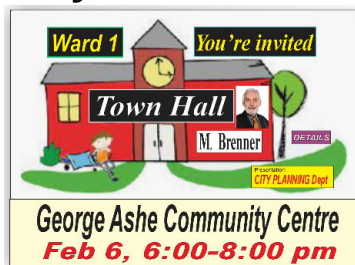




## The DESKS

1. **FRONT DESK:** *so they want a war, do they!*
2. **POLITICAL DESK:** *from City Hall*



3. **Richard's DESK:** *validate the news you're reading*
4. **HEALTH DESK:** *digital devices can affect sleep negatively*
5. **BOOKS DESK:** *the best way to read books*
6. **TECH DESK:** *AI an excellent tool for any kind of writing*
7. **LAST WORD:** *I publish a lost*

## From the FRONT DESK:

So they want a war. I wish we had the economic power to engage in one with some potency, but we don't. So here is the next best weapon we can use, **BUY CANADIAN**.



So the wacko wants to impose tariffs. Sounds like a declaration of economic war but this psycho doesn't read history. Give him a history book to remind him of the War of 1812. Canadians almost

burned Washington to the ground, the White House for sure. We may not have the capability of doing that now as we did then, but we sure as hell are going to fight back.

[\*\*MADE IN CANADA Grocery Guide\*\*](#) is a website that identifies grocery items and brands produced and manufactured in Canada. We may not beat them but we can hurt them, *muchly*, by not spending one Canadian cent on anything American.

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*From the website authors...*

"Determining which products and brands are **Made in Canada can be challenging**. That's why, at Made in CA, we have put together a **shopping list** that will enable Canadians to source grocery items and brands produced and manufactured right here in Canada.

We encourage Canadians to **share this** guide with friends, family, and community. If you find a Canadian-made product in your local grocery store that isn't listed here, we encourage you to submit it for consideration to this list [here](#). We aim to update this guide daily."

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The [\*\*MADE IN CANADA Grocery Guide\*\*](#) website identifies Canadian products.

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[Thank you *Mike Borie*]

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## ***POLITICAL DESK:***

*News from councillors, elected reps and community associations*



### ***Political commentary:***

Receiving news and updates from the City of Pickering elected leaders is valuable and beneficial but I recognize and appreciate their right to a calm and relaxed life. Rather than sending repeated invitations for updates, I will leave it to the Mayor and Councillors to send me updates when they have something they wish published here or in the other

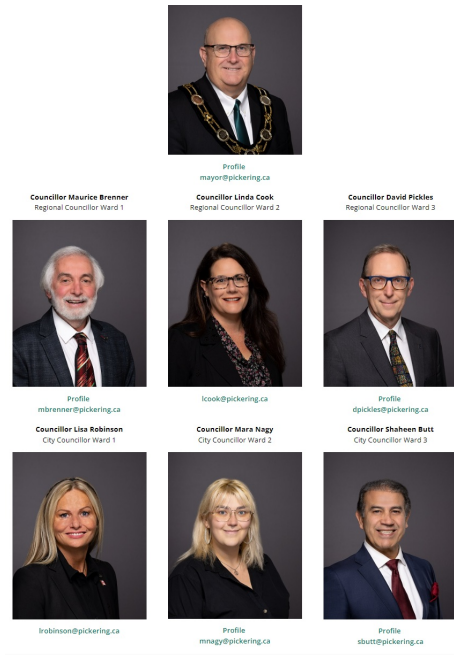
publication, the newspaper



As always, we wish the Pickering Council, the Ratepayer associations and the provincial and federal representatives well.

