

# Electoral meetings 'interesting'

## Editorial Board



ARITA DROOG

Hi there. It has been quite a while since I last wrote an article for the paper.

Yes I have been slacking off in the writing department, but not in the learning department.

Since my last article I have been to three public consultation meetings and appeared on cable TV. The consultations were interesting to say the least.

First off, I would like to thank those who came to the meeting on Dec. 4.

I felt proud that we had as many speakers as we did. To me that means that the message is getting out there and people are concerned about what's happening.

Hooray Owen Sound!

You make me proud to be from this area.

As for the other meetings that I attended, the main focus was on change, either to proportional representation or mixed member proportional.

Some speakers did not want change while others advocated whole new systems.

Some preferred single transferable vote while others liked the two-round system.

So as you can see there are many diverse points of view that need to be considered.

After this first meeting I thought I could handle all the information by sorting through it and using it to help me make my decision.

Then I attended another consultation meeting in Orangeville. There again I was bombarded with thoughts, ideas and information.

Again the subject of fairness of representation came up several times, and stronger voter participation was a major concern too.

In Belleville the theme was change, again most suggested MMP or PR with one or two suggesting no change to the system.

I think though that one of the major concerns, should we recommend a change, was the issue of a public education campaign.

At this point in time there are many people who are not yet aware that we are in the midst of this process.

Hopefully they will be aware sometime before they get handed their ballot in October. This is not part of our mandate, but I believe that as part of the process we can recommend or suggest that a public education campaign should be undertaken.

In looking at the hansard (Nov 16/06) it looks like this is already in place should we recommend a change.

Many other issues were also brought up, like:

- We should consider how elections are financed. Unions and business should not be allowed to dominate the funding of politics.

- The voting age should be lowered.

- The referendum should be held separately from the election to create more interest.

- A 60 per cent threshold for the referendum is too high.

These are all issues that are beyond our mandate, but we can choose to comment on them in our final report.

The information is starting to stack up and I have yet to come to some kind of conclusion.

So you see where my dilemma is. Everyone has a good point, every system has its good points and bad points and every person has the right to a vote that counts.

To those of you who know me, you know that I will be wrestling with this until the final conclusion.

To those of you who only know me through this column I hope I will have your support on whatever decision I/we make. Until next time.

On the weekends that we are meeting you can see us in action with live web streaming on the **TVOntario website**, <http://www.tvo.org/cfmx/tvoorg/citizensassembly/>

You can also write the assembly at Citizens' Assembly Secretariat, 1075 Bay St., Suite 830, Toronto, Ont., M5S 2B1

You can also follow along at the website [www.citizensassembly.gov.on.ca](http://www.citizensassembly.gov.on.ca)

If you have any questions e-mail me at [ADroog@ontariocitizensassembly.ca](mailto:ADroog@ontariocitizensassembly.ca)

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