



EDITORIAL: Vote, you have the right

POLITICAL DESK: Election time

RICHARD'S DESK: Mico...beyond the Energizer Bunny by miles

HOME & HEALTH: Prostate cancer: should you or shouldn't you?

BOOKS: "The Secrets We Hide," Karin Slaughter

TECHNOLOGY: AI, AI, AI...how to use it at its simplest

LAST WORD: Appreciation and gratitude

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

EDITORIAL



Election Day is OCT. 26.

Are you going to vote?

Voter turnout for municipal elections in Ontario is abysmal. There are no clear reasons why but voter turnout is often around 30% or lower. Why?

Voter apathy?

The low turnout isn't because voters do not know about the elections. The news, commercials, advertising promos everywhere blare out that the election is coming. Get ready and get out there to vote.

Yet voters don't. They sit back with their TV remotes in hand watching their Netflix, Crave and other TV broadcasts. This is disappointing for a democratic country as great as Canada.

We are free here. Our government leaders try to make life livable for everyone. Our only valid complaint that everyone can use equally is that Old Man Winter dominates Mother Nature here for more months of the year than should be allowed...oh, if only we could control the weather.

Life is good for many of us here in Canada...we can go where we want, move around as we like, shop where we want, vacation anywhere in the country...about the only restrictions on most of us are our pocketbooks and no snow tires.

Voting is not just our way of showing appreciation to our government leaders but it is a way to send them a message that they are doing a great job. Those of you who think criticizing the government is the right thing, may we suggest you join those outliers in Alberta and Quebec and help them find a glacier they can declare as their new nation. We're happy here in the land of the free and the home of the happy.

So what, you ask?

So, show your leaders you care. Sure, some deserve criticism but don't be one of those people who find nothing is right, everything should be criticized. Not in this Canada.

My Canada is a great place to live and I thank all the elected representatives sitting in public office for their positive contributions to our good life. I thank you by voting and come Oct. 26th...I will be voting. How about you?



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.



Dear Richard,

Even though summer is coming to an end, what a season it was! From backyard barbecues to local festivities that served as a reminder of what makes Canada such a special place to call home, I hope you and your loved ones enjoyed every moment of it.

Happy back-to-work and back-to-school season as well! Whether you're heading back to the classroom, the office, or a busy fall schedule, we're wishing you a fantastic season ahead. Our office was proud to hand out over **162 backpacks** at our recent backpack giveaway, and it was wonderful to see so many families come out (check out our next mailer for a couple of snaps). Cheers to a fresh start, a new school year of learning and growth, and a productive fall for everyone!

Inside this newsletter, you'll find updates on legislation passed in Parliament before summer, highlights from around our community, and a look at what's coming up this fall. I hope it gives you a good sense of the great work in our community. I look forward returning back to Ottawa with your concerns and celebrations in Parliament, and to seeing many of you at local events and celebrations in the months ahead!

Yours sincerely,



As we are in the middle of an election campaign, much of my time is devoted to that topic. It may be one of the most exciting elections in years. Many strong candidates, many wards which could be in turmoil. As varied as things could be, a major upheaval will be when and if Mayor Ashe gets appointed Chair of Durham Region which is a good possibility. If he gets the appointment and resigns as Pickering mayor, then that race will be in for a cataclysmic change. Appointing David Pickles as mayor will not be accepted by the electorate and the new election will become a battle royale with Frampton and Robinson now having a real chance of grabbing the brass ring. As frightening as it may be to many people, Robinson could win.

Visit my website at www.szpin.ca particularly the widgets on the right side to read particular facets of the campaign.

Here's a list of the candidates, though I think more than just a few will be defeated by the incumbents. The incumbents are favoured in every AI projection I develop. This may not be justifiable as not every councillor has risen to the level of responsibility and action the office demands. Voters need to examine candidates with careful scrutiny because AI is hallucinating when it projects incumbents will all win. They shouldn't.

