



EDITORIAL: Democracy's not all its cracked up to be

POLITICAL DESK: Same old, same old ???

CLASS ACTS: Election Candidate Acknowledgements

RICHARD'S DESK: Benefits of the time change

HOME & HEALTH: Aging Well Together Information & Active Living Fair

BOOKS: John Grisham is my favourite author

Mico REPORT: How Mico's doing?

TECHNOLOGY: AI, AI, AI...use it. It is a marvelous tool.

LAST WORD: Appreciation and gratitude

[AI has been used in some areas of this publication.]



EDITORIAL

2026 Pickering Election Results 	
WINNERS: elected candidates highlighted ✓ votes received shown at right	
<i>Unofficial results, all polls reporting (6 of 6) — City of Pickering, Oct 27, 2026</i>	
Mayor	
Ashe, Kevin ✓	13,038
Robinson, Lisa	8,867
Frampton, Janice	4,917
Cornell, Doug	3,479
Rickard, Shaun	3,301
Rasool, Zargham	1,482
Wood, Andrea	654
Ward 1 — City Councillor	
Blair, James ✓	6,177
Vadivel, Priya	3,360
Mir, Addullah	3,151
Nye, Jamie	1,227
Samlalsingh, Michael	917
Steinhausen, Jeremy	521
Mohamed, Zubahir	149
Ward 1 — Regional Councillor	
Brenner, Maurice	Acclaimed
Ward 2 — Regional Councillor	
Cook, Linda ✓	5,959
Van Rooy, Nancy	4,829
Rasool, Bushra	1,071
Ward 3 — Regional Councillor	
Pickles, David ✓	4,839
Mujeeb, Azmat	2,820
Public School Board Trustee (2 seats)	
Cunningham, Emma ✓	16,732
Armstrong, Walton ✓	11,828
Kanageswaran, Sinthuja	5,061
Muhammad, Amijad	4,566
Manjra, Khadiza	3,722
Parikh, Hitesh	3,026
Ward 2 — City Councillor	
Nagy, Mara ✓	3,782
Snyders, Sam	3,073
Meloche, John	2,545
Lepine-Fisher, Stacey	1,559
Viapiana, Vince	1,080
Ward 3 — City Councillor	
Butt, Shaheen ✓	4,874
Nada, Rajkumar	2,700
Separate School Board Trustee	
De Freitas, Andre ✓	2,663
Stergiou, Bessy	1,416
Perez, Ayeza	986

Democracy's not all it's cracked up to be.

Something smells in the states of Denmark and Pickering.

As Churchill said, "Democracy is the worst form of government except for all those other forms."

This election in Pickering wafts some malodorous fumes of exorbitant spending and xenophobic bias.

Presence

Some candidates were criticized for apparel. "...pink blazer, black

mini skirt, bare legs....” Ashe? Butt? It’s a democracy. Wear as you see fit but remember books are often judged by their covers. Still, as mother said, dress appropriately and suitably for the situation. But remember voters jump to ‘book cover’ conclusions very readily. They are human !

Practice, practice, practice

However, voters are not deaf. Poorly prepared candidates stood out like sore thumbs. Voters deserve preparation and some candidates were not prepared, did not do enough homework.

Xenophobia and racism

As unacceptable as it may be, a cursory examination of the winning names suggests that there may have been some uneven voter consideration when it came to certain names. Sadly, there is no way to legislate equal social consideration.

Expenditures

Unfortunately, elections still are a rich man’s game. Once again, a cursory investigation of Canada Post rates indicates that a one time distribution of campaign leaflets to the 30,000+ homes in Pickering would cost about \$9000. Some candidates did it more than once. To name them might be an act of slinging mud but a quick glance at the election results will tell you who has spent a lot of money. Elections should not be bought but again, no legislation can be passed to prevent this from happening.

Conflict of Interest

Some candidates running for office also manage businesses that sell to the institutions involved with the office. This is blatant conflict of interest. A bit of quick research will reveal this information to be factual but once again, corruption and guaranteed ethical campaigning cannot be legislated.

Technology needs proficiency

Pickering was nearly the last to report the polling numbers, if not outrightly dead last.

Pickering used technology to manage voting. Sadly, glitches occurred spoiling the vote reporting. If that is so, is the accuracy of the vote questionable? Is the vote count accurate?

Voting process managed by the City

The voting technology was managed by the City of Pickering. The City of Pickering council is managed by Kevin Ashe. Ever hear of mayor super powers? Again, something smells in Denmark...and Pickering too.

