



The DESKS

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From the FRONT DESK:

Editorial

It's the best of times, the worst of times.

Our world is becoming more and more amazing everyday. Technology, innovation and technical know-how surprise us more and more, everyday. Medical break throughs are finding cures for what we had thought was incurable, . Technological creations are shocking us beyond our wildest thinking. Who'd have thought cars could drive themselves? Who'd have thought planes could be made so small and advanced, they could be used right from our driveways? Who'd have thought surgeons would be able to operate on someone hundreds or even thousands of miles away? And more comes every day.

It truly is the best of times in so many ways.

But it is also the worst of times.

You are likely more familiar with 'the bird' than you'd like to be. Likely seen it in a parking lot as you were about to pull into a parking spot that another driver had their eye on. Other gestures have the same message, used in traffic jams, at street intersections, in crowded gatherings. These are a few examples of negativity showing our crumbling social system. "Yes sir," "Thank you ma'am," "Excuse me please..." phrases gone the way of the dodo in today's world. Respect and regard for authority? Honour, manners, etiquette? Vanished. Care, empathy...poof! These have all been piled on to the debris heap of yesterday.

Our system, once bonded by the proper manners and mutual respect for each other are threatened to complete eradication today. Manners, respect, mutual consideration of others...on the heap, rejected by more and more people today and a certain world leader leads this social disintegration.

Crime and violence are another story. Parking your car in your driveway is an invitation to the car thief, even in broad daylight. A minor rear end collision

could be the opening salvo to a carjacking. At gun point no less. The prevalence of violent crimes trickles down to even the most minor facets of our society. As many employees of call centres will attest, each working shift is a test of patience, durability and resilience.

Recently, I spent an hour trying to get a phone number for a Canadian government department. Hearing bot after bot, listening to endless robot messages, one scripted phrase really grabbed me: over and over, almost every one of the robot replies had this *cautionary note added to it*, “if aggressive, rude or harassing language is used, the call will be disconnected.”

Wow, such a message added to every one of the calls I heard makes me think, many people must be responding in anger or aggressive language and so often that companies must include a warning in their automated phone calls. That’s an indication of the troubled times in which we are living. Evidently, these kinds of offensive messages must be very common, so much so that companies have to add these warning messages to their call responses.

The anonymity of social media or the easy access to social media may be the cause of this growing disrespect and anger in our society. Perhaps it is reflection of the violence and aggression televised so often by our news broadcasts. Perhaps it is the hatred and aggression so thematic to so many cinematic productions from Hollywood. What ever the cause, there is no denying our citizenry is too ready to jump in with guns blazing, anger flaming and aggression blasting away.

What happened to raising children to be respectful of authority, older people and others? Are parents becoming slipshod in teaching their children what we were taught? Are teachers slipping in what they teach our young people? It certainly looks like our society is on a slippery slope downward.

Bottom line...

Get back on top of your game if you influence younger people. Accept respect and proper behaviour in dealing with people, seniors and authority figures. Let’s bring back the days of ‘thank you,’ ‘yes sir,’ ‘no ma’am’ and the like. However, people in positions of authority, influence and teaching may need reminding that they themselves need to act as people deserving of respect. They have to treat people respectfully and with reciprocal sensitivity and care. You shouldn’t be giving people “the bird” just because they cut in front of you on the road, or in the line at the bank. Say something like “you’re in a hurry, eh?” rather than calling them a name. Better yet, don’t say anything at all or show any angry response.

We live in tough times. Let’s return to the days when we treated others as we want to be treated, with respect, courtesy and care.

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.

From the PICKERING City Council



Profile
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Councillor Maurice Brenner
Regional Councillor Ward 1



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Councillor Lisa Robinson
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Councillor Mara Nagy
City Councillor Ward 2



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Councillor David Pickles
Regional Councillor Ward 3



Profile
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Councillor Shaheen Butt
City Councillor Ward 3



Profile
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From Mayor Ashe...

Dear Friends,

As we enter into March and the spring season, I want to take a moment to reflect on the past month.