2026 Pickering Election Candidates

Certified Registered Candidates List

MAYOR

Ashe, Kevin
Cornell, Doug
Frampton, Janice
Rasool, Zargham
Rickard, Shaun
Robinson, Lisa
Wood, Andrea

WARD 1 — CITY COUNCILLOR

Blair, James
Mir, Abdullah
Mohamed, Zubahir
Nye, Jamie
Samlalsingh, Michael
Steinhausen, Jeremy
Vadivel, Priya

WARD 3 — CITY COUNCILLOR

Butt, Shaheen
Nada, Rajkumar

WARD 1 — REGIONAL COUNCILLOR

Brenner, Maurice (Acclaimed)

WARD 2 — REGIONAL COUNCILLOR

Cook, Linda
Rasool, Bushra
Van Rooy, Nancy

WARD 3 — REGIONAL COUNCILLOR

Mujeeb, Azmat
Pickles, David

WARD 2 — CITY COUNCILLOR

Lepine-Fisher, Stacey
Meloche, John
Nagy, Mara
Snyders, Sam
Viapiana, Vince

RICHARD's Desk:

Briefly:

- **Mico:** Nobody told me...Mico's a bundle of energy that never stops.



Mico's 6 months old now...and saying he's a bundle of energy is a gross understatement. This guy never stops.

Ever hear of "belling the cat?" Well, I have "squeaked Mico." He loves a particular toy that squeaks when he mouths it which he really loves to do. The beauty of this is that as long as I hear squeaking, I know he is not into some kind of trouble but

playing with his toy. He likes it so much, he gladly ignores being locked into the office with me while I work. The constant squeaking is a reassurance rather than a nuisance. "Squeaking Mico" allows me to continue my work.

Otherwise, Mico is developing well in some areas, terribly in others. He is super friendly, coming to play with anyone he sees. He is very friendly with everyone, too friendly, as he jumps up on them. People need to be told to prod him in the chest with a knee saying, "No" or "Stop" and he calms down. Otherwise, he continues his playfulness.

Fermo would bark to signal bathroom need, go to the door waiting for it to be opened. He would do his business and bark at the door to be let back in. One bark, out; one bark, in. Wonderful.

Mico??? Who knows? He seems very active when the need is there but it's a guess on our part. Opening the door, he goes out to the first step and stops. One has to go out and prod him to go further...I can just see where this will be in the winter snow. Eventually he roams around the yard but responds to being called, though that means he comes to the step and that's it. Beg, plead, kneel, cry, command as

you wish, he still stays out there staring at the fool making all those verbal noises. You have to go outside and 'corral' him to go inside but prop the storm door open so he can be prodded inside...along with any other animals, insects interested in entry at that moment. Maybe I am expecting too much from a 6 month old puppy and making unfair comparisons with a 10-year-old Scottie.

A good facet of Mico is his intelligence, when he is feeling cooperative. Teaching him not to lunge on the leash in a walk was an easy peasy lesson about heeling. Walk, stop, he sits; "Mico heel," he walks with me on the left. But all that goes out the window whenever someone else takes him for a walk and lets him do his lunging thing. I can't teach the world, not that they would cooperate and bother learning.

Oh well, the saga continues....little by little, each day....

HOME & HEALTH:

Briefly:

- **PROSTATE CANCER:** Early diagnosis is the crucial key to restoration of health.

McMaster

OPTIMAL AGING PORTAL

Screening for prostate cancer: What you should know about the PSA test



Prostate cancer can be treated effectively

Choosing to be tested and screened for various diseases and health conditions is a tough decision. For many patients, testing does not improve health and can cause – rather than relieve – anxiety. That's certainly the case for prostate cancer, which is the most commonly diagnosed non-skin cancer in men and the third leading cause of cancer-related death among men in Canada. The good news is the long-term prognosis is encouraging: the 10-year estimated survival ratio is 95%, the highest among all cancers in men. The bad news is that a widely used screening tool for prostate cancer - the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test - is not very reliable.