The bottom line

There is no way to legislate or guarantee ethical, principled, equal and completely democratic campaigning or elections. Some campaigns were won by outlandish spending. Some had obscured endorsement. These conclusions are not based on rumor but rather can be corroborated with a little research. However, be prepared for obstacles thrown into the research path. There will be refusals to divulge information. Names will be withheld. Numbers will be obfuscated. Getting the facts will be like pulling hens' teeth, if you can find the teeth. Transparency is invisible where tainted politicians reside.

As sullied as our election system may be, and it does have a distinct odor about it, this is the best we can do. It is still better than any other system as Churchill stated.

POLITICAL Desk:

News from councillors, elected reps and community associations

Briefly:

- **Note:** We use updated information from politicians as much as possible each month, publishing what we receive.



Incumbents are hard to beat. Six of the seven councilors are returnees. Only James Blair is new.

Congratulations incumbents, Brenner, Cook, Pickles, Nagy and Butt on your return to council.

Special congratulations to new councillor, James Blair. You did it, You fought a hard campaign successfully. Bravo and kudos.



Who are these people?

Mayor Kevin Ashe. Ashe won a second term as mayor with 36.5% of the vote, well ahead of Ward 1 Councillor Lisa Robinson at 24.8%, in a seven-candidate field. The result is a clear mandate in a split race, though *nearly two-thirds of voters backed someone else*. Ashe is the son of George Ashe, the first mayor of Pickering. He has served as a school board trustee, Ward 1 city councillor and regional councillor, and has held local office off and on since 2003. His re-election gives Pickering continuity at the top as the new council is sworn in on November 15. Expect the second term to be judged on how well he builds consensus on a council. Residents will be watching how he handles development pressure, taxes and the tone of council debate after a campaign that put council conduct front and centre.

City Councillor Ward 1 James Blair. Blair takes the Ward 1 seat, which opened up when incumbent Lisa Robinson ran for mayor. He won with 39.8% in a crowded seven-candidate race, finishing well ahead of Priya Vadivel (21.7%) and Abdullah Mir (20.3%). A plurality win in a wide-open field means he starts the term with a mandate but not an overwhelming one. Ward 1 residents will look to him to be visible and responsive. His first months will show whether he can build working relationships with the mayor and his council colleagues. He is the only newcomer to the city councillor table.

Regional Councillor Ward 1 Maurice Brenner. Brenner was acclaimed, meaning no one ran against him. That is rare and says something about his standing in the ward. He is one of Pickering's most experienced politicians. He beat Kevin Ashe for the regional seat back in 1997 and went on to serve as Ward 1 city councillor. He returned to the regional seat in 2022 by just 110 votes over Tom Hayes, so this year's walkover marks a big change. As a regional councillor he also sits at Durham Region, where decisions on water, waste, transit, policing and regional

roads affect Pickering residents directly. With no campaign to fight, he can focus on the work from day one.

Regional Councillor Ward 2 Linda Cook. Cook was re-elected with 50.2% of the vote over Nancy Van Rooy (40.7%) and Bushra Rasool (9.0%). It was a competitive race, but she won it outright. She first won the seat in 2022 by only 159 votes over Gary Strange, so this result is a much stronger endorsement than her first. As a regional councillor she represents Ward 2 at both Pickering council and Durham Regional Council, where the big-ticket services are decided. Her more comfortable margin should give her more weight in regional debates. Ward 2 voters will expect her to keep Pickering's priorities front and centre at the region.

City Councillor Ward 2 Mara Nagy. Nagy was re-elected in Ward 2 with 31.4% of the vote, ahead of John Meloche (21.1%) in a five-candidate race. First elected in 2022, she has now secured a second term. *Her share of the vote reflects a divided field rather than a runaway win*, so she will want to keep broadening her support in the ward. Nagy came into politics talking about the accessibility of council and the number of in-camera meetings, themes that were still alive in this campaign. How council handles openness and transparency over the next four years will be a fair test of whether those concerns were answered. Expect her to remain a voice on process and public access.

City Councillor Ward 3 Shaheen Butt. Butt won re-election in Ward 3 with 64.4% of the vote, a commanding margin over challenger Rajkumar Nada. He has been on council since at least 2018 and is one of its more settled, experienced members. A win of this size shows strong support in the ward and gives him a secure base for the next term. In a council with some turnover, his experience and long-standing ward ties are real assets. Ward 3 voters will be looking to him for steady representation on local issues like neighbourhood services, growth and city budgets. He starts the new term in one of the strongest positions around the table.

