchurch-Stouffville's independent community owned newspaper

The Stouffville Free Press is published monthly by the Stouffville FREE PRESS Inc. and delivered by Canada Post to most residences and businesses in Whitchurch-Stouffville and Goodwood. The press run is 15,000.

Mailing Address: 5758 Main St., Stouffville, Ontario L4A 2T1
Phone: 905-640-FREE (3733)
Editor: Bruce Stapley / stouffvillefreepress@bell.net
Advertising Sales: Nicole Love / travis.merrick@sympatico.ca / 416-802-6716
Edward Nelles / edward@thegellesgroup.com / 416-898-3887
Graphics Department: Travis Merrick, Sheri Smith & Nicole Love / travis.merrick@sympatico.ca

Editorial and Photography Contributors:

Kate Gilderdale
Bruce Stapley
Kinjal Dagli-Shah
Hannelore Volpe
Ben Embiricos
Jill McWhinnie
Maurice Smith
Ruth LeBlanc
Rob Reid
Dan Wigmore
Carole Nelles

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