



The DESKS

1. **FRONT DESK:** A bad year for some, we hope a better one for everyone in 2025
2. **POLITICAL DESK:** News from City Hall

Please note, our writers are busy writing for the inaugural edition of



3. **Richard's DESK:** Going to a movie soon...brace yourself
4. **HEALTH DESK:** Suffering "holiday insomnia?"
5. **FOOD BANKS:** Donations to Food Banks drying up...please help
6. **BOOKS DESK:** Holiday break for some of us
7. **TECH DESK:** AI will take over soon !
8. **LAST WORD:** Some of us would like to get off this bus

From the FRONT DESK:

Trudeau's world is crashing all around him.

It's been a bad year for some

Everyone has a time in their lives when the world seems to be crashing around them. Trudeau must be in that kind of mess right now: provincial premiers giving him the finger in regard to national issues, the ass*le in the United States declaring 25% on Canadian trade products, marital separation, cabinet ministers abandoning ship like rats from a sinking ship, and caucus member clamoring for leadership change. Not exactly the best of times for Trudeau.

Churchillian determination

The chaotic confusion and clamor in Ottawa and around Trudeau reminds us of Winston Churchill, the epitome of bull dog tenacity and steadiness during catastrophic times. Steady the rudder while the world crashes all around you. Surprisingly, Trudeau himself seems to be avoiding comment or public statements about this leadership turmoil. Trudeau is either a mule in people's clothing or Churchillian in his stand in a politically catastrophic world.

Voter fatigue

No matter what any political pundit can say about Trudeau and his policies, no one can comment on what is going on in his mind. No matter what policies he hopes to pass, no matter what 'political gimmicks' he may consider or try, the bottom line is it is the electorate suffers voter fatigue. They are tired of the man and want him out.

Barabbas effect

When Pontius Pilate asked the mob who to release, Christ, a religious leader innocent of any criminal wrongdoing or Barabbas, an infamous murderer and well-known criminal. The mob called for Barabbas' freedom. Amazing but not unbelievable in the world of today. Nearly 50% of the American electorate voted for T****, a man so tarnished by indictments, accusations and criminal offenses, they should lock him up now and throw away the cell key. Instead, 49% of the electorate voted for him. When Health CEO Brian Thompson was gunned down in the streets of Manhattan, his alleged killer was applauded and cheered by a significant number of people on social media. These are examples of the Barabbas effect!

That effect continues today with symptoms that grow and expand to great surprise and

amazement. Watching T**** propose candidates for government appointments is an exercise in surprise and astonishment. Nominating a drug user, rapist of an underaged sex victim for the position of US Attorney General! That craziness passed but did not stop. Nominating a Wide World of Wrestling executive, Linda McMahon, as education secretary when she has no credentials in education, no experience in the area and lied about her actual degrees. Amazing. The list does not stop there, nor should it apply to the USA only. There are examples of wackos in politics, in governments around the world. South Korean, former government leader trying to declare martial law to consolidate his waning power. Sheehh!

We living is very strange times but makes them worse is the attitude of people in accepting what would be viewed as unreasonable positions just a few short years ago. We may not be able to change the direction some leaders are leading us but the crucial reaction should not be apathy and passiveness. We need to be cognizant of what is happening around us, what political leaders are promoting and where they are trying to lead us. We must remain vigilant and active in calling out the negative aspects of what current leaders are pushing. We need to contact political representatives and voice our stand against threats to democracy, against policy failures and against politician trying to take us down of road of democratic descent and policy fiascos.

Cheering for a murder suspect, accepting failures and threats to democracy, order and good government is the wrong route for us to follow. We cannot let the *Barabbas effect* deepen its roots in our society. Sadly, 2024 has been the year in which our world developed the malady.

In 2025, let's renew our courage and determination to reverse the maladies of the past and strive to making our world more positive, constructive and better.

POLITICAL DESK:

News from councillors, elected reps and community associations



Political commentary:

Normally, elected officials are invited to submit messages to this newsletter. However, because of the launch of the new



newspaper, the invitation was redirected with each being asked to write news about their constituency and to ask for their support for the new publication.

We wish the Pickering Council, the Ratepayer associations and the provincial and federal representatives, a safe and happy New Year.

From the PICKERING City Council



Profile
mayor@pickering.ca

Councillor Maurice Brenner
Regional Councillor Ward 1

Councillor Linda Cook
Regional Councillor Ward 2

Councillor David Pickles
Regional Councillor Ward 3



Profile
mbrenner@pickering.ca

Councillor Lisa Robinson
City Councillor Ward 1



Profile
lcook@pickering.ca

Councillor Mara Nagy
City Councillor Ward 2



Profile
dpickles@pickering.ca

Councillor Shaheen Butt
City Councillor Ward 3



Profile
lrobinson@pickering.ca



Profile
mnagy@pickering.ca



Profile
shbutt@pickering.ca

From Mayor Ashe....

