

## Unfriended on Facebook

Written by **BRIAN LOCKHART**

It finally happened. I had to 'unfriend' someone on Facebook.

While most of my Facebook friends should actually be called acquaintances, I do use the website as a way of keeping in contact with many old friends who now live in different cities and towns.

Thanks to Facebook I've reconnected with a few people I had lost contact with over the years, including several high school buddies and a couple of old girlfriends who went on to other things.

Since telephone books seem to be almost a thing of the past and there is no public listing of cell phones that I'm aware of, looking someone up in 'the book' isn't as easy as it once was.

Finding someone on Facebook takes only a few minutes or less - providing of course they have also joined this massive social network - and the more unusual the name the quicker they can be located.

For the most part, people tend to post pretty innocent stuff. Vacation photos, family outings, and hobbies seem to be pretty popular. For a while everyone felt the need to post a photo of their dinner when they went out to a restaurant. Thankfully that trend seems to be done with, although photos of your winery tour seem to have taken its place.

Currently the trend seems to be taking photos of your legs and feet while you are on a lounge in front of a body of water - either up at the cottage or in the Caribbean.

While most people on Facebook tend to use the web site for staying in touch with friends - sort of like the old yearly family newsletter - others, for some reason use it as a platform to express thoughts that they would never say in public.

The friend I had to 'unfriend' fell into the latter category.

In everyday conversation he never spoke of politics, never behaved in an obnoxious manner, and was generally a congenial guy.

Bringing up politics at a party is the height of a social faux pas. It ranks right up there with asking someone how much money they make or criticizing a person's religion. If you want to keep your friends as friends, those are some common sense things you just don't talk about.

If you want to find yourself alone at a party while people roll their eyes behind your back, start talking about politics and pontificate about your superior knowledge of how things should be done.

And yet, despite common sense and good manners this guy felt the need to post his political opinions on a daily basis.

Why would a seemingly friendly person suddenly turn into a pompous blowhard simply because his thoughts are on a computer screen rather than spewed out face to face?

I don't care what a person's political or religious beliefs are. Occasionally the discussion might come up but to tell another person they are 'wrong' for a different set of values pretty much sets up an uncomfortable situation.

This guy posted almost daily his thoughts on the political scene both here and in the U.S.

Occasionally someone would respond but for the most part they didn't. I figured that sooner or later he would get the message that

people don't respond to his posts because they simply would not play that game. Even worse, if someone did object, he would rebut every time, and keep rebutting to get the last word in ? every time.

I once suggested that maybe he had a void in his life and if he channeled his anger into something positive his life might be better. That sentiment was echoed by several of his Facebook friends who agreed ? obviously they were feeling the drain of these constant political posts as much as I was.

The latest round started when Doug Ford was elected premier. He posted daily that Ford was ruining the province ? before he had even taken office. It doesn't matter to me who you voted for, but this type of narrow-minded polarized thinking is way over the top.

I decided I didn't want daily messages for the next four years from this guy preaching his blowhard style of superior political knowledge ? so finally I decided to hit the 'unfriend' button and go back to hearing out about vacations, dinners at a downtown restaurants, and photos of people having fun poolside.

I don't know if it is simply the fact that lonely people find venting online is easy from the confines of your computer or maybe it is the only way they can get people to listen to them.

Either way, tuning out was the best option.