PSA testing important first step

The PSA test is a blood test to check for the presence of a protein that is produced by the prostate cells. A high PSA level may be a red flag for cancer, although not necessarily. 'False positive' results are also common. A prostate cancer diagnosis can be scary and many men do die of the disease, but most cases of prostate cancer actually progress slowly and men can live with prostate cancer without symptoms. A positive result from a PSA test can cause a lot of anxiety for men, particularly when the results are false, or lead to the detection of cancers that never would have progressed to the point of causing death or any health concerns. Meanwhile, men who test high for PSA levels usually undergo further tests including prostate biopsy, which is painful and may cause infection, blood in the urine and hospitalization.

Pros and Cons of PSA testing

These issues have prompted researchers to look more closely at the pros and cons of PSA testing. A [systematic review](#) from 2014, conducted in partnership with the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care, examined the results of three randomized controlled trials involving more than 200,000 men. More recently, a [systematic review](#) containing three randomized controlled trials involving more than 600,000 men was conducted for the US Preventive Services Task Force. The purpose of these reviews was to assess the benefits and harms of screening for prostate cancer using the PSA test.

Should you get a PSA test?

The benefits of PSA screening were not consistent between studies. What was notable were the associated harms of screening including high chance of false-positive results, the dangers of complications from follow-up prostate biopsies, and overdiagnosis. These potential risks, weighed against the benefits, led the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care to recommend the PSA test not be used to screen for cancer, particularly in men under the age of 55 and over the age of 70. Men aged 55 to 69, the highest risk group, are advised to seek expert advice and find out about other options before deciding to have a PSA test.

It is important to note that the task force's recommendation is not a universally accepted one. For example, the Canadian Cancer Society's position is that the benefits of PSA screening outweigh the negatives and that eliminating it would result in a significant increase in prostate cancer deaths.

Collaborate with your doctor

So what's a guy to do?! As always, and particularly in this case, men are urged to consult with their doctors to fully understand the benefits and harms of PSA testing. Your physician will help you choose the best course of action based on your individual circumstances (including ethnicity, family history of disease and other risk factors) and personal preferences.

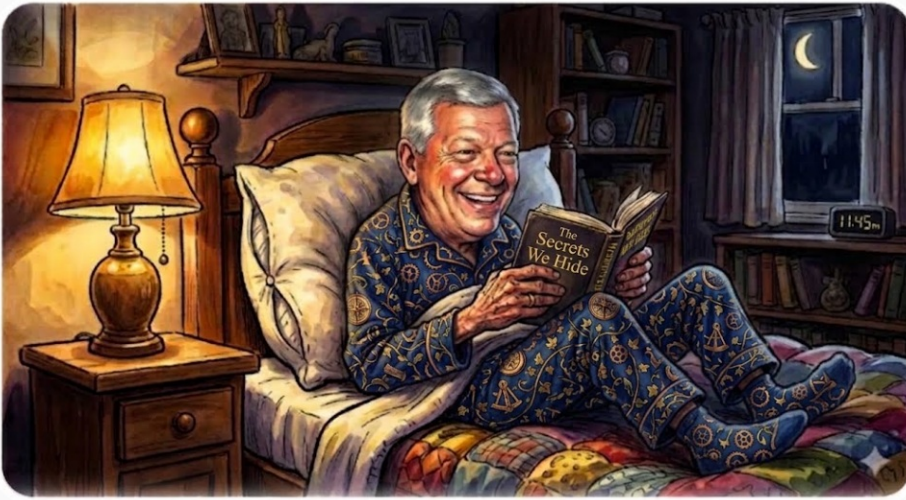
One thing everyone agrees on: new, more accurate and effective screening tools are urgently needed to safely detect and treat prostate cancer.

Source: McMaster Optimal Aging Portal (McMaster University).

Book Shelf...

Briefly:

- **Books:** currently reading a book that makes me feel like I am studying for a PhD.



I used to read longer and later, **BM (Before Mico)**, but his bathroom calls are earlier than 7am. So I am up by 6:45am every day and it's killing me.

