

Love is in the air when Nelson goes Candi-Dating

By Anne DeGrace.

Nelson folks are an engaged bunch. We wave placards; we write letters to the editor. We get tooth-gnashy about the things that bug us, and we are fiercely proud of our community heroes. And when it comes to elections, we vote. Voter turnout is not a problem in Nelson—but for voters, wading through the pre-election rhetoric can be.

Enter Speed Candi-Dating, through which voters find their municipal match (or matches!) in three-minute one-on-ones. New alliances may occur; strange bedfellows may emerge. The Nelson Public Library—always a social hub—is now poised to be a non-partisan political vortex. And a match-maker. Can you feel the love?

For most of us there is at least one relationship for which we wish we'd had more information, the better to enter with our eyes open. Candi-Dating does that for the voter-electee relationship. We take no responsibility for jilted lovers post-election—all relationships are fraught—but we want to enable open-eye voting of the best possible kind. And if sparks fly—well.

Dan Woynillowicz is the man behind Politics Café (politicscafe.ca), and he's done this sort of thing before, jumping on a suggestion made by a candidate for the 2011 municipal election and running with it. For the 2014 election year, in

partnership with the West Kootenay Eco-Society, he approached the Library Board with the idea of taking Candi-Dating to a place with a rep for community engagement. The Library has that in spades, so the Library Board leapt at the opportunity to ramp our hub-ness up another notch, and maybe spread the love around.

It works like this: would-be electoral lovers register at the door and their names go in a hat for City Council candidates, school trustee candidates, or both. Names will be drawn for each round to do the rounds, so to speak. There will be three minutes to woo or be wooed, and then the bell goes off and things move on—just like real life! Folks not in the current round can enjoy TED talks on municipal politics and other fun things. There will be door prizes and food, of course. Candi-Dating can be a hungry business.

Like all Libraries, we see ourselves as connectors: a conduit for information and learning; a community hub in which to learn and grow; and a place where people gather and things happen. And now, we're match-makers. If there's any fallout from this, we hope it will be chocolate.

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