

BROCK'S BANTER: Springing into Action

The friendly greetings one heard while out for a stroll on Friday were the surest indication yet that spring has truly sprung. After all, who wants to say 'Hello!' or 'Great day!' in the depths of winter?

Good Friday, however, was a different story as the relatively warm weather, a decent dollop of sunshine and some time off from being shackled to the desk conspired to herald the true arrival of the season.

Forget the groundhog, but one of the pleasures of spring is to try and pinpoint exactly when the area is going to come back to life, with people jogging, going for their regular constitutional, basking in the glow of the sun, or inexplicably spring cleaning as if their entire lives depended on it. (You know who you are)

I overheard and was on the receiving end of these unusually cheery how-do-you-dos on the boardwalk at the McKenzie Marsh when droves turned out, on foot, on bikes or with a leash in hand to enjoy the day. The good will spilled over onto Saturday when thousands converged on the Aurora Seniors' Centre and the Aurora Community Arboretum for the annual Easter Egg Hunt.

In my years covering the event, I have never seen the place so packed to the gills with people of all ages and creeds looking for their hidden treasure and unwinding with a game or two. It was the healthiest crowd in a good long while and nobody seemed to pay any attention to the soggy ground underfoot. Unless, of course, they got a soaker.

Seldom are the days when I yearn for my youth, but I would be lying if I said I didn't want to give the old 'Pin the Ear on the Bunny' another whirl. Parents seemed to be having as much fun as their kids in this part of the event which, thankfully, was held on higher, drier land! as adults and their charges alike tried to figure out new and creative ways to well, I won't say 'cheat', but meet their objectives!

Since some of us are still recovering from Easter, let's continue with a Christian theme for a moment?

DAVIDS AND GOLIATH

I wonder how much of the good cheer experienced by so many on Good Friday was enjoyed by the leadership hopefuls vying for the top job in the Liberal Party of Canada. By the time Easter rolled around, candidates had just under a week to recover from their final debate and prepare for the inevitable coronation of Justin Trudeau.

That seems like the only logical conclusion as heavyweight Marc Garneau pulled out of the race, throwing his support behind his closest rival. Both gentlemen visited Newmarket-Aurora during their runs, sat down for interviews with The Auroran, and presented ideas which could be both positive and productive in Canada's public realm.

Party supporters and interested bystanders say the party needs more than Justin Trudeau's considerable star power to recapture the imaginations of Canadians and regain their self-appointed (and fatally presumptuous) position as 'Canada's Natural Governing Party', but what's the alternative?

While Mr. Garneau himself came with his own degree of star wattage, it was clear watching local potential supporters interact with the candidates that Trudeau was the man of the hour.

The formal election amongst the remaining candidates -- including Newmarket-Aurora Liberal candidate Martha Hall Findlay -- will come down April 14 in Ottawa.

Speaking to both of the leading candidates, one thing I sincerely hope does not get lost in the shuffle was Garneau's commitment to give more autonomy to riding associations in choosing their candidates. It does a disservice not only to all parties, but voters when federal ridings keep tight reins on local decisions.

The Conservatives 'big C' or P.C. have it right around here. Neither party wastes any time in acclaiming both Frank Klees and

Lois Brown as their parties' respective candidates. Heck, the Conservatives took the gutsy (some have said audacious) step to keep Ms. Brown, a highly visible presence where her constituency office now sits on Bayview Avenue. Not out of sight, certainly not out of mind.

Parties such as the Liberals, however, have tried to exercise far too much control, as was seen when former Aurora mayor Tim Jones and incumbent Newmarket Councillor Chris Emanuel faced off for the local Federal Liberal nomination following Belinda Stronach's term.

Both stayed in the mix for a considerable amount of time while the party navel gazed before actually pinning down a date to decide the candidate. Then the former sitting mayor of King, Margaret Black, decided she wanted a shot at the nod, and all bets were off, leaving the two local candidates in the dust. And we all know how that ultimately turned out.

Giving the ridings a say in who will represent them and when they can be appointed as their candidate will save a lot of uncertainty and also give party supporters a clear voice within the community, someone to turn to, foster ideas, and perhaps even encourage people thoroughly disillusioned with Canada's current political structure to shop around, become familiar with the people wanting to represent them well and really find someone who speaks to them. Well before the Governor General fires the electoral starters' pistol.