Regional Councillor Ward 3 Dave Pickles. Pickles was re-elected as Ward 3 regional councillor with 63.2% of the vote over Azmat Mujeeb (36.8%). He has held the seat since at least 2018 and is among the longest-serving members of Pickering's delegation at Durham Region. A win of this size confirms strong support at home and gives him credibility as he continues to speak for Pickering at the regional table. Regional decisions on water, sewers, waste, roads and transit have a big effect on residents, so his experience counts. Ward 3 will want to see him use it to protect local interests as the new term begins on November 15.

CLASS ACTS:

Some candidates show class even in defeat

Briefly:

- **Note:** We were surprised by some politicians sending “Class Act” messages after being defeated in the election. These are really classy people but the electorate does not always get everything right. The voters may have missed some class acts.



A message from Candidate John Meloche:

Hi RICHARD SZPIN,

Sorry if you already received this, however some people have stated they did not get this communication on election night.

Well, tonight wasn't quite the ending I had hoped for. The residents of Ward 2 have made their decision, and while

The concerns about rising taxes, infrastructure, public safety, economic opportunities, transparency, and the future of our city remain just as important tomorrow as they were yesterday.

I hope our newly elected Council takes those concerns seriously. Now, there are some people I need to thank.

I'm certainly disappointed, I respect the democratic process and the outcome.

First, I want to congratulate Councillor Mara Nagy on her re-election. I sincerely wish her success over the next four years. Regardless of who occupies that seat, we should all want our elected representatives to succeed, because when they do, our community benefits.

I also want to acknowledge my fellow candidates, Sam Snyders, Stacey Lepine-Fisher, and Vince Viapiana, and congratulate them on their campaigns. Having experienced this process firsthand, I have an entirely new appreciation for anyone willing to put their name on a ballot. It takes courage, commitment, and a tremendous amount of personal sacrifice.

To the 2,141 residents who placed their trust in me and gave me their vote, thank you.

I cannot adequately express how much that means to me.

When you run for public office, you put yourself, your ideas, your reputation, and your personal life out there for everyone to scrutinize. You

To my incredible supporters, volunteers, and everyone who stood behind this campaign, you have my deepest gratitude.

Whether you displayed a lawn sign, shared a social media post, spoke with your neighbours, attended an event, helped behind the scenes, or simply offered a few encouraging words, you made a difference.

To everyone who made a financial contribution to my campaign, thank you. You entrusted me with your hard-earned money because you believed in what I was trying to accomplish. I never took that responsibility lightly, and I am deeply grateful for your confidence in me.

To the people who publicly endorsed me and were willing to put their own names and reputations behind my candidacy, thank you for believing in me.

To my wife Kathryn and our children, thank you for putting up with the long days, late nights, missed family time, and everything else that came with this campaign. You have supported me through an extraordinary experience, and I love you for it.

I also want to recognize the City of

do it because you believe you have something meaningful to contribute.

And I truly believed, and still believe, that Pickering has an opportunity to do things differently.

Looking at tonight's results, there's something worth recognizing. Nearly seven out of every ten votes in Ward 2 went to candidates other than the incumbent. While those votes were divided among several candidates, the numbers suggest that many residents are interested in different ideas, perspectives, and approaches to leadership.

But elections aren't decided by adding together the votes of everyone who didn't win. They're decided by the votes each candidate earns individually.

And tonight, Mara Nagy earned the most.

I accept that result without reservation.

What I don't accept is the idea that the concerns residents shared with me throughout this campaign somehow disappear when the ballots are counted.

The concerns about rising taxes, infrastructure, public safety, economic

Pickering election staff, the volunteers who helped facilitate the democratic process, the organizers of our candidate forums, and the residents who took the time to become informed and cast their ballots.

And to every resident who opened their door to me over these past several months, thank you.

Some of you agreed with me. Some of you challenged me. Some of you had very difficult questions, and a few of you made it abundantly clear that I wasn't getting your vote!

But that's democracy.

And I wouldn't trade those experiences for anything.

I've met some extraordinary people during this campaign. I've heard stories of struggle, frustration, hope, pride, and genuine love for our community.

Those conversations changed me. They gave me a deeper understanding of the city I've called home since 2010.