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***From the PICKERING City Council***




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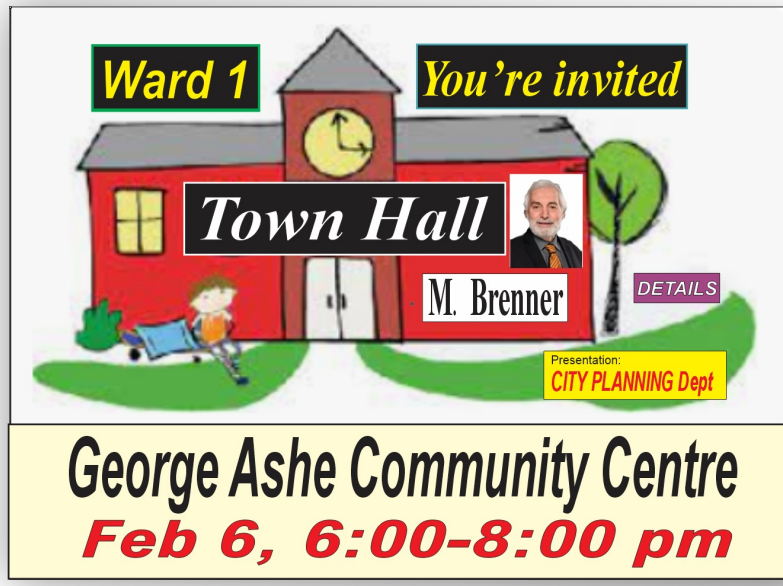
***From Mayor Ashe...***

**Kevin Ashe**

*Mayor, City of Pickering*

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***From Councillor Maurice Brenner...***



### ***About Brenner TOWN HALLS***

A Councillor Maurice Brenner Town Hall is always a well-planned and a well-organized event. Past presenters have been informative and engaging and each Town Hall has been run efficiently and effectively.

### ***The presentation***

The City's PLANNING DEPARTMENT will be the primary presenter at the upcoming Town Hall discussing and describing 'Pickering of Tomorrow.' Condos, traffic congestion, population growth, retail places and City greenery will likely be just some of the topics in the PLANNING DEPT's presentation.

Attending every past Brenner Town Hall has always been very informative and very worthwhile attending. This one will likely be the same.

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***From Councillor David Pickles...***

***David***

***Pickles***

***Regional Councillor Ward 3***

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*Paul White*

President

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*Peggy Bowie*

President

*(Ph 416.903.3284)*

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**PWSCA**

Pickering West Shore Community Association

*Scott Loyst*

President

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### **Richard's DESK:**



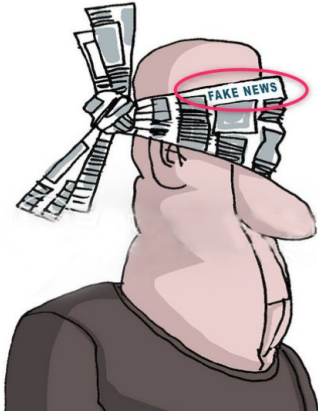
A retired school administrator, Richard used to motorcycle across Canada and the USA. Father Time has kiboshed riding giving Richard more time for his other passion, writing.

Richard, along with his wife and stubborn Scottie have been living in Pickering for more than 30 years. He is a firm believer that it is one of the best communities to live in in all of Canada.

**Cautionary message:** Be cautious: all the news you see, hear or read may not be all true.



News stories today may not be what you think. In the past, reported news was what developed readership. Sensationalism and excitement were key facets in hopes of increasing the number of readers, thereby increasing profits. People grew more sophisticated and more discerning in what they read. This selectivity was the death knell of the print media with an increasing number of newspaper ceasing existence.



### ***Today's news***

News today is controlled by fewer and fewer entities, conglomerates whose goals have been shifted dangerously. Where once the aim was to increase profit, when that began to fail, the news controllers shifted from *profit orientation* to *reader manipulation*. Today these power brokers aim at controlling the citizenry and manipulating it in such a way that it is intellectually controlled.

The news today is not intended as information, rather it is intended as manipulation, trying to persuade the populace into obedience and compliance. Truth and validity are no longer their objectives.

