

Does anyone have anything fresh to offer?

It doesn't seem like five years to me. Or, depending upon your point of view, it could seem much longer. In any event, Prime Minister Stephen Harper on Sunday celebrated the fifth anniversary of his ascension to 24 Sussex Drive, when he and the Tories won 124 seats and booted the long-governing Liberals across the floor to the opposition side of the Commons.

In October, 2008, Harper won another election, this time upping his seat total to 143, still a minority, but a much stronger one, and chances are good – and getting better – that 2011 will mark his third attempt at capturing a coveted majority government and getting on with his agenda.

In a speech to the partisan faithful, Harper said, "Canadians gave our party a mandate to shake up Ottawa. We have been faithful. We have kept that trust and we have delivered."

Well, yes and no.

Certainly, Harper followed through on his pledge to cut the GST to five per cent, a move roundly pooh-poohed by the fiscal elites and the opposition, but extremely popular with the folks. And, given the worldwide economic collapse over the last few years, Canada under Harper managed to fare better than pretty well every other industrialized country.

In doing so, however, Harper acted in an extremely unConservative fashion by pouring billions of tax dollars into recession fighting and running up a huge budget deficit. Some argue he had no choice given what was going on in the world. Others believe – and your correspondent is in that camp – that the system would have recovered as it always has when these things happen without the need of putting us more and more in hock. But there you have it.

The only positive thing to say about that is that had the Liberals been in power – or, God forbid, the NDP – the Harper deficit would look like a walk in the park compared to what those guys would have done.

For if there is anything that turns the crank of Liberals – at least the current Liberals – and the NDP, it's the old "tax and spend" mentality. That is why, of course, one of the big issues in the next campaign will be Harper's plan to cut corporate taxes and the Liberal and NDP plan to oppose those cuts.

Obviously, the surest way to discourage industry from expanding and hiring more people – not to mention discouraging new business from coming to the country – is to slap them with more taxes. And the best way to encourage economic growth is to lower the tax.

Ah yes, you cry, we can't afford to cut corporate taxes. And, if we do, the shortfall has to be made up by increasing taxes on the average schmo.

Take heart. The beauty of lowering corporate taxes – and it's been demonstrated time and again – is that it sparks business expansion and more jobs and hence, more taxes being paid. Also, does anybody really believe that every dollar the government is spending now – and this applies to all governments – is a dollar well spent? Just look around your own community and I'm sure you can come up with numerous examples of tax dollars being wasted.

According to public opinion polls, the Tories have generally maintained a healthy lead over Michael Ignatieff's Liberals and Jack Layton's NDP. Experience has shown that, generally speaking, Tories tend to do better during election campaigns than during non-election polling. And with five years under his belt – and despite the best efforts of Liberals and NDP to scare people about Harper's real intentions – this nonsense about having a "hidden agenda" has been shown for what it is: a political hatchet job.

The opposition did try recently to revive the old "hidden agenda" smear when Harper, in an interview with the CBC's Peter Mansbridge, said that he felt capital punishment is sometimes justified but has no intention of bringing it back. Somehow that was (mis)interpreted as a code to his supporters that the minute he gets back into office, he'll immediately start getting a noose ready for the next convenient killer.

You'd think that by now, given that Harper has shown himself to be such a moderate – too moderate for my taste often – that they'd give up on that and move on to something substantial to go after him over.

But then, to do that, they have to have some substantial ideas to sell. And, unless they're hiding them, there's little evidence they have anything fresh to offer.

Which likely means that, come the election, the only question is whether or not Harper will get over the minority hump. It's certainly not guaranteed. Then again, it's certainly not out of reach. My own feeling is he'll be third time lucky. We'll see.



National Affairs

Claire Hoy

February is a cold, short month, with warm-up activities galore at Caledon Seniors' Centre

By Lloyd Bittle

Yes! February and the Centre have activities galore to make it your month to continue achieving your 2011 New Year's resolutions.

January was our 15th anniversary welcome to 2011. A month of grand celebrations with a grand lunch and a healthy toast to Robbie Burns – a New Year's classic.

A warm welcome and activities and friends to make your day and month. We predict "Willie" the groundhog will see his shadow and make February an Amethyst Day and month for all. A poem I remember said: "Rub shoulders with contentment, Make happiness a friend, Run with resolution, Whose fervour is for keeps, Remember we are known, By the company we keep."

We welcome all 55-plussers to join us.

Membership is only \$15

Police warn residents to protect homes from break-ins

Caledon OPP are reminding residents to lock all entry points to their houses and garages when not at home.

That comes after an attempted break-in Jan. 22 at a home in Bolton and successful break-ins earlier in the week in Caledon East and Bolton.

Police report a Procter Avenue home was entered sometime between 2 p.m. Jan. 18 at 3:30 a.m. Jan. 19. A flat panel television was stolen after the thieves accessed the house through the unlocked garage.

Jewellery, money and video games were reported stolen from a residence on Taylorwood Avenue in Bolton after the thieves forced open the front door sometime during the morning of Jan. 17.

