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Royson James' picks and pans

Oct. 28, 2006. 07:46 AM

[ROYSON JAMES](#)

Just look at their faces on this page — a magnificently coloured collage that makes Toronto a world city.

Most were born elsewhere and came to the city of dreams with a sense of hope and a spirit of determination that our city government desperately needs.

Today's GTA section analyzes how Toronto council performed in the first term under Mayor David Miller: the politicians we should keep, the ones who were mere bench-warmers, and the ones whose departure would aid, not hurt our city.

And for every incumbent pegged to leave, we have at least one terrific newcomer, shown here, ready to fill the void.

They speak Urdu, Italian, Somali, Arabic, Mandarin, Spanish, Filipino — some with the diction of a CBC news reader — and they bring a world of experience to our city. It's time to send them to city hall where they'll make a world of difference.

From 26-year-old Keith Sweeney, looking to unseat a dinosaur in York South-Weston, to the cantankerous and aging warrior John Sewell, hoping to bring some accountability to city hall, they are a breed apart. Their election would change the face of Toronto, and alter its politics for the better.

Toronto's motto is Diversity Our Strength. The motto recognizes that in welcoming so many of the world's brilliant and motivated citizens, Toronto gets the better part of the deal. It's time to tap into our strength.

It's also time to bring a new dynamic to the city, one that promotes excellence instead of political alliances and blind loyalty.

In choosing these newcomers, we prized above all the promise of passion and commitment to community. Journalist Adam Vaughan may be a mayoral candidate some day. Diana Hall sees a world beyond Scarborough's borders. In all, they are an antidote to the tired or lazy incumbent.

Mohamed Dhanani promises to bring a bank branch to Flemingdon Park. Strange promise indeed, until you realize a neighbourhood of 20,000

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"Our time has come," says Sonali Verma, challenging in Ward 1, the ward with the largest South Asian population.

Voters should embrace them and fuel a tidal wave of change at city hall. Yes, it's a leap of faith. But judging by what we have now — too many disengaged, aging, career councillors who long ago lost the spark that made city politics dynamic — they will be an improvement.

A council of 45 can withstand the tremor caused by these newcomers. Besides, city hall needs a good shake.

The James Report: B4-5

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