Kevin Ashe

Mayor, City of Pickering

From Councillor David Pickles....

David

Pickles

Regional Councillor, Ward 3 Councillor



A year end report from the President:

Another tumultuous year comes to pass, and we reflect on what we can do as a society to help others in need. FBNA has been in continuous operation since 1927 in Pickering, and it has been my distinct privilege to have been President for the last 35 years. Our Association was Incorporated in 1949, and is operated as a non-profit organization under its Constitution. What sets us apart from the many ratepayers groups that come and go, is how we are able to survive all these years. Fairport Beach is a recognized community created back in 1900 or earlier. It comprises land along the lakeshore between West Shore Blvd. and Petticoat Creek, and north, to a block north of Oklahoma Dr., approximately 400 homes. All the older homes have it in their deeds to perpetual access to the waterfront. As new infill homes are built that right is removed. In the 1930's, the Bank of Canada ceded all this waterfront property to FBNA. We decided to sell it to the Metropolitan Toronto Regional Conservation Authority in 1991, and this allowed the bridge to be built across Petticoat Creek and the waterfront trail to continue east. With the funds from this sale we have been given the opportunity to reach out to other worthy organizations.

Over the past decades, our members approve the budgets presented at the Annual General Meetings. An estimation of our donations would be in the ballpark of \$75,000 more or less. Our elected executive members bring a wealth of expertise to the table and we continue to flourish under our present guidance.

One of our proudest accomplishments is making the donors wall of contributors at the Ajax-Pickering Hospital. We started with \$1000/year for over 20 years. As we expanded our outreach, we partnered with the City of Pickering, largely due to working closely with our Ward 1 Councillors, Maurice Brenner and Kevin Ashe. In 2004, the major disaster struck in Indonesia, and Pickering set up the Tsunami Red Cross Relief Fund. FBNA responded with a cheque for \$10,000. We also reached out to our 3 elementary schools in the West Shore community and have helped with sports and playing area improvements, and \$500/year grant for projects.

During Covid, we expanded our outreach to help the Ajax-Pickering hospital with PPE emergency funds, Ajax-Pickering Salvation Army Food Bank, and the St.Paul's Food Bank in Pickering with \$1000's in cash and food donations. Within our special waterfront community parkette, named Fairport Community Park, we had partnered with TRCA, City of Pickering and T.D. Environmental Fund, and initially donated \$17,000 to planting trees along Park Cres. and shrubbery. When the waterfront trail was extended we designed and paid for a butterfly garden that is maintained by Gray's Landscaping and the City. These are just some of the many community events we continue to support, and expand as recommended from our members. All the forgoing comments are just a reflection of what it is to volunteer, and to be involved with our community and City. None of this would have been possible without the selfless contribution of time and commitment from our neighbours who make up FBNA.

Paul

White

President



Dear Neighbours,

The Rougemount Community and Recreation Association (RCRA) wishes everyone a happy and safe Christmas Season!

Thank you for a terrific 2024 and look forward more community events in 2025!

Richard, all the best of the Season to you and yours and thank you for your service.

Peggy Bowie

President

(Ph 416.903.3284)

PWSCA

Pickering West Shore Community Association

Scott Loyst

President

**Richard's
DESK:**



Richard is a retired school administrator. He has motorcycled across Canada and the USA 5 or 6 times [after retiring] but now he's a computer nerd, a news junkie and passionate about writing. He has lived in Pickering for more than 30 years and and firmly believes it is one of the best communities to live in in all of Canada.



Been to a movie lately or planning a movie outing with family or friends over the holidays. Watch out, the movie watching experience may surprise you.

Movie going is not what it used to be. Not that long ago, you could go to a movie, the lights would dim, shut off and you would enjoy a movie without distractions.

Not today. Today you could be sitting beside a cell phone user texting energetically during the much of the movie, their bright screen lighting up the area around you. Worse, the person could actually be holding a phone conversation, yacking away with no consideration that their conversation disrupts your movie watching, listening.

The movie experience today

There *other people* diminishing your movie watching experience by carrying on conversations during the movie, even singing along in musical movies, adding comments to the movie's dialogue, blurting in to the movie script with total disregard for their surrounding movie viewers.

These are all real life movie going experiences that diminish the pleasure of watching a movie in its old fashioned way: in the dark, the only sound coming from the movie itself, the only light that from the silver screen at the front. Those were the days. Not today.

Recently an executive from Canada's CINEPLEX commented about the movie experience today on the CBC news. "The movie goer should feel comfortable watching the movie as they want, with their preferences, their choices."