Richard reads

I still prefer digital reading to hard copy. Digital reading gives me access to the Internet, maps, menus, and global meandering, all things that cannot be done with a hardcover book.

Current read:

Welcome to North Falls. A small town where everyone knows everyone. But nobody knows the truth.

1601 Iris Drive looks like any other house on the quiet, residential street. But rumors are rampant about the Vickery family, and what goes on behind closed



doors.

When gunshots ring out, Sheriff Emmy Clifton and her sister, ex-federal agent Jude Archer, discover a devastating crime scene. Allison Vickery has been murdered in her own kitchen, and her teenage daughter is bleeding upstairs, left for dead.

Everyone thinks they know what happened. But secrets are buried everywhere in this small town.

And it's up to Emmy Clifton to uncover the truth...

I am three-quarters through this book but I find it tedious reading.

Slaughter loves writing but isn't very good at storytelling. This book is a chaotic jumble of characters overlaying a murder investigation where the author shows her love of writing but her incapacity at developing an engaging story.

She writes phrase after phrase as literary gems that do not develop or polish the story at all. I dislike continually shaking my head asking myself, "Where am I? What's happening?"

As I don't know 'whodunit' I will have to finish the book. At this point, my conclusion about this book is that it is not to my liking at all. Let's see how I feel when I finish it.

If you go to my website, www.szipin.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 →

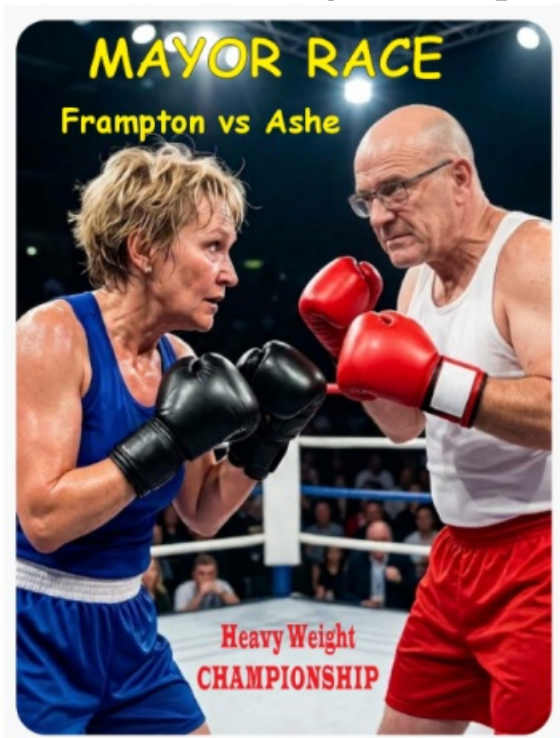
Be sure to click the circled links to see more titles in the list.

Technology Desk:

Briefly:

- AI - can be a useful tool as long as it is used carefully and with skepticism.

I use AI a lot, to generate pictures such as the one below...



I use it to create work based on research it has carried out. I use it to rewrite completed work for style, for level of prose and I use it to proofread for grammar and spelling errors. For me, AI is a practical and useful tool that saves me much energy and a lot of time.

Three AI models to choose

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 my Swiss army knife for most of my AI work while the other models are used for image generation and problem solving.

Get your AI model (We'll use Gemini)

In your browser address box, type gemini.google.com and press Enter to open Gemini.

In the open box of Gemini, type “Generate a caricature of a Canadian politician at a podium.” This will result in an image



somewhat like this

Voila...image created.

Now you can play with modifications to your image by telling Gemini what changes to make to the image, whatever tweak you would like to see and Gemini will make the changes and regenerate the new image. It's fun, it's playful and it can be very useful.

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



And lastly, recently a site visitor asked if they could make another contribution to help defray my expenses. I declined, as my site is intended for news and information publication, not revenue generation. To past contributors, thank you. For those who still wish to help, donations can be made to zippyonego@gmail.com via Interac transfer.

Best,

Richard, Nadia & Mico