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EDITORIAL/MESSAGE: News reporting, purely a profitability game

POLITICAL DESK: ELECTION information

RICHARD'S DESK: Mico update, ooooh to be young

BOOKS: Reading beyond my regular level

TECHNOLOGY: A bit about computers; a bit about AI

LAST WORD: Appreciation and gratitude

____[Some material has been modified by AI.]

EDITORIAL

The media is paid to publish and broadcast the news. We expect it to be objective and neutral in its reporting, though some bias is inevitable no matter how hard objectivity is sought.

What actually gets reported deserves scrutiny. Revenue and profit top the media's priorities, and reporting whatever attracts an audience follows close behind. Violence, crime, disaster, and crisis sell best, so they get reported most. Gun crime and street violence are worked from appetizer to main course. Nothing pulls in viewers like violence, aggression, and bloodshed. Networks flash a token warning that footage "may be graphic" — then air it anyway, because graphic sells. Dignity and decency don't factor in. If it attracts an audience, it runs.

That disregard for impact is the real failure. Children exposed to this kind of coverage can absorb it as normal — even acceptable — adult behaviour. So can older viewers, the emotionally vulnerable, and anyone less equipped to put graphic footage in context. The effect isn't just perception, either: research links sensationalized coverage to a measurable rise in violence and aggression in the days that follow.

Gore attracts viewers. Viewers drive profit. So the industry reports more gore, each cycle more gruesome, with barely a thought for what it does to the people watching. It carries no responsibility, no obligation to society — only the bottom line. Profit trumps people. Pennies be damned when dollars can be had.

Society has few levers to pull. Letters and petitions mostly land on deaf ears. Politicians keep their distance — reining in the press reads as political interference, so they avoid it even when it's warranted. But if government and industry leaders won't act, who will?

The answer may be the audience itself. News consumers need to push back directly — telling politicians and media leaders when coverage crosses from informative into gratuitous. Profitability should not be the only test of what is fit to broadcast.

POLITICAL Desk:

Briefly:

- **Elections:** I am not going to push for you to vote. That's your decision.



Voting is the historically earned right of every citizen. Unless you are a student of history and know a fair bit of history, you might not realize how many people fought and died to get that right. This neither a lament for them nor is it a promotion urging you to vote. You decide for yourself.

However, I do urge you to become an informed citizen and you can become better informed about the election and the candidates by exploring the ***Elections section*** of my website at www.szpin.ca I write about many aspects of the Election from the candidates to platforms and policies to when and where to vote.

Additionally, though I do not endorse any particular candidate nor deflect from one, I publish material candidates have made available to me. Again, this is not to persuade anyone to vote any particular way. Rather it is just publishing information to help readers become better informed.



What I know about the Election campaign

Mayoralty race: Kevin Ashe, Doug Cornell, Shaun Rickard, Lisa Robinson

Ashe is the incumbent with many years of experience in Pickering politics, following in his father's footsteps. I know nothing about Cornell or Rickard and have not heard any alarm bells of any sort associated with either one. Lisa Robinson is well known to anyone who has listened to Pickering news information. She is a councillor who is in the center of a swirling storm of controversy and turmoil. Very outspoken, Robinson states her mind, claiming what she says is 'the truth' regardless of its impact or effect in the community and in Pickering Council.



Ward 1

Maurice Brenner should be isolated from the pack as he is not running for regular councillor, rather for *regional councillor*. The rest, Blair, Mir, Nye, Samlalsingh, Steinhausen, and Vadivel are fresh blood. None has anything noteworthy that would detract from their being a candidate to consider.

Ward 2

The incumbent, Linda Cook, has been the councillor for the word and is campaigning for *regional councillor*. Newbie Nancy Van Rooy is campaigning for the same position. The remaining campaigners for Councillor office are Stacey Lepine-Fisher, John Meloche, incumbent Councillor Mara Nagy, and Sam Snyders, No bad marks there.

Ward 3

Incumbent councillors, Shaheen Butt and Dave Pickles have one competitor currently, Nada Raykumar. Again no glaring problems with any of these candidates with Pickles having the most experience as Councillor of all of these candidates.

Trustees - Public

Trustees are elected officials of school boards. What they do...I don't know. It would be nice to hear back from a trustee explaining their role, purpose and function. The public school board trustee candidates are: Walton Armstrong, Emma Cunningham (incumbent), Sinthuja Kanageswaran, Amad Muhammad, Hitesh Parikh, and Nadhiena Shankar.

Trustees - Catholic

Same story, trustees are elected officials but who knows the work they do. The candidates are: Andre De Freitas and Ayeza Perez.



They are millions of people in the world who wish they had a say in their governments as do those who have a vote. Every citizen in Canada of voting age, has that right.