That is the biggest load of farmer's fertilizer I have ever heard. I go to a movies to be entertained by a Hollywood, not by some boar sitting next to me in the audience creating distractions with their disruptive antics. My ticket paid for a movie not someone's cellular conversation. The ticket covered the cost of a movie not someone else's cell phone conversation.

Courtesy, consideration, gone

What's happening to manners, respect for others, consideration for society? It looks like we are moving into a social phase where individual rights supercede anything and everything else. Society be damned. Social etiquette, forget about it. "I want it. I am going to get it. Violently if I have to, regardless of you, regardless of everyone else, regardless of society."

What the hell happened? Where did we go awry? This ain't the world I want. This is a self-serving, self-centred society that disregards others. Respect for others is gone. Consideration for other people is out the window. Regard for other people, in the trash bin.

It isn't a question of this being justifiable? It is wrong, FULL STOP. We live together in a society. To live that way successfully and acceptably we need to consider the well-being of other people. We need to respect one another, have consideration for each other and be able to interact with each other in respectful and considerate ways *as existed not long ago*.

We were taught manners, etiquette, respect and recognition of others. Our parents, our grandparents, our teachers, our mentors all taught the same message. Be aware, be considerate and be respectful of others. My mom taught me that....and I still abide by the lessons she taught me. Do others?

HEALTH:

Briefly:

- Trouble sleeping? Holiday anxieties disrupting you each night? Take a look at some of the SLEEP topics we have covered in our .HEALTH section

The holidays likely wrecked your sleeping well a few times over the holidays. It did for many people as their heads didn't just fill with up with sugar plum dreams, gift getting and giving and worries that Santa might make a safe trip. Canada Post sure knocked the wind out of Christmas card delivery. No wonder you likely had a few nights where sleep went next door instead of slumbering with you.

Here are just some of the researched articles published on our site regarding sleep issues.....

these links that may help you get back to your old pillow nights...

Can't sleep: [Insomnia](#)

Day fatigue: [Tired day](#)

Need naps: [Napright](#)

Always tired: [Tired always](#)

Is it INSOMNIA: [Insomniareally](#)

Go to our section "[.HEALTH](#)" for coverage of sleep problems and other issues.

FOOD BANKS:

Briefly:

- FOOD BANKS in extreme need as donations are drying up.



ST. PAUL'S ON-THE-HILL **COMMUNITY FOOD BANK**

The Food Banks everywhere are experiencing very difficult times. Donations are shrinking: food costs have increased; operation of food banks is costing more; people aren't making charity donations as before.

The St. Paul's on-the-Hill is feeling the effect of the above triple whammy that has affected them. But the number of those who rely on the Food Bank is increasing every month.

Please help if you can. Ways to make a donation:

Ways to make a donation:

1. eTRANSFER to foodbankdirector@stpaulsonthehill.com
2. PAYPAL
3. Cheque to:

**St. Paul's on the Hill Food Bank
1535 Pickering Parkway**

Pickering, ON
L1V 7E9

Books Shelf...

Briefly:

- It's a busy time of the year. Gail and Heather have been busy as elves in Santa's workshop. Richard has

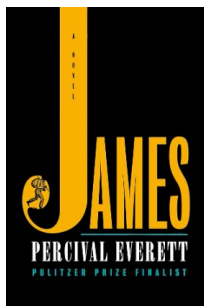


Gail and Heather, two dynamic and discerning book enthusiasts, both retired school administrators, bring years of reading experience to the book shelves here.

Gail's Book Thoughts:

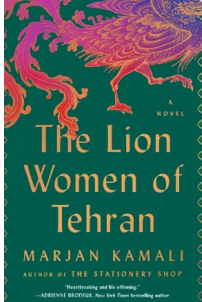
A new year has begun and the long winter season is also upon us. Winter often keeps many of us indoors and gives us ample time to curl up and read a good book. I have a few suggestions for some excellent book that I have enjoyed in 2024.

Fiction:



The first book is titled **James** by **Percival Everett**. This book can be found in the top ten book list on every best book list for 2024. I recently read James and can concur - it is an excellent book! Many adults have previously read the story of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain. James is the reimaging of the story of Huck Finn but told from enslaved Jim's point of view. Jim is a runaway slave who travels with Huck Finn on a dangerous journey by raft down the Mississippi River. There is some satirical humour in the story and definite many thought-provoking thoughts about slavery. You won't be disappointed with this book!

The next book I would recommend is **The Lion Women of Tehran** by **Marjan Kamali**. This is the story of two women, Ellie Soltani and Homa Roozbeh, who are friends since childhood. We follow their stories as



children in the 1960s in Tehran, Iran to present day when Mahsa Amini was arrested and put to death for improperly wearing her hijab in public (2022). As well as a compelling story of friendship, betrayal and forgiveness, this story follows the decades in Iran's history from the 1950-60s rule by the Shah of Iran who introduced the White Revolution. This revolution was a series of reforms that gave rights to women.

