

The Ballot - July 2006

Welcome to the first issue of The Ballot!

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From the Chair



It's been a busy couple of months, travelling across the province speaking at selection meetings, and getting to know Assembly members. I've been contacting members who were selected at meetings I didn't attend, and look forward to meeting them all in person in September.

I really enjoyed speaking to everyone who attended selection meetings. It was inspiring to see the number of people who took time out of their summer weekends to learn more about the Citizens' Assembly. I thank you all for your interest and hope you will take advantage of other opportunities to get involved in the Assembly's activities by visiting the website for regular updates.

On behalf of the Citizens' Assembly Secretariat, I want to extend my thanks and appreciation to Elections Ontario for managing the selection process so efficiently and with such enthusiasm.

Staff at the Secretariat are hard at work preparing for the Learning Phase, which begins on September 9th. And I'm developing strategies for what I can do, as Chair, to facilitate the important work that Assembly members will do.



George Thomson



Selection Meetings Complete!

Teams from Elections Ontario and the Citizens' Assembly Secretariat spent the end of May and all of June travelling across the province attending meetings to select 103 citizens to form the Assembly. Twenty-nine meetings and 17 cities later the Assembly is complete!

The selection meetings were very well attended. In some cities, members of the public who weren't candidates for selection attended meetings to observe the process and learn more about the Citizens' Assembly.

There was a great deal of media interest in the selection process, and many Assembly members were featured in their communities' local paper. In fact, the Citizens' Assembly was mentioned in the news almost every day in June. Here are a few examples:

Assembly to review Ontario's electoral system (Lindsay Daily Post, June 1)

Electoral reform sparks interest (The Toronto Star, June 7)

From refuge to reform: Kingstonian chosen for electoral group (Kingston Whig Standard, June 12)

Residents play role in election reform (The Mississauga News, June 16)

Your chance to alter democracy (The Sudbury Star, June 28)

Read more about the [selection process](#).

About the Members

Visit [Meet the Members](#) to see photos and biographies of our diverse members. Learn about their families, occupations, hobbies and why they're committed to being part of the Assembly. It's interesting to see how Assembly members' ages compare to Ontario's population:

	Age Cohorts				
	18-24	25-39	40-54	55-70	70+
Ontario's Population*	12%	29%	30%	17%	12%
Citizens' Assembly Members	11%	22%	31%	24%	12%

*Source: Statistics Canada

The Ballot Box with Dr. Rose



In this section, I'll share an interesting fact or a mini-lesson on electoral systems. I hope you'll visit The Classroom section of the Citizens' Assembly website so you can follow along with Assembly members as they learn together.

Since this is the first issue, it makes sense to examine psephology or the study of elections. I thought it might be interesting to examine the word's roots.

Psephos comes from the Greek term for pebbles, a reference to the early practice of voting using pebbles. Logos, also Greek, means 'the study of'. Together they form the term 'psephology,' meaning: the study of elections.

Fast forward to the way we vote today, using ballots. The term "ballot" comes from the Italian word palla which means 'ball,' a throwback to the days when balls were used to record votes—the original ballots!

There'll be many more facts, trivia and other information in The Classroom, coming soon, on our web site.

Dr. Jonathan Rose is the Academic Director with the Citizens' Assembly Secretariat and will be leading the learning sessions for the Assembly.

New on Our Site

- [The Secretariat Team](#)
- [Get Involved](#)
- [Media Room](#)

Questions or comments about The Ballot? Send an e-mail to: theballot@citizensassembly.gov.on.ca

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