Take for example Facebook, once a user of fact checking tools to verify and authenticate information it was publishing, today its CEO, a sycophant of the US president t\*\*\*\*, has removed all fact checking tools from the publication. His lie to justify this is that it will rid the site of censorship as it broadens and permits more freedom of expression. Lies, lies, lies. It is not news or information reporting; it is news control.

### ***Democracy is in danger***

Democracy today is threatened by these autocratic purveyors of regulatory persuasion. The new age executives are interested in controlling the masses, you and me. Therefore, the news today must be taken with a grain of salt, must be evaluated and assessed for truth and validity. Do not be readily taken in by what you read or see broadcast. Evaluate the information, think about it. Better yet, if you are skeptical about what you see or hear, use other news sources to authenticate and verify.

### ***We recommend***

It is becoming increasingly difficult to trust news sources as so many are controlled by power mongers, the financially elite and political leaders with ulterior motives. The United States is an example of this new wave of control and manipulation. Not only is the psycho who heads its government an outright liar and manipulator but his appointees are sycophants whose only criteria for their appointed position is loyalty to the 'emperor.' We live in increasingly dangerous times.

My recommended news sources are:

**CBC** -> <https://tinyurl.com/y8mca3aq>

**BBC** -> <https://tinyurl.com/y3238cqd>

**REUTERS** -> <https://tinyurl.com/y3ycj4e4>



## **CERTAIN JOURNALISTS:**

Dan Rather -> <https://tinyurl.com/22hdgz9h>

Joyce White Vance -> <https://tinyurl.com/2cmm333h>

Heather Cox Richardson -> <https://tinyurl.com/y4223lhj>

Richard Wolff -> <https://tinyurl.com/2dnwhmhx>

### ***How to proceed***

It would not be practical time-wise to use consult and use all the news sources I have listed. Instead, pick a couple, test them to see if they suit your tastes, then bookmark them for repeated reference.



We are living in very troubled times with democracy threatened more and more. Rather than muting the news, listen/watch it with a discerning eye/ear reinforced by authentic news and verbalize what you believe and have learned whenever opportunity presents itself in you socializing.

Best,

***Richard***

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## ***HEALTH:***

### ***Briefly:***

- Digital devices at bed time may affect your sleep negatively.



### ***How Screen Time Sabotages Our Sleep***

In our digital age, the ubiquity of screens has significantly impacted our sleep patterns. Research shows that excessive device use, especially before bedtime, can disrupt our sleep in several ways:

#### ***Impact on Sleep***

**Blue Light Emission:** Digital screens emit blue light that mimics sunlight, suppressing melatonin production and disrupting our circadian rhythm. **Psychological Stimulation:** Engaging content on

devices can increase arousal, making it difficult to wind down before sleep. **Sleep Architecture Alterations:** Electronic devices can delay sleep onset, decrease REM sleep, and reduce overall sleep duration.

### *Consequences*

- Reduced sleep duration and quality
- Increased daytime fatigue and decreased productivity
- Potential mental health impacts, including higher risk of depression and anxiety

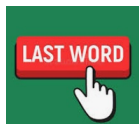
Studies have found a dose-response relationship between screen time and sleep problems, with higher usage correlating to greater sleep disturbances.

### *Vulnerable Groups*

Adolescents, young adults, and children are particularly susceptible to device-induced sleep issues due to their higher device usage and ongoing biological changes.

### *Strategies for Better Sleep*

1. Implement a "digital curfew" at least an hour before bedtime
2. Create device-free zones, especially in bedrooms
3. Use blue light filters or "night mode" settings on devices
4. Practice mindful device use, especially in the evening



By balancing our digital connectivity with healthy sleep habits, we can mitigate the negative effects of screen time on our sleep quality and overall well-being.

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## **Books Shelf...**

### ***Briefly:***

- Everyone's been busy, so my posts may be somewhat abbreviated.

