



## *Message from Queen's Park*



**Monthly Column by MPP John Yakabuski**

October 29, 2010

Last week the citizens here at home, indeed citizens all across Ontario went to the polls, making choices around who they'd prefer represent them at the municipal level for the next four years.

From my standpoint, the results represent the most significant change, in terms of numbers anyways, of heads of municipalities that I've ever witnessed in my time as MPP. Of the eighteen municipalities that lay within the boundaries of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, no fewer than nine of them have new heads of council. And at County Council, there will be five new faces at the table, sitting as representatives of their municipalities.

I extend to all successful candidates my sincere congratulations, and my thanks for their acceptance, or continued acceptance, of the great responsibility entrusted to them by the electorate of each voting community. I assure all of them that I'll continue, as I believe I always have, to be completely accessible to them as they go about the business of representing their various constituencies. My door remains open to them, and I heartily encourage them to consider me, and my office, as a resource and avenue of assistance to them as they carry out their duties.

To be sure, some of those new faces are replacing people who either retired or chose not to run again. And there are those who have run for office for the first time and not experienced the success they were hoping for. These people are to be congratulated for their desire to serve, and are to be encouraged to stay involved. It's a healthy thing for democracy when there's choice on the ballot, and I thank you for presenting us with that choice.

But there are also a number of people who put their names forward for re-election, or election to other posts, who were not successful. These people have taken the risk every politician takes when they allow their name to stand for public office, and I extend to them my most sincere thanks for the service that they've given to their communities, the positive difference that they've made, and the meaningful impact that they've had. Your communities, each and every one, are the better for you having served as selflessly as you have.

I have long maintained that the municipal level of government is the most important of all, as it is the one closest to the people. We who serve at other levels could not do our jobs as well without the "on the street" perspective that municipal leaders share with us. Quite simply, thank you, one and all.

On another note, as we move forward through the year, anniversaries and important dates come and go, the great tapestry of time marching forward. And, as always, the importance of Remembrance Day needs to be mentioned, indeed highlighted, as a significant event, especially connected as it is to the passage of time.

When I was young, I was like a lot of Canadian kids, in that Remembrance Day was something truly special, aside from being a day off school. We would line the streets of Barry's Bay, and delight at the approach of our fathers, the veterans, as they marched down the main drag, flags unfurled, drums beating the cadence, the skirl of pipes in the air. These were our dads, and in some cases, our moms, and they were in the prime of their lives, and whatever their wartime experience, they marched with a pride that made our hearts swell. There are not as many of them as there once was, and those who remain have become increasingly frail, having lost a step or two over the years. But they remain fiercely loyal to their duty, the duty they once exercised on behalf of their nation in time of war or other conflict, and their duty of honour and remembrance to their comrades, those having fallen in battle long ago, and those who have simply lost the battle of time.

These are young men and women simply grown old, and that when they present their salutes, they are, for a moment anyways, young again, indeed one again, in solidarity with their comrades. In their time, they stood as the guarantors of the protection of this nation, and were part of a generation that set out to make others free of tyranny. How fortunate we are for the contributions they've made to our Canada. We must never forget.

Today, in Afghanistan, young men and women from this country continue to stand in the way of danger in order to protect the weak from the transgressions of the strong. As it was with those who went before them, these, too, are Canada's heroes. They, too, are worthy of our pride and heartfelt thanks.

I encourage everyone to attend a Remembrance Day ceremony if you possibly can, thank a veteran whenever you meet one, and wear a poppy. We can never repay the debt we owe them, but we can show our continuing gratitude. "At The going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them".

### *Lest We Forget*

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