Become familiar with your candidates. If they have not knocked on your door, not tried to meet you there, voting for them might be throwing away a good vote. A candidate should make the effort to meet you to spend a few minutes face time helping you learn about them. Don't throw away your vote. Vote for who you have met and who has explained their promises and policies to you. It may be the only time you will see this person even if they win. As one door-to-door canvassing candidate said recently, "I was amazed at how many residents never ever heard the name of their elected representative."

RICHARD's Desk:

Briefly:

- **Mico:** An update about the little guy...5 months old and an energetic dynamo.



Well, Mico's grown. Now a 14 lbs of slim, toned muscle from the non-stop running around and go-go energy he has every day, *all day*.

Playmates

We're very lucky having so many youngsters coming to our home asking to play with Mico. Kids ranging in age from about 5 to about 10 or 11.

It's fun to watch the interaction. Puppies must have some inherent sense that they need to tone down their energy with little kids. No jumping on them, no chewing, nibbling or mouthing. Mico is surprisingly good with interactive play with these youngsters. He never does anything aggressive or boisterous with any of them. And the kids are surprisingly good with him. They talk to him, give him commands, explain things to him as if he is one of them and he seems to sit there and listen as if he understands every word. Heart warming to say the least.

Endless energy

Much of the time, Mico seems to get the gist of what he is being told. But the most important thing is he is enthusiastic, cooperative and interactive. The kids are very active with him, running him around the back yard, having him chase after a large rubber ball, reinforcing his learned commands. They love watching him respond to 'sit.' They go none stop; he goes none stop. And you would think at the end of the day he is finished, fatigued, wiped out. Nope, damn little guy has his supper and he's up for more. He doesn't stop with his high energy until about 9 pm. By which time we are all beat.

Killing me

Bedtime is 10 pm, and you have to go slow and easy not to re-energize him. In the first few weeks, he would cry for about half an hour when put to bed. No longer. But morning crying continues; at 6:15 am, on the dot. Hell, I'd be crying too if I had to hold my bladder for 8 hours. Vet says he should be fine for 4-5 hrs. She was surprised to hear he holds for 8+. And even when he's let outside in the morning, he's in no rush, quite surprisingly. But what is killing me is that he's ready to go at 6:30 am. I'm not. Every morning, 6:45 am, the two of us are out in the back yard waking up with the birds and squirrels. It *is killing me*...I was used to sleeping it till 8 or so...no more...6:45 and bingo, the day starts.

Chewing

If it exists in the house, it is likely a good prospect for chewing, in Mico's eyes, err, mouth. This guy has to put his teeth on everything. Well, that's his way of feeling things when he lacks fingers and hands. Paws don't do it, mouth and teeth do. So he takes every shoe, just one, right-left no preference but just one. Drags it all over, chews it and if it is flimsy, well, say good bye to it. Carpets, same story; towels, ditto...sweaters, hats, scarves, guess what. Don't leave the remote near the edge of a side table...this is no Fermo. This guy's got legs...the vet says this *mini* schnauzer might be more of a *midi* and Nadia goes 'Oh nooooo !'

He is what we wanted

After Fermo, the house without dog is a house without soul, without spirit, without life. Strange what a dog brings to a home: energy, zest, spirit....life ! Mico has done it too. Not seeing him for minutes and you ask, "See Mico ?" Occasionally, not too often, he's snoozing under a table somewhere.

Finally, learning his commands

Amazingly, though never taught to do so, he can go for a walk in the neighbourhood and though never formally taught to do it, he will stick nearby even without a leash. To the end of the block, to the cul de sac midstreet greenery, no leash...does his business and heads back home. I am cautious of his distance as I still don't trust he will stay close but find it amazing he is as good as he does *sans leash*. Fermo never did that but wandered off in various directions as he chose and would go deaf to the 'Fermo, come' command. Mico's hard of hearing but he does hear !

As for commands: sit, stay, pronto (release), and come have been learned and his response is very acceptable for a 5 month old puppy. We are reinforcing the commands and amazed when he succeeds...the most amazing one....the stay when food is placed in front of him at mealtime. He sits and waits, until released with

“pronto.” Then it’s “attack city” as he dives into his meal.

Mico’s is a lovable joy.

That’s it for now on the Mico report.

Books Shelf...

Briefly:

- **Books:** mental escapism, tools for learning, cerebral gymnastics



Heavy reading

As you likely know my favourite authors write adult fluff, crime thrillers that entertain and engage rather than educate and elucidate. I read at bedtime for about half an hour or so, every night. Some nights when TV is particularly boring I will head to bed early to read (but remember Mico cannot go to bed too early as the puppy bladder can last only so long.)