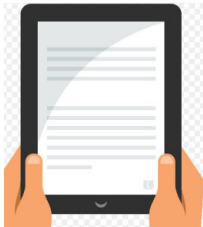


Gail and Heather, two dynamic and discerning book enthusiasts, both retired school administrators, bring years of reading experience to the book shelves here.

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### ***How Richard reads Books:***

I read nightly though I am trying to wean myself from doing so as I read books on an iPad.



### ***Why I read on an iPad***

The iPad is an incredibly convenient tool for reading books with numerous little tools to reading a book, from bookmarking to online referencing for definitions, meanings of phrases, terms or translations, geographic locations, musical references, artists renderings and much, much more and each tool is a finger touch away.

### ***Access to a huge library of books***

Tremendous First, it gives you electronic access to libraries anywhere, anywhere where libraries connect to the Internet. I vacationed in Florida a number of times and visited their biggest library system, Broward. Impressive, huge and an incredible facility. I got a library card, a digital one that lets me borrow books from that library any time I wish. They have an expansive selection of titles available to digital borrowing, although the local libraries here in Pickering,

the Durham Region and Toronto are very competitive and comparable in what they make available to digital borrowers. Having a digital card means convenient, easy and practice access to an amazing selection of books.

### ***Reference sources***

Next, I enjoy reading books on an iPad because it gives me immediate access to the Internet for following up what I am reading. I can access *maps* to see where I am reading; I can look up a reference to any aspect that I am reading. I read Stuart Woods books a lot and he refers to New York City restaurants constantly. I can look them up, read their *menus* and even virtually visit places like restaurant dining rooms. I can access definitions and explanations at will. I can hear the music being mentioned or view the artwork in the story. Although this slows down my reading, enriches it tremendously because I can get a visual or verbal explanation to clarify what I am reading.

### ***Bookmarking and highlight with notes***

I have never gotten past the old school thinking of books should never be marked in any way. An iPad allows me to bookmark pages or highlight sentences, adding notes for future reference. It is an excellent way to keep track and recall items if I want to write a review of the book or send a message about the book to someone.

### ***Personal book shelf at my finger tips***

Finally, with an iPad I can have numerous books on the go, bookmarking and writing notations in each book or simply marking where I left off. An iPad gives me tools that enhance my reading and make it convenient to have a library shelf of books right here at home. It is immediate access to all the books that I may be reading on an easily access book 'shelf' at my fingertips.

Or I can just read the book in the old fashion way, page after page.

For me, an iPad is the only way to read a book.

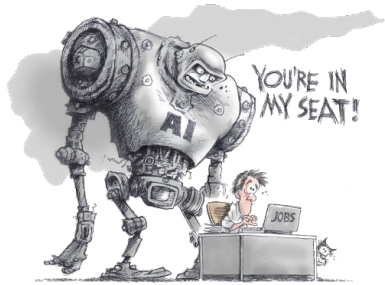
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## **TECH DESK:**

### ***Briefly:***

- Artificial Intelligence is an *excellent tool* for any kind of writing

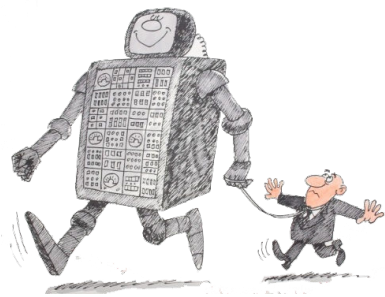
I have been exploring Artificial Intelligence (AI) for a while now, for a couple of months, from time to time. I have used it for design work, writing pieces, summarizing articles, revising articles for improved comprehension, and solving computer problems which it has done for me in easy-to-understand form.



AI has surprised me with its effectiveness, at times making it feel like I am interacting with an intelligent and very capable human. Though AI also works with design and graphics, I have concentrated almost mostly on the written word.