I won't pretend that losing doesn't hurt. It does.

When you invest so much time, energy, emotion, and personal

opportunities, transparency, and the future of our city remain just as important tomorrow as they were yesterday.

I hope our newly elected Council takes those concerns seriously. Now, there are some people I need to thank.

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To the people who publicly endorsed me and were willing to put their own names and reputations behind my candidacy, thank you for believing in me.

To my wife Kathryn and our children,

sacrifice into something you genuinely believe in, of course you want to succeed. But I also recognize that more than 2,100 people believed I was capable of representing them at City Hall.

That is something I will always be proud of.

I ran this campaign independently, stood by my principles, spoke openly about the issues, and did my very best to give residents an honest alternative.

And while I didn't win this election, I have absolutely no regrets about running.

Tomorrow morning, I'll wake up in the same city, surrounded by the same neighbours, with the same hopes for Pickering's future.

I still want our children to grow up in a city filled with opportunity. I still want responsible financial management, strong neighbourhoods, safe streets, thriving businesses, and a municipal government that puts residents first.

An election can determine who holds public office. It cannot determine who gets to care about their community.

My commitment to Pickering didn't begin when I registered as a candidate,

thank you for putting up with the long days, late nights, missed family time, and everything else that came with this campaign. You have supported me through an extraordinary experience, and I love you for it.

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And I wouldn't trade those experiences for anything.

I've met some extraordinary people during this campaign. I've heard stories of struggle, frustration, hope, pride, and genuine love for our community.

Those conversations changed me.

and it certainly doesn't end tonight.

To everyone who supported me, please don't feel that your efforts were wasted. Participating in democracy, raising important issues, and demanding accountability are never wasted efforts.

Be proud that you stood up for what you believed in.

And please, continue to stay engaged. Ask questions. Attend meetings. Hold your elected representatives accountable, respectfully and constructively.

Our city deserves residents who care enough to get involved.

Finally, to the incoming Council (petty much the same), I wish you every success. You have an enormous responsibility over the next four years, and I genuinely hope you make decisions that leave Pickering stronger for the next generation.

Tonight, I didn't win a seat on Pickering City Council. But I gained something I will carry with me for the rest of my life: a deeper appreciation for this community and the extraordinary people who call it home.

Thank you for allowing me to be part

They gave me a deeper understanding of the city I've called home since 2010.

I won't pretend that losing doesn't hurt. It does.

When you invest so much time, energy, emotion, and personal sacrifice into something you genuinely believe in, of course you want to succeed. But I also recognize that more than 2,100 people believed I was capable of representing them at City Hall.

That is something I will always be proud of.

I ran this campaign independently, stood by my principles, spoke openly about the issues, and did my very best to give residents an honest alternative without reservation.

What I don't accept is the idea that the concerns residents shared with me throughout this campaign somehow disappear when the ballots are counted.

of this election.

Thank you for listening.

Thank you for believing in me.

And above all, thank you for reminding me why Pickering is worth fighting for.

It's been an absolute honour.

John Meloche
Resident of Pickering Ward 2.

Thank-you!

John Meloche
Resident of Pickering



A message to all of Pickering....

As I close this chapter of my municipal campaign, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who stood behind me throughout this journey.

To my campaign team, donors, and everyone in our community who endorsed my campaign, volunteered their time, or offered their support, I am incredibly grateful. Your contributions made a real difference, and together, we made sure our voices were heard.

I am proud to have run a campaign rooted in integrity, credibility, and positivity. While I am disappointed not to be joining the new council, I respect the decision of the voters and sincerely wish those elected the best as they take on their roles and responsibilities to the residents of Pickering.

Thank you for your trust, encouragement, and support throughout this experience. It has meant more to me than you know.

Thank you, Pickering. It's been an honour.

Nancy Van Rooy

Ward 2 Regional Councillor Candidate

Some first class candidates who were overlooked...

There many 'classy' candidates who didn't make it. We won't list the ones we label as such as the list is too subjective and will be unsatisfactory to many readers no matter who we list.

But we would like to highlight some candidates who stood out in the campaign in some way....it is a ***subjective list***:

Doug Cornell, Janice Frampton, Shaun Rickard, Priya Vadivel, Abdullah Mir, Michael Samlalsingh, Stacey Lepine-Fisher, Bessy Stergiou, Vince Viapiana, Lisa Robinson, Andrea Wood, John Meloche, Nancy Van Rooy. They stood out in our books, worked hard and honestly. All of them are winners in our books.

