



Message from Queen's Park



Monthly Column by MPP John Yakabuski

December 13, 2010

As the legislature breaks for Christmas, it is clear that the strategy of the McGuinty Liberals has been decided on by the political planners in the second floor corner office. With the election date set as October 6th, 2011, the operatives have already let some of their game plan slip out. A document prepared by Sussex, a strategic consulting firm, hired by the Liberal Party was leaked to the PC Caucus. It revealed that part of the Liberal strategy will be to confuse and mislead the public so they don't focus on the McGuinty government's record of the past seven years. A record of broken promises, flip-flops and failures. While the Liberals are clearly hoping to fool the people, I am very much of the belief that the people are much smarter than they give them credit for 2011 promises to be very interesting indeed.

As your MPP, I've gotten to do some pretty unique things over the past several years. One of them has been my involvement with so many talented musical people who call the Valley home. Most of my experience has been of the country and spiritual genre. As some of you would know, I have actually released two CD's of that variety. My current release, TAKING CARE is a fund-raising project for our long term care homes here in Renfrew County, with all proceeds going to them. Notwithstanding my affection for country and spiritual, almost any music well played is most enjoyable.

I experienced this, as I recently joined the Pembroke Symphony Orchestra as the narrator of T'was the Night Before Christmas which was part of their For Kids from 1 to 92 Christmas concert. Even though the weather did not co-operate, the concert was Sunday, December 12th. Those who did brave the elements were treated to a wonderful afternoon of music and voice. From Handel's Messiah to Leroy Anderson's Sleigh Ride, the orchestra, under the direction of conductor, Angus Armstrong, was magnificent. The audience even got to participate in a Christmas Carol sing-a-long. The vocal highlights of the afternoon were provided by Kathleen Radke of Renfrew. Ms. Radke's beautiful soprano voice is something to behold indeed.

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Over the few weeks preceding the concert at the Pembroke Festival Hall, I was able, during a few practice sessions, to catch a glimpse of the dedication and commitment these musicians have to their craft and how incredibly hard they work at it. A real treasure right here in the Valley.

Speaking of Christmas, it's a time of year that my family and I look forward to very much. This will be the first year that Vicky and I have experienced the empty nest syndrome. While our children are at home from time to time, they are now either on their own or away at school. For those of you who have been through it, you know exactly what I am talking about. With grandchildren as well, our home will be full of Christmas joy. It's easy to let the hustle and bustle and the merriment of the holiday season become the focal point of the Christmas season but we can never truly celebrate Christmas without Christ. Some 2000 years ago, in a stable in Bethlehem, our Saviour was born. As we enjoy the pleasures of friends and family, gift giving and receiving let us never forget the true meaning of Christmas and the miracle that has sustained us for centuries.

On behalf of Vicky and our entire family, please accept our most sincere wishes for a Blessed and Merry Christmas and May 2011 be full of health, happiness and prosperity.

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