

## Running for office

**By Constance Scrafield**

So we are back to the polls to vote on October 24th this year and there is no need to feel abused by overkill of the electoral process, since less than half of us voted provincially. Maybe electing candidates for offices in our local Council, this close to home will entice us to make a better effort to vote in October.

Wait a minute, make sure you have a clear picture in your head of who is on the ballot ? my cousin put his cat up for election once and the feline won. Then there was the chap whose name was put forward but he'd been dead for 15 years... had some good policies though.

Just kidding but let's face it, if we are so indifferent to the privilege of voting why does it matter if that process is treated like a farce?

Yet and yet, the importance of participating in the election process cannot be overstated and monitoring the debates that precede them matters too, for the souls that we put into office have the power to be a mighty influence on our very personal lives. We should care who goes into those offices, keeping an eye on them and make them accountable for all that they promise and all that they do.

Take a look around at the folly and the villainy of other countries and note how lucky we are to have the system that we do and the people surrounding our governments, calling them to account and not (usually) going to jail or being ostracized for their oversight.

There is nothing much to say about Doug Ford that is good but he will face strident opposition when he wants to start digging in Caledon for his precious and completely misguided Highway 413. This time around, people are ready to defend the environment against his destruction and for whatever reason he was slipped back into power, he will be restrained.

Still, he is not the force for crazy that is Donald Trump, who seriously has and is working to bring democracy to an end in the United States, who openly admires tyrants and dictators; leaders who oppress their citizens with death and indefinite imprisonment. Trump has deep admiration for Putin's aggression against Ukraine. Putin, comparing himself to Peter the Great, plans to continue his invasion not only of Ukraine. Once and if he dominates and conquers Ukraine, he will march forward to the five other countries running along Russia's western border, including Finland.

Now there is a scramble for Finland at least to join NATO, balancing the terror of Putin's reaction to such a move: he has warned against it ? will he attack Finland and test NATO's allegiance or back off?

Elections are scheduled to take place in Russia this year. Putin's propaganda has done its work but overwhelming evidence of war crimes in Ukraine is also filtering through to the Russian people.

In Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro's crimes are against all of us in his depletion, development and destruction of the Amazon Rainforest, the ?lungs? of the planet, not to mention the harm to the Indigenous people who live in the forest.

Here in Canada, we have much about which to be concerned and which in the long run dictates our country's future. First, our environmental policies are held to ransom by the fossil fuel industry ? still the world's problem and while change is cumbersome and painful, as a nation we have to bite that bullet and make change. That and the consumption of our boreal forest in the north is destroying another ?lung.?

It is long since time to end our colonization of Indigenous lands and people. So much harm to mend.

We have to address our poverty issues in this extremely rich country and deal with how we treat our disabled and deserted population.

Ostensibly, politicians make the decisions, for better or worse, about what happens to our ? everything.

Ostensibly, I say, because we are not really privy to the influences pressuring on those decisions ? we may know who but not how much money, promises, ?black mail? about support and ?jobs? and propaganda, not only the tool of government but of business too and we can never forget that.

It is important that we participate, if only to keep ourselves informed by filtering through the volume of information and disseminating fact from fiction. This is best done by knowing the reliability of the source of information, not simply going with whatever we read ?online?. There is media that has earned our trust over their decades of authentic reporting. The Globe and Mail is reliable, as is the Toronto Star. One can count on the CBC to bring unbiased and balanced news and analysis to the airwaves. CBC radio at least is not beholden to advertisers and is free of pressure from political interests.

The only safe harbour for democracy is the people that practice it. Us. We must be prepared to call out when those we count on by virtue of voting for them fail us.