These were sincere, dedicated campaigner who gave their very best to their campaigns. It would have been nice if they all could have won, winners that they are. We wish them well and look forward to seeing them campaign for some municipal office again next election.

RICHARD's Desk:

Briefly:

- **Daylight Saving Time:** NAn extra hour of sleep,..yippee !!!



Falling Back: The Return to Standard Time Is Worth It

On Sunday, November 1, at 2:00 am, clocks in Ontario move back one hour. For many of us, it is the most welcome clock change of the year, and there are good reasons why.

Extra hour of sleep

The first and most obvious benefit is an extra hour of sleep. The change gives everyone a 25-hour day, and sleep is the foundation of good health. Shift workers, parents of young children and seniors who sleep lightly may notice the benefit most.

Feels like more daylight

Mornings also become brighter. Sunrise arrives about an hour earlier by the clock, so people who walk the dog, catch the bus or head to work at dawn no longer start the day in darkness. Light in the morning helps the body wake up, lifts mood and sharpens alertness. Sleep researchers add that standard time lines up more closely with natural daylight than daylight saving time does. Our internal clocks are set largely by morning light, so the return to standard time can make it easier to fall asleep at night and wake up refreshed.

More sunlight, more safety

Safety improves as well. Children walking to school and commuters driving to work benefit from more daylight in the early hours. Visibility matters most for pedestrians, cyclists and

school crossing guards, and the morning rush is when many of them are out. The November change is also a handy reminder to test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and replace their batteries. Fire services across Canada encourage this habit every year, and it takes only a few minutes.

More family time

The shift also marks the start of the cozy part of the year. Earlier evenings invite family dinners, reading, hobbies and community events, and for many older residents it is a chance to slow down and enjoy the quieter months. Some households may even see a small saving on the hydro bill, since fewer lights are needed in the morning, although the effect is usually modest.

Adjust to time change

Adjusting is easy. Keep your regular bedtime on Saturday night and enjoy the extra hour. Get outside for a walk on Sunday morning to help reset your body clock. Move your clocks back before bed, or let your phone and computer update themselves, and change your smoke alarm batteries at the same time. Expect earlier sunsets, and plan evening errands and walks accordingly.

Real benefits

Whatever one thinks about the biannual clock change, the fall-back weekend has real, practical benefits: more rest, brighter mornings and safer starts to the day. So on Saturday night, set your clocks back, take the extra hour and enjoy it.

HOME & HEALTH:

Briefly:

- **Aging Well Together Information & Active Living Fair:** This is a great event to attend if you are interested in improving your aging.

*Aging Well Together Information & Active Living **Fair***



November 12, 2026
10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex

1867 Valley Farm Road, Pickering

This is a free event focused on living your best life 55+

Talk with exhibitors, listen to guest speakers, visit interactive displays, receive a bag full of samples and giveaways and have a free lunch (first 250 registrants)

A great opportunity to:

- Meet and speak with a wide range of service providers;
- Attend interactive presentations with special guest speakers including Durham Region Police Services, Lakeridge Health, Ministry of Transportation, and others;

- Collect valuable information, samples, and special offers;
- Enter for a chance to win fabulous door prizes

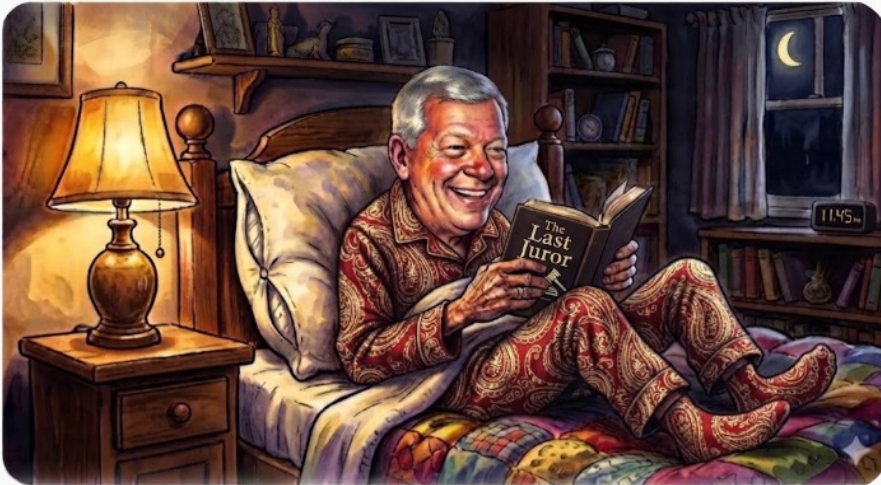
Registration is not required to attend this event.

