

Klassen: When logic just doesn't add up

BY KARIN KLASSEN, THE CALGARY HERALD JANUARY 2, 2012



By now, every compilation has been done; the year 2011 has been thoroughly scoured for the best and worst everything, for political slips on banana peels and for metaphorical panties showing.

Like many writers who still like to read with scissors, I save clippings that accumulate in overstuffed folders, and it is to these that I look for inspiration today.

I have a file called "Who has Pictures of Whom Naked?" This is where I put stories that just don't make sense, such as why we have such lousy taxi service in the city, despite everyone but the taxi commission screaming it from every freezing street corner.

Another addition to this "Are you Kidding?" file is Mayor Naheed Nenshi floating the delusion that free-for-all secondary suites are something everyone in the city agrees with, because a University of Calgary Students' Union poll (a hotbed of taxpaying homeowners) and a bunch of special interest lobby groups said so. I don't know one single homeowner (save for the ones who live in Phoenix) who wants them in MBY. Thank you, aldermen, for listening to your constituents, and not turning the city into a living, breathing Sim City video game experiment.

Also making the "What the?!?" file is why Rob Anders keeps getting reelected when he shows such ennui with the job, such as falling asleep in the House of Commons. My theory is that his career is a political science master's thesis: run a cucumber, call it a Tory and see if it will win.

Or there's Alison Redford's reneging on fixed election dates and an independent health care review. It's just so dumb. If the universe unfolds as it should, the rationale will come out and we will think, "Aaaahhh, that makes sense now." If not, and unless she's part of the cucumber experiment, she just won't make it.

Then there was the recent "Huh?!?" news that health superboard chair Ken Hughes has resigned and is rumoured to want to sashay his popularity into a run for provincial politics.

These are inexplicable lapses in logic where the destination doesn't follow from the journey. I'm not saying he isn't a great guy, but gee - doesn't he read the newspaper? People are profoundly unhappy with how health care has been run; he's been largely in charge of it.

Hughes can call it "first class health care" all he wants, but anyone who has actually been ill (especially

the ones who live in Phoenix) know it's not.

I also have a file with stories of people who did their job really well over the course of the year. Here are some of these "likes."

Ald. Diane ColleyUrquhart has been like a dog with a bone exactly when she should be.

Whenever I heard or read a civic story that begged a question, the alderman for Ward 13 quickly asked it.

Not so fast, she said after Gary Holden moved on after the Enmax debacle, now how about we look at that board? She's been as vocal on the shortage of taxis, the city's wimpy stance on the Occupy protesters, the budget, and Nenshi's incivility when, during one of his media gadabouts, he said aldermen were treating the city like an ATM machine. If I were Oprah, I would say, "You go, girl!" but I don't have that kind of street cred.

Chief city bylaw officer Bill Bruce is also on the two-thumbs-up list. In the world of bylaw theory, and that is a big place, Bruce is a rock star, apparently getting standing ovations when he's invited to speak in other jurisdictions. His picture makes the paper so often, we joke about him in our house.

"Bill Bruce is at the door and he wants you to clean your room."

"Bill Bruce called and says you won't get your allowance unless you paint the shutters."

Bruce is so affable in the face of dandelions and doggy doo, that I'm pretty sure that's why the Occupy protesters just up and left.

"Bummer," I imagine one loafer said to the other, "Roll up the Gortex. Bill Bruce has his ticket pad out and he's not afraid to use it."

The files on this year may be closed, but the theme that continues in every realm is that of needing strong leadership at every level. We want it. Let's make sure we get it.

Karin Klassen's column appears every second Monday.

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