

I am so crazy about North Bay that I honestly don't understand why everyone in the world doesn't want to live here. But my unconditional love does not make me blind to our faults and problems.

It bothers me that I have to wear a sports bra to drive down city streets. It bothers me that the best-paved surface in town is the Kate Pace Way. I loathe seeing thoughtlessly discarded litter on our streets. And it breaks my heart to wave goodbye to wonderful people forced to leave their hometown because of a lack of opportunity.

The things that are wrong in North Bay can be fixed. With vision and determination and a solid plan, we can be the best city in this province. In many ways, we already are!

The things that are right in North Bay need to be recognized and applauded. I love the way this city rallies when someone is in trouble. I love the way we come together to celebrate each other's accomplishments, and mourn each other's defeats.

We are a city of people whose everyday accomplishments go unheralded, but not unnoticed. Cheers to the wonderful folk who pay their taxes and beautify their property; who volunteer their time and talents and give tirelessly and generously to charity. The good people who coach sports teams and get involved in the schools and are raising their children to be compassionate, law-abiding citizens. These are the people who live in North Bay by choice. They have turned their backs on more lucrative jobs in bigger cities with more opportunities because they love the lifestyle this city affords. They deserve the best. Let's all work together to make sure they get it!

The Rant

I have never had much faith in the democratic process. When the Watergate scandal broke, I was sixteen years old and just beginning to embrace the cynicism that has since become my hallmark.

I'm ashamed to admit that I have always looked for the black cloud behind the silver lining when it came to politics; I have a black belt in bellyaching. Imagine my shock at finding myself in the unprecedented position of having absolutely nothing to gripe about! I have the good people of North Bay to thank for my new belief in the process. Everyone we have talked to since Victor announced his campaign for mayor has been unbelievably supportive. Every day people tell us that they now have hope; hope that the city will be back on track, hope that their children will have all the opportunities they had back in the "good old days", hope that North Bay will once again be the strong, vibrant city they remember.

We are so grateful to the wonderful people who have volunteered their time to help in Vic's campaign. Family, old friends and new friends bring their infectious enthusiasm and commitment to every effort. And it has been an incredibly positive experience.

I was fully prepared for the ugliness of politics, but to my unending relief, there has been precious little of it. There have been a few rumours and some fear mongering heard around town, but once again, the good people of North Bay know better than to listen and react to innuendo. They come into the headquarters and voice their concerns and receive an honest response. That's the way I'd always hoped politics would work. Thank you North Bay. It appears that this card-carrying cynic will soon be joining the Optimist Club!