A resident of Culpepper Court in Bolton contacted police at the evening of Jan. 22 to report suspects had attempted to get into the house through the interior garage door while the homeowners were out between 7 and 8:30 p.m.

Police are reminding residents to contact them at 1-888-310-1122 when someone or something seems out of place. They believe the potential thieves in this incident walked around the exterior of the home before attempting to gain entry.

per year; the best deal in town. We look forward to a grand 2011. Your participation will make it so. Be a Caledon Senior Centre booster!

February highlights

Feb. 1 – 1 p.m., euchre and bridge.

Feb. 2 – Noon, February birthday and anniversary luncheon. Celebrate yours with us. Happy Groundhog Day. "Willie" promises to see his shadow.

Feb. 4 – 7 p.m., duplicate bridge and euchre. Every Friday. Games, your choice too.

Feb. 9 – 10 a.m., Rock and Roll Theme Day. Costumes prizes, fun galore.

Feb. 14 – Noon, Valentine Luncheon. Bring yours, Meet yours, Enjoy.

Feb. 17 – 11:30 a.m., luncheon, with homemade beef stew, as well as a sing-a-

long and smile show, Canada in Love. The cost will be \$15 per person.

Feb. 21 – Noon, Happy Family Day Lunch. Bring your family and celebrate. All are welcome.

Feb. 23 – Noon, delicious pot-luck lunch. Feed the pot or pay.

Note: All regularly scheduled activities in full swing.

Future highlights

March 8 – Noon, Shrove Tuesday, Pancakes galore. Delicious luncheon and entertainment.

March 10 – Trip to Casino Rama for Grease. The performance is at 1 p.m. This includes a buffet Lunch. The luxury coach leaves the Centre at 9 a.m., returning at 6 p.m. The cost is \$10 per person.

March 13 – Daylight Time begins. Spring clocks

forward. Annual clean up and renovations during March break to March 19.

April 1 – April Fool's Day. Celebrate with us at our Spring Fling Dinner and Dance and Grand Fund Raising Gala. Get your tickets for Grand Prizes. "Fool Around" with us! Winners all!

May 19 – Trip to Falls Casino. Luxury coach leaving the Centre at 9 a.m., returning at 5 p.m. The trip includes a buffet lunch. The cost is \$15/person.

Contact the Centre for all activity details and schedules at (905)-951-6114 or e-mail to caledonsenior@rogers.com

Better still, drop in 7 Rotarian Way, just north of the Wellness Centre, and pick up schedule listings. Always a "cuppa" and friends to meet.

"Only once a stranger."



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"Candles on the Cake" By Melanie Alderfer-Mowat



Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you...

My comical sons will be singing the version about smelling like a shoe to me this birthday as I blow out 40 candles.

Yep, this year I turn the big 4-0.

It's hard to believe so many years have gone by. I'm excited though and feel that at 40 I have a laser-like focus of what I want to do with my life both personally and professionally. I've waited a long time for this feeling to come.

I have friends who knew what they wanted to do in high school but I was meant to go on more of a meandering journey. In my 20s, I tried various areas of work - preschool teacher, singer, tax collector, mortgage underwriter - to see if they fit. While working, I also travelled to places like Kenya, England and France to "find myself". Being in various places and jobs enabled me to gain a clearer picture of what I liked, what my strengths were and where I did not want to be.

My 30s were a more grounded decade: I got married, moved to Canada, found work with an incredible community-impact agency, bought a house and started a family. Although I had a clearer picture of who I was and what I wanted to become, my focus was on my family and being "the twins' mom", ensuring their needs were met.

Now as I turn 40, and as my children are older and more independent, part of my focus is back on me. It's an exciting time; fulfilling my dreams/goals - my "vision" of what life can be! And this perfectly coincides with the energy

here at Caledon Community Services (CCS) which is also at a heightened level. This year too, our community's dear local health and social service agency is turning 40 years old!

CCS has evolved incredibly in only four decades. As I was being welcomed into this world in 1971, a group of concerned Caledon residents came together and decided to serve this community. The beginning of CCS, called the Bolton Contact Centre, opened its doors to provide a crisis line and some informal supports. As residents requested a service that was not available in Caledon, this organization became a catalyst in developing and/or advocating for such needed services.

This catalyst-like behaviour has stayed with CCS throughout the years. The agency has developed a variety of services that support residents with life challenges, all the while fulfilling its mission "to help people help themselves by working creatively and responding to community needs".

Everything accomplished over the past 40 years is thanks to generations of people who have touched CCS. Dedicated staff, passionate volunteers and generous donors - all of whom ensure our neighbours have much needed services in our community.

Now as CCS turns the big 4-0, our entire organization enjoys a laser-like focus on its vision of what life can be, "Healthy, Engaged Compassionate Community for All".

With the same amount of candles on our cakes, and specific visions in mind, it will be amazing to see what will be accomplished in the next 40 years.

How Do You See It?

Tell us how you see it.

You can reach, Melanie Alderfer-Mowat, Communications Specialist, Fundraising & Communications at 905.584.2300 ext 238 or mmowat@ccs4u.org

This column is provided free of charge by the Caledon Citizen.