



...And the Winners are...

1ST PRIZE • Mariel Hoover

1 Dozen Long Stem Roses ~ Stouffville Florist

2ND PRIZE • Angie Thomson

Romance Kit ~ Willow Springs Winery

3RD PRIZE • Lillian Byer

Valentine Gift Box - Charlinda's Belgian Chocolates

By the overwhelming response, it appears as though everyone had a ton of fun.

Thanks for playing!

The local mouths belonged to:

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. John Paulino | 2. Luke Anderson | 3. Kate Gilderdale |
| 4. Bruce Stapley | 5. Kelly Baxter | 6. Ralph Pohlman |
| 7. Kirk B. Nice | 8. Ken Prentice | 9. Tracy Bankuti |
| 10. Ruth LeBlanc | 11. Sherry Hulshof | 12. Vicki Puccetti |

Point of View

by Ralph Pohlman



America First

For those of you who don't spend a lot of time in the United States, I am here to tell you there have been some changes since 9/11.

First of all, much as I may like it or feel at home in the U.S., (after all, three of my kids were born there, as was my father), I am, in fact, a Canadian with a beard and, therefore, a possible hairy-footed, cigarette smuggling, mad-cow-disease and anthrax-carrying, Taliban-supporting, non-resident alien. That has never been so forcefully pointed out as it has been since 9/11.

The evidence is sometimes subtle, but I'll give you the gimlet-eyed response to my attempt to get a phone installed. Despite having a phone the past three years, the rules have changed.

We are in an area where everybody has Sprint. It seems that the various phone companies have carved up the state of Florida. We are in Sprint territory, so I phoned Sprint and ordered a phone, expecting I'd get it tomorrow, like in the past. The guy on the other end of the line wanted my Social Security number.

I explained I was a Canadian and didn't have a Social Security number. Well, that bit of information brought a cool response. He now sounded like a CIA agent who suspected my real name might actually be Osama bin Whoever. Without a Social Security Number I was an unknown quantity, an outlander, and they weren't about to put a dangerous instrument like a telephone into my hands that easily. I'd have to apply and the process would take three weeks to a month. I'm not kidding.

But, I explained, I had recently phoned for water and hydro and they had accepted my Canadian Social Insurance Number, plus I have an account at the Bank of America. (I hoped that would sound impressive.

It's a very tiny account, admittedly, but I didn't say that.)

He wasn't interested. They would mail me a form to fill out, which I was then to take someplace and have it notarized, then send it to their office in Kentucky, along with two pieces of photo ID and the name and phone number of a U.S. citizen who could vouch for me.

"Could it be couriered?" I asked. "Well," he said, "you can courier the completed form to us if you wish, but we'll be mailing it to you." Once head office had "processed" the form and approved it, then I may get a phone. This was the only way, I was assured. A minimum of three weeks.

I phoned again the next day, but this time got a woman who sort of apologized for the inconvenience but said this was the new policy, which she had to follow. "However," she said, "you might try going to our office in Ocala, bringing your photo ID, and see how it goes."

So, I drove to Ocala, taking my passport and driver's license. It went very well, thank you very much, and I now have a phone. But be prepared to jump through a few hoops. I know, I'm a Canadian, but I'm not a member of the Iran-Iraq-North Korea "axis of evil" that President George Bush warned of in his state of the union address. Snubbed again, eh?

Maybe we could create a triumvirate by joining up with Sweden and Australia to form the "axis-of-nations-that-are-actually-quite-nice-but-sometimes-secretly-have-nasty-thoughts-about-America." The fact is, Americans don't really think about Canada very often. As former prime minister Kim Campbell once said in a speech, Americans view Canadians as "unarmed Americans with a health plan."

There is not much chance of forgetting where I am these days, since the business to be in, in the U.S., is the flag business. I see more

American flags than Mel Lastman has hair implants. They are everywhere (flags, not Mel's implants), and not just the usual places like flagpoles or houses, either. I see them on cars (sometimes three or four per car), construction sites, dumpsters, lamp-posts, mobile homes and an occasional forehead.

I'm told the Star Spangled Banner has become the most popular tattoo, often applied to very personal parts of the anatomy. I'll have to check on that. I expect soon to read that an exhibitionist has been arrested for stepping out of the bushes and waving his raised flag tattoo at a passer-by.

But I'll bet he has a phone!

Giant book sale a March treat for all

Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library is hosting its annual Giant Book Sale to raise funds for the development of library services.

The sale runs March 25 to 28 and admission is free, but collectors can take advantage of a special preview from 7 to 8 p.m. March 24 for \$15 a head. From best-selling fiction and children's stories to history and literature, the sale will offer something for every taste and interest. To sweeten the deal, Brook's Delectable Chocolates will be available during the sale.

Hours are 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. March 25 and 26, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. March 27 and noon to 4 p.m. March 28. For more information or to volunteer at the sale, call 905-642-7323.

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