### ***Use free versions***

AI models come in different forms, some can be very expensive with monthly subscriptions as high as \$50/mth. There are enough free versions which will satisfy your needs for a long time.



***5 free versions of AI tools available in 2025:***

1. **ChatGPT** <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.openai.chatgpt>  
ChatGPT is a popular AI chatbot that can assist with copywriting, answer questions, and help with various text-based tasks. It's free to use with certain limitations.
2. **Canva AI Image Generator** <https://www.canva.com/download/>  
Canva offers a free AI image generator built into its platform. Users can create realistic images, especially of people, for use in various design projects. The free version allows up to 50 image generation prompts.
3. **Claude** <https://claude.ai/download>  
Claude is a free AI assistant that excels at website coding, answering technical questions, and generating Excel formulas. It's known for providing conversational responses and can be customized to suit different communication styles.
4. **Leonardo AI** <https://leonardo.ai>  
Leonardo AI is a comprehensive free AI image generator. It offers ample generation credits at fast speeds and includes features like prompt improvement tools to help users create vivid, detailed AI images.
5. **Copy.ai** <https://www.copy.ai>  
Copy.ai is a free AI copywriting tool that generates unique content for blogs, social media, product descriptions, and more. Users can simply input a brief description of their desired topic, and the tool will create content based on those specifications.

### ***How to use AI***

AI works by responding to questions input to a prompt screen. Ask the question, enter and it responds. The most important aspect to using any AI is asking the question in a way that AI can interpret and answer. Sometimes you need to rephrase your question to get a response you expect. "Tell me a story," won't do.

AI is an extremely useful tool and with a little exploration and experimentation, you will learn how useful it can be for you.

### ***Areas where AI is very useful***

I write a lot and increasingly I go to AI for help. I underline the word 'help' because almost always I have to refine what AI gives me. Often it is too long, sometimes it is incomprehensible, and though I have read about it, I have not experienced it 'hallucinating,' being inaccurate, but I have not used it enough to experience that.

### ***Searching and researching***

AI has been much better in giving me summarized and useful results compared to my browser, I use Google Chrome mostly. Microsoft Edge has a built in AI called co-pilot but I have not used it. I use an AI called PERPLEXITY PRO most of the time. It serves me very well.

Using AI for *search* and *research* will give you results which are better organized and more succinct than Google Chrome. Most users are satisfied with Chrome but once you have experienced AI's responses, you will find them to be more refined and practical than Chrome.

### ***Problem solving***

AI is valuable as a problem-solving tool. It will offer you solutions almost instantly and you can ask it to simplify its response, number it, or other questions to improve the response to your liking.

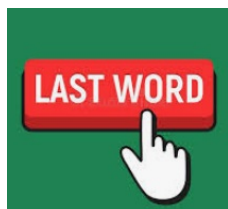


AI is a tremendous tool for a many things from written work to photo-explained problem-solving. At risk of sounding superficial, just ask and if you do not like the answer, ask again in other words. You will be surprised at how well AI responds.

Try it and let me know how it works out for you.

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*I publish three publications,*

A newsletter



;

A newsPAPER



;

And a website



The limited edition newsPAPER is the newest publication and the most time consuming. I am convinced Pickering needs this kind of paper as every one of past ones is defunct. The News Advertiser has gone digital but has its shortcomings. The goal of the **eNews** is to become the town crier for local news but it needs support and input from residents to make it more valuable and productive. It is a fun endeavour at the moment and has had some rewarding experiences like the interviews published with the Mayor and with the Chief of the Fire Dept. We are hoping to publish two more important interviews in the future: the Police Chief and the CEO of the Pickering Public Library.

Computer work is demanding but when you have ripe fruit hanging from the trees like these 3 publications, it is very rewarding. When you hear from supporting readers, it is even more rewarding.

All the best for February, hopefully a 'light winter month' as we have been experiencing so far.

Best,



***NADIA & FERMO TOO !***