Ellie and Homa reach adulthood during the volatile Iranian Revolution which put Khomeini into power in 1979. Many rights were stripped from women and the mandatory hijab law in public was instituted. The author addresses several important themes in Iran's recent history: social class, feminism, women's rights and political activism. Many of us witnessed this history daily on our news channels. This story depicts the turmoil these women experienced. Well worth the read!

Need a good mystery?

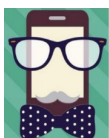


If you need a good mystery to read, I suggest **David Baldacci's** latest thriller which is **To Die For**. This is the return of Travis Devine, the 6:20 Man. (This is the third novel in the 6:20 Man series.) Devine is sent to Seattle to aid the FBI in case that leaves Devine battling new and old enemies. Always a good read.

Non Fiction:



The book **Cher** is an auto-biography written by **Cher**. In this book we actually find out that the Cher we thought we knew, is fiction. The autobiography follows her disastrous childhood through to her meeting and marrying Sonny Bono. Cher "turns back time" and reveals the true story of her life. Unfortunately, this is only Part 1 of her story. Part II will be released November 2025.



Richard's struggling

Richard is struggling with his book selections these days, torn between what he *should* read and what he *wants* to read. The '**should**' list are non-fiction books, history books and classics that he has not read. The '**want**' to read list are the

books he enjoys, usually fictional, always entertaining and often sheer escapism. So what's wrong with choosing one list over the other...a *'guilty reading conscience.'*



Louise Penny's *The GREY WOLF* is a 'grabber,' after a somewhat slow start. The story opens with a break and entry into the secondary Montreal home of Inspector Armand Gamache, senior detective with Quebec's Surete. His jacket, stolen in the B&E, is returned by parcel post and the pockets contains pieces of paper with partial lists of herbs and spices. The opening salvo to a complex and sophisticated read regarding a terrorist plot against a large urban region of the province.

Read my full review at [GREYWOLF](#)

TECH DESK:

Briefly:

- AI - Artificial Intelligence - a primer with some discussion about AI

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI is computing power taken to a higher level than commonly thought. Sometimes referred to as *large language model* (LLM) which is computer programming that can recognize and generate text based on working/dealing with huge sets of data.

Availability

AI apps or programs are readily available, often offering free trial models. Otherwise, these apps have monthly subscription charges that can add up significantly, quickly and easily.

I recommend using the free trial versions and if you find you are using them often, then proceed to the next step which is bargaining with the AI providers to get a better deal. If you are a writer, journalist writing material on a regular basis, AI can be an invaluable tool for inspiration, motivation, summarizing, research, writing and polishing your material.

Below is a list of AI links not in any particular order, but all have:

The best free AI tools at a glance

| | Category (recommended) | Standout feature (The PRO versions of some of these AI apps have fewer limitations than the free version.) |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| ChatGPT | AI chatbot | Powerful and easy to use |
| Adobe Firefly | AI image generator | Image generation with Generative Fill and Expand features; integrates with Adobe's suite |
| Pixlr | AI photo editor | Modular photo editor; includes AI Cutout and Backdrop features |
| Rytr | AI writing generator | Affordable upgrades for AI content |
| Grammarly | AI grammar checker | Grammar check; tone adjustments; works across multiple apps and browsers |

Practical uses of AI

AI has extensive practical uses, particularly for writers but anyone who uses a computer.

Writers can use AI for inspiration, to give them ideas what to write, and even write drafts to meet their writing needs. AI will produce a draft of what you ask for in seconds. This can then be edited, re-written or excerpted to suit your writing needs. In a very short time, you will learn how to best use this tool.

Computer users can use AI to search the Internet. They can refine their search criteria in numerous ways to affect useful and practical results very quickly. The key is to ask questions that are specific. For example, “What are the FIVE best AI tools?” or “List TEN free AI tools with their web site links.” Making your directive specific produces the best results quickly and efficiently.

LAST WORD



The world's going mad?

I watch the news a lot and I believe it taints my view of the world too much, even tainting my attitude as I go through my days. The news is filled with events marked by anger, rage and aggression. The broadcasts imply that the world is inundated with an endless number of malevolent aggressors, destructive terrorists and criminally slanted conspirators.

The world has as much good in it as bad. Sin, violence, murder and killing has more sensationalist attraction to it than does the fireman rescuing the cat from the tree.

Turn off the TV! Our world is a much better place than the television broadcasters display.

Wishing everyone...



& FERMO TOO !

NADIA