February was a month filled with reflection, celebration, and education as we honoured Black History Month. February served as an opportunity to recognize the immense contributions of Black Canadians, both past and present, who have shaped our history, culture, and communities in profound ways. Whether through historical education, cultural celebrations, or community events, it was heartening to see how many of us came together to learn and celebrate the achievements and experiences of Black Canadians.

February will also be remembered as one of the most challenging winters we've had here in Pickering and across Ontario. The heavy snowfall we've faced over the past few weeks has certainly tested us all, but thanks to the tireless efforts of our Operations staff, our roads, sidewalks, and public facilities have been kept clear, ensuring everyone could stay safe and mobile. It's no easy task, and I truly

appreciate all their hard work and dedication in making sure our City stays accessible, no matter the weather.

As we enter March, I'd like to extend a special invitation to you all for my Coffee with Kevin, back by popular demand! Join me on Wednesday, March 19, at 6:00 PM at Trebilcock Coffee Roasters (1035 Toy Ave #19), a local business that is redefining the Canadian coffee landscape with their next-level Farm-to-Cup experience. I'd love to catch up with you, hear your thoughts, and share what's happening in our City. Limited spots are available so please RSVP at coffeewithkev.eventbrite.com.

As we step into spring, let's continue to embrace the energy and optimism of the season. I look forward to connecting with you all, and I'm excited for the great things ahead!

As always, please do not hesitate to contact my office at mayor@pickering.ca or 905.420.4600. Also, I encourage you to stay up to date on the latest news in Pickering by subscribing to my newsletter if you haven't already.

Truly,

Ashe

City of Pickering

From Councillor Maurice Brenner...

From Councillor David Pickles...

Pickles

Yours

Kevin

Mayor,

David

Regional Councillor Ward 3



Paul White
President



Peggy Bowie
President
(Ph 416.903.3284)

PWSCA

Pickering West Shore Community Association

Scott Loyst
President

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.

Message: An election, we didn't need, we likely didn't want

[This message was written a couple of days before the election. So it is a prediction.]

Ford won another majority. Maybe diminished, fewer than his previously held 78 seats, Bonnie Crombie will get commendable numbers. Marit Stiles' days as leader of the provincial NDP are numbered but she is a viable alternative to the Liberals. Still she'll be gone within a year, two at best. Years of honest effort, sincere leadership gone....poof at the whim of a misguided electorate.

The hope and wishful thinking that elected Donald T****, was displayed by Ontario's voters. Despite: Despite Ford's endless sins, scandals and slip-ups the majority of voters were either deaf, blind or unthinking. 'Better the devil you know...' is not the way to vote but that may have been the attitude held by the majority of voters. Emergency room care is terrible in hospitals everywhere. Only if you are will to take out a 'mortgage' that will cost you an arm and a leg.

Is life better in Ontario after more than six years of governing by the Conservative Party? It would be interesting to hear the explanations given by people who think it is better. This election result is much like that in the USA. The Americans elected a felon, a misogynist, a lying bully willingly and democratically. Listen to their elders now, criticizing that vote, complaining about the error of their election. Closing the barn door now is too late folks. Ditto in Ontario. Both leaders read the voters' message. We know you fouled up and continue doing so often but we accept you with your sins. Go ahead, lead us.

Oh man, what can one say.

Richard

HEALTH:

Briefly:

- Respiratory Syncytial Virus may be the new COVID.

Hey people! Have you heard about **RSV**? Well, maybe you should know about it and how to keep it at bay this winter. There's no need to panic, but it's good to be in the know!

What's the deal with RSV?

RSV, or **Respiratory Syncytial Virus**, is a pesky virus that loves to make an appearance during Canadian winters. It's not just a kid thing—older folks and anyone with a wonky immune system need to watch out.

Who's at risk?

- **The Young and the Young at Heart:** babies and grandparents;
- **The Not-So-Fighting Fit:** If you have heart or lung issues, diabetes, or a weakened immune system, you are an easy prey for the RSV virus.

How to Spot It

RSV's a sneaky one – it can look like a cold, the flu, or even COVID. Here's what to watch for:

- Starts with a runny nose and maybe a low fever
- Might progress to wheezing and trouble breathing
- Can make you feel wiped out, with headaches and achy muscles

Keeping RSV at Bay

Time to channel your inner defences! Here's your battle plan:

1. **Wash those hands:** serious washing, like you're scrubbing in for surgery, folks!
2. **Mask up:** When you're out and about, especially if you're feeling under the weather.