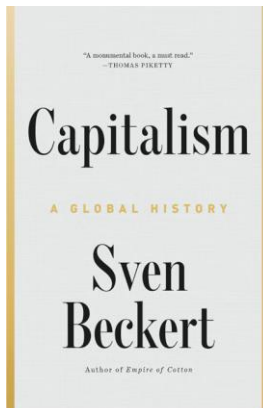
In any case, recently I was thinking I am reading all this fluff and enjoying it but I questioned what I was getting out of this reading. [You can see the long list of books I have read at

[“Richard Reviews”](#)

other than reading pleasure.

I thought I am not getting much out of these books

So I decided to ‘learn’ something with my reading. I chose a tome that would enlighten me. Here’s the story.



It feels like being back in graduate school...mental exertion....

An excellent narrative that unravels the defining story of the past thousand years.

No other phenomenon has shaped human history as decisively as capitalism. It structures how we live and work, how we think about ourselves and others, how we organise our politics. Sven Beckert situates the story of capitalism within the largest conceivable geographical and historical framework in this fascinating new book.

Capitalism, argues Beckert, was born global. Emerging from merchant communities across Asia, Africa and Europe, capitalism's radical recasting of economic life rooted itself only gradually. Then it burst onto the world scene, as European states and merchants built a powerful alliance that would propel them across the oceans. This epic drama corresponded at no point to an idealised dream of free markets. All along, state-backed institutions and imperial expansions shaped its dynamics.

Capitalism decentres the European perspective, highlighting agency, resistance, innovation and ruthless coercion around the world through to the present with the rise of Asian economies, particularly China. Sven Beckert doesn't merely add up capitalism's debits and credits in this monumental book, but allows us to think afresh about the past to help us re-imagine the future.

Richard adds

Professor Beckert writes in a style that is erudite and elevated beyond my normal reading level. The language is very sophisticated and complex, very advanced and polished to a level that becomes as somniacal as Sominex or a 100 year old brandy. This is not bedtime reading and if it weren't for years of teaching history, it would be impossible reading. But my years as a history teacher have begun dividend payment. I am familiar with much of the times he writes about making the demanding reading easier to follow and understand. Nevertheless, it is tough bedtime reading. Far from fluff.

Technology Desk:

Briefly:

- **Computer work:** This newsletter is not a computer manual but its readers likely use some sort of electronic device: laptop, PC, tablet, cell phone. So some comment about computers is important here.
- **An example of AI sophistication:** See the LIVING PRESIDENTS QUARTET below.

Essential computer apps

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Word processor (free): | LibreOffice Writer |
| 2. Spreadsheet (free): | LibreOffice Calc |
| 3. File/folder manager (free):
needed) | Windows File Explorer (no install |
| 4. Drawing app (free): | Krita |
| 5. Photo editor (easy, free): | Paint.NET |
| 6. Browser: | Chrome |

The above list is consists of apps that I believe are the essential ones for eny computer user. A little Internet searching will show many more useful apps, paid ones usually offer much more than the freebies. However, the free ones above are sound choices for the price.

A final comment about AI (Artificial Intelligence)

AI is a very useful tool, far more than simply being a good creator of text and doing effective editing. Suffice to say, it can be a 'right hand' person to help you with problems, strategies, development of working plans. Practice will lead you to its many valuable facets...but *be warned: AI makes mistakes. So consider its suggestions with some deeper consideration before just accepting.*

Here's a great example of AI creativity.....

LIVING PRESIDENTS BARBERSHOP QUARTET

To **HEAR** them, click -> [SING](#)



To **HEAR** them, click -> **SING**

I hope you found this as entertaining and amazing as I did the first time I viewed it.
I still find the lip movement and facial animation mesmerizing.



Every morning as Mico and I hit the back yard, I feel the very slight drop in temperature and see the moisture on the grass....reminders that we are past the mid point of the year. As I look at the greenery of the backyard, I feel the creep of anxiety knowing fall is around the corner...and then that damn 5 months of winter. The first explorers to Canada surely didn't come in January or February or else they would have turned around and never returned.

Mico and I sit down for a few minutes and just enjoy the mornings of midsummer.

I have given AI a lot of attention in the last few issues because I think it is the leading edge of a new revolution, the DIGITAL Revolution and I urge readers to learn a little about to avoid drowning in the impending technological tsunami.

At risk of sounding repetitive and mundane, again, I every one of you donors to my site. Thank you for your generosity and appreciation of my work.

Donors receive the newsletter automatically. Others can view complete editions on my website at www.szpin.ca ... Click the  widget found on the right of the site there.

Summer's lease hath all too short a date.
~ William Shakespeare

Best,

Richard, Nadia & Mic