Free lunch provided for the first 250 registered guests in attendance.

Book Shelf...

Briefly:

- **Books:** cI have tried reading serious books, recently one about money. It was far too serious and I don't read to develop myself. I read for relaxation, entertainment and pleasure.

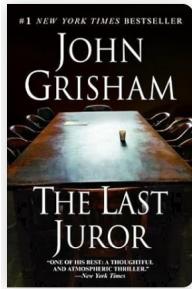


I used to read late into the night, much later than I do now but that was **BM (Before Mico)**. His bathroom calls start early, about 7 am and I know what bladder pressure feels like. So it's off to help him...to his laundry room enclosure and out he goes. But because I read so late....I'm dragging.

Richard reads

I read all my books on my iPad. Digital reading gives me benefits no hard copy book can: access to the Internet, maps and global meanderings. Of my favourite things to do with digital reading is to be able to peruse menus of restaurants that Stuart Woods' books reference, locate places the books write about on a world map in Google or simply see where the book scene is set. Digital access allows me to digitally visit the restaurant, peruse their menu and look at the meal presentation. You can almost taste it and smell the aromas.

Current read:



John Grisham is best known for fast legal thrillers, but *The Last Juror* is a slower, more reflective novel. It returns to Ford County, Mississippi, the setting of his debut, *A Time to Kill*.

The narrator is Willie Traynor, a 23-year-old drop-out who buys the struggling weekly newspaper in Clanton in 1970. He is an outsider in a Deep South town where everyone knows everyone's business. His early missteps are funny, and he grows into the job believably.

The central crime comes early. A young mother is brutally murdered, and the suspect is a member of the Padgitt family, a local clan with a long record of crime and intimidation. Willie covers the trial and becomes close to the people around it. The verdict does not end the matter. Years later the consequences return, and Willie is pulled back in.

The book works because of Grisham's patience. Over nearly a decade, the paper's front page shows a town changing: schools integrating, old loyalties shifting, Vietnam looming over the county's young men. The Mississippi setting feels lived-in, from the dialogue to the church suppers.

The most memorable character is Miss Callie Ruffin, a dignified Black woman who serves on the jury at a time when that was still unusual in the county. Her friendship with Willie carries the book's emotional weight and says more about race and justice than any speech could.

The book has weaknesses. At over 500 pages it wanders, the middle sags, and the ending leans on coincidence. Some supporting characters are drawn too broadly.

It suits readers who enjoy a strong sense of place and a narrator who grows. It is not the best choice for a quick, twisty page-turner; *The Firm* or *The Pelican Brief* serve that better.

Overall, this is a warm, funny and quietly angry novel about justice, race and the small-town press, and it deserves more attention than it usually gets.

Rating: 4 out of 5.

I enjoyed this book a lot because of the way Grisham deals with the American south, the character names he creates, the locales he visits in his scenes and they're real places and the dialogues that sound so authentic.

The story line seems to be superfluous. A young, 23 year old buys a Southern USA rural newspaper but when he begins writing about a particular trial and the only black woman on the jury, he puts himself into a war with the local power family. The threat on his life feels very real though the actual attempts seem be intentional near misses. But the story is a wonderful piece of development, the ongoing threat, the unique facets of the black woman juror's family and the ghetto she lives in.

It's a great little story, not heavy but warmly engaging. You feel like you're visiting the story's region and interacting with the many characters. This is not your typical murder or crime story with spine tingling suspense and fear developing scenes. No, this book is a trip, a trip to the American south where bigotry, racism, misogyny and bullying prevail and you escape it all by being the peripheral visitor, the reader.

In short, *The Last Juror*'s a comforting and pleasant read.

If you go to my website, www.szpin.ca, select “Richard reads reviews” from the **CATEGORY** drop down box on the right, you will see a portion of the list...



Richard reads a lot.

The list below shows the books I have read and reviewed. It reminds me and helps me remember what I have read.

Notice my favourite author is *Stuart Woods*. He writes 'adult comic books,' pure escapism, engaging entertainment. Nothing more but fun to read.