3. **Keep your distance:** Give everyone a nice, polite Canadian 2-meter bubble.
4. **Clean and disinfect:** Attach those surfaces with a good wipe-down.

Vaccine Talk

Good news! There's a **vaccine** available:

- If you're 75 or older, it's recommended for you;
- 60 and up with health issues? Talk with your doctor.

When to Call for Backup

If you're having trouble breathing or feeling really rough, don't tough it out – reach out to your health care provider. They're there to help!

Remember, we're all in this together. By looking out for ourselves and each other, we can make this winter a bit less sniffly for everyone. Stay warm, stay safe, and maybe treat yourself to some poutine – doctor's orders!

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.

Richard reads Books:

I read a lot, nightly before 'lights out.' I have written this before, I prefer to read digitally, on my iPad rather than with a book.

The benefits of reading on a digital device, iPad

With an iPad, I can do things that enhance my actual reading. In a second window, I can confer with a map to find the location of what I am reading, even look at the street where the action takes place (if it is a non-fiction book). With Stuart Woods books, I can not only look at the restaurants he writes about, the menus in those restaurants but even photos of the meals. I can look up unfamiliar words, get definitions, find translations of foreign phrases. With a digital device, I have access to a whole world of information, wikipedia, library of congress, reference books and the wide world of web.

When I am done, get back to reading my book and I am in control. If I don't want to look it up, I can just continue reading without interruption.

Another convenience, though this can be done in a book by folding the page corner, I can mark where I left off.

Another...in digital reading, I can highlight words, lines, paragraphs and even write notes

about it. In a real book, I must write in it with pencil or, verboten, with a pen.

Finally, digital books can be borrowed from almost any library in North America. You just have to have a library card. I don't buy books as my book shelves already have too many books. So I borrow. I borrow from multiple libraries in Ontario and from one of the largest libraries in the USA, Broward library in Florida. They gave me an electronic library card and I can search for and borrow hundreds of of books. Convenient, practical, boundless, and free!

I love books, digital books even more !!!

TECH DESK:

Briefly:

- Are you responsible for minute-taking and verbal record of meeting? Here's the app for you.



If you are responsible for recording or keeping a verbal record of meetings, this is the cell phone app for you. Even the free version has what you need.

[Ask permission to record anyone.]

Easy Voice Recorder is a *free* app for your cellphone that will surprise you with its capability and features.

The app can record anything it hears, the spoken word, music, random sounds...if you can hear it, *Easy Voice Recorder* can record it and you can listen to it any time you wish and as often as you want.

Make notes as you listen

This app is ideal for individuals who are responsible for keeping text records of meetings. You can type up your text file, pause the recording as you need, type your notes and resume listening, all at the touch of your cell phone screen.

Transcription feature

Even more awesome is that the *Easy Voice Recorder* has a 'transcribe' feature which will type everything that was recorded into a text record. You simply click the '*Transcription*' icon and the app will produce a typed record of the recorded material in a few moments. Now you can paste the typed text into the processor you use and edit it as you wish.

That's all there is to it...simple, straightforward and easy to use. A voice recorder that converts the recorded words into a typed text record and as easy to use as any word processing program.

For more details, visit [DIGIPOM](#)

The app is available for Android and Apple devices at the Google or Apple Store.



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The limited edition  digital newsPAPER is the newest publication and the most time intensive. Pickering needs this kind of paper as every one of past ones is gone. The News Advertiser has gone digital in its commercialized messaging.

Pickering has no central news source. The



with its goal of becoming the town crier for local news, is the attempt at creating on central news source.

But it is not getting the support that was hoped for. Like so many other newspapers, it too will cease publication after the March issue. Three issues have been published with the highlights showcasing of Mayor Kevin Ashe, the Fire Chief Stephen Boyd and the CEO of the Pickering Public Library, Jackie Flowers, along with some interesting newstories.

Thank you everyone.

All the best for March, hopefully winter will remain a 'light one' and spring will arrive early.

Best,



NADIA & FERMO TOO !