

Who cares



By Nate Smelle

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LECTIONS SEEM TO bring out the best and worst in people. On one hand, we get to see the passions of the candidates running to represent us; on the other hand we have to observe the petty quarrels that arise between rival politicians fighting for the same office.

At least on the municipal level we don't have to sit through the flush of attack ads on the television. Still, the rumours and accusations have been running rampant. As entertaining as it may be to sit back and enjoy the popcorn, it is also good to remember how lucky we are to be able to participate in the political process. Not everyone on the planet alive today shares the privilege of determining how their hard-earned quickly burned tax dollars will be spent. For some the decision whether or not to vote can be a matter of life or death. For many of us in North America though the decision of whether or not to vote depends on what is on TV that night.

The best part of any election is that it invites us to investigate who among our community cares, and what they care about. Assembling around election time is also an important part of community building. Family members, friends and neighbours come together and talk about the state of affairs; connections are made and lines are drawn in the sand.

With such a tall order before them it is easy to complain about the actions and inactions of the politicians we elect to represent us. No matter how carefully they may balance on the fence at first, sooner or later they have to choose what to stand for and against. When candidates enter an election they know such tough decisions will be unavoidable if they are elected, but still they run. Eventually they all realize that pleasing everyone is simply impossible. It is at this time that the best and the most dangerous politicians get down to work fulfilling the promises that put them in office.

Having a chance to listen and speak with nearly all of the candidates running in Bancroft and Hastings Highlands we certainly have our work cut out for us in this election. In my opinion everyone on the other side of that long plastic table is there because they care for our community. Some may seem to care more than others, but none of them would be putting themselves on trial in front of their community unless they felt strongly about their vision for this place we call home.

The colours of our signs might differ, but we are all heading for the same goal? a healthier and happier place to live. Get to know the candidates who have put themselves out there this time around. Listen to their vision and question whether it fits with your idea of the best community possible.

Who cares? The candidates do; that is why they are running. What they care about is what we need to know before we vote on Oct. 27. From the huge turnout at both all-candidates meetings I attended in Bancroft and Hastings Highlands, it was obvious that we have a race here. Hats off and best of luck to all of the candidates running in North Hastings in the upcoming election.