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Politically Speaking

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There are all kinds of junkies in the world, sports junkies, movie junkies, food junkies, and a host of others. The online Free Dictionary (I love anything that is free) describes a junkie as "One who has an insatiable devotion, ie. A sports junkie."

Well, I admit to being a political junkie, and have been for five decades. In that time I have served as a campaign manager in so many municipal, provincial, and federal elections that I have lost count. I have also been a candidate at both the municipal and provincial levels and an elected official in the then Borough of Etobicoke and Metropolitan Toronto Councils, (both of those bodies are now part of the City of Toronto), and, to round things out I have served as a Chief Administrative Officer, or City Manager, in a number of municipalities, including Clarington.

Now, the reason I am telling you this is that I plan to visit you in the weeks to come (by way of this publication) and give you some thoughts on the politics of the day, at all levels of the spectrum. I only think it fair that you know a bit of my background and my political leanings so that you can readily agree with me or take another blood pressure pill.

I am a Conservative, and at one time I was a member of the Reform Party. (Maybe you better make that two blood pressure pills). You see in todays society it's not good to be a Conservative. The C.B.C., The Toronto Star, The Globe and Mail, C.N.N., M.S.N.B.C. and most main stream media outlets agree that Conservatives are either far right kooks or bible thumping war mongers,(and those are the nice things they say about us). However, I do think it important that you know from whence I come so that I am not sailing under any false colours.

Now, having said that, I don't want you to go away with the thought that this column will be just a propaganda piece for those politicians that call themselves conservatives or belong to the Conservative or the Progressive Conservative Parties. A lot of those folks are what I call CINOs (Conservatives In Name Only). There are a lot of those politicians around who play up to the party faithful just to get elected but govern with one eye on their press clippings and the other on the opinion polls. They love to be loved. You and I will deal with them.

One of the controversial issues at the local municipal level is the York/Durham Incinerator project being built in Clarington. It brings into focus the role of the four "local" councillors when it comes to looking out for the welfare of the municipality. Although the four councillors have never voted for the proposal, their opposition has been soft at best. However, on any given day they can outvote the remaining three members who serve both locally and at the Region of Durham. These three are swingers for the cause and will support the incinerator because they take their marching orders from the Regional Chair.

On top of all this, the Region has made it clear that they really don't care what the majority of the Clarington Council thinks on the subject. If the Region says the incinerator will be built in Clarington, it will be built in Clarington. So much for the concept of a "Willing Host Community".

Now, I realize that the Environmental Hearings on the incinerator are still underway and, if

the truth is known, will probably give the proposed location the green light. Personally, I am not opposed to incineration. Since Mr. McGuinty killed the rail haul project that would have sent the G.T.A. garbage to a Willing Host Community in Northern Ontario, incineration is probably the best of a bad lot of proposals. It becomes a question of location.

What is the attraction of building the facility in the most south-eastern location of the Region? Hasn't Clarington taken enough unattractive projects without adding an incinerator to the mix? I can see the new economic development marketing pitch once the incinerator is built. "Come to Clarington to locate both your business and your home. Enjoy our beautiful nuclear plant with an expansion on the drawing board. Drive by our nuclear waste pond in Port Granby. And don't forget to visit our state-of-the-art garbage incinerator." Clarington has taken its share of such facilities.

The four "local" councillors should not only vote against the proposal but should take the Region to the Courts to establish a reason for their being. After all, why should the voters of Clarington bother to elect "local" councillors if they simply must dance to the Region of Durham's tunes. These are the type of issues that makes the sport of politic watching only second to playoff hockey.

Stay tuned, and order a new supply of blood pressure pills.