OTHER REVIEWS

← Older posts

- [The EDGE, David Baldacci](#)
- [ECHO BURNING, Lee Child](#)
- [EDUCATED, Tara Westover](#)
- [ELEPHANT WHISPERER, Lawrence Anthony](#)

On my website choose the category RICHARD READS to reveal the longer list and click these LINKS to see more

Newer posts →

Be sure to click the circled links to see more titles in the list.

Mico REPORT:

Briefly:

- **Mico:** Nobody told me...Mico chews everything in sight.



Mico doesn't look like that yet but he's getting close. That dog is a full grown mini Schnauzer, gorgeous eh! Mico is developing just like that one. He is developing so well, his breeder, Inna wants him back for stud service. Geez, my dog gets invited for stud service. I get offers for coffee, me to take them out for one. This world is definitely upside down.

Mico's one hell of a dog. Intelligent as all get out. He looks at you at every command as if he knows but he adds, "I'm thinking about it. Don't rush me !"

He more curious than a cat. When out for a walk just around the neighbourhood here on our street, he's got to fly to every yard, pee on every tree, sniff at every shrub but when called he comes flying....just not to my feet or my side, only to the area where I am and then he bounces around again. It could be because he so excited, all the time. He is up for a run, a walk, a tear through the neighbourhood at any given moment. He greets everyone with a quick jump up but then leaves them in peace. If they're kids, well, good bye Mico...he's found his newest friends.

I have one complaint. He chews or shreds anything he can get his mouth own, a shoe, a slipper, a sock, a magazine, a sheet of paper....anything. And he chews, rips, shreds it into little pieces, some of which become spur of the moment snacks. I am hoping he will outgrow this stage soon or else I may have to resort to more discipline and more stern commands.

The guys is a boundless ball of energy, no matter how long his walks, how long he has been outside, how many kinds he has played with all day. When he comes into the house and everyone's ready for some TV time, Mico's still bouncing around asking, "Well, what's next? Come on, I'm ready !" There's just no way to slow this guy down. Thank goodness he finally calls it a day *late in the evening*.

I wouldn't trade this guy for the world, but maybe one Fermo, hmmm, maybe. But then Fermo was around for years, 14 of them. Greatest dog in the world...Mico will be a close second.

Technology Desk:

Briefly:

- AI - a useful tool but use it cautiously as it does make gross mistakes. Be careful, be skeptical but use it...to save time, energy and do things productively.

I use AI a lot. I use it to generate text, source of ideas, research, writing quick drafts, editing and refining my work. It is a tremendously useful tool that is much like having a team of people helping me out.

Three AI models

I use three AI models, two really:

Anthropic Claude

For most of my work, verbal stuff, I use Claude. To do preliminary articles, summary write ups, short bits, Claude will generate something useful in seconds. I likely use it as the basis for my own article or piece.

Gemini, ChatGPT

For any work involving images or photos, I use Gemini or ChatGPT. Claude does not do any image related work. I use these two AI's because they have limits to their use. When one runs out, I switch.

There are three AI models that I like. In order of frequency of use: ***Claude Opus 5.5***, ***Gemini 3.8 Flash*** and ***Microsoft 365 Copilot GPT-5***. Claude is the Swiss army knife for most of my AI work while the other models are used for image generation and problem solving.



Because I am constant user of computers, I have some software that is important to all my work, particularly graphics and photos.

I recommend Claude first, the free version. If you get into serious computer work, know that you will spend significantly more for a subscription.



If you do any computer based work, use AI to assist you. My version of Claude, more than a couple hundred dollars, does a lot for me. It works with my computer, fixing things, refining things and helping me. But remember, I publish two publications, a website and a monthly newsletter, so I need assistance, and Claude is it for me. My website repairs are now almost always managed well and successfully using Claude.

Get the free version and ask it to setup lessons for you to learn as to how to make the most of AI.

One caution

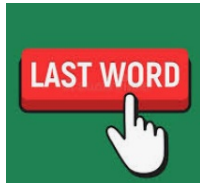
As these companies are in it to make money, you will be restricted in your number of

uses, modifications or tweaks requiring you to shut down and return after a period of time while your allowance is reset.

Have fun.

LAST WORD:

Appreciation and gratitude



As always, I thank the many contributors who have donated to my publications. This is an expensive passion that is as successful as it is because of the gift donations I receive from very generous people. Thank you.

For those who may wish to help, donations can be made to zippyonego@gmail.com via Interac transfer.

Best,

Richard, Nadia & Mico

