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It had to happen: Toronto mayoral candidates suffer from debate overload

Last night, the inevitable finally occurred. With approximately one squillion debates scheduled for this municipal election, some of the candidates were late attending one debate (at the University of Toronto's downtown campus) because they hadn't yet left a previous debate (at Lawrence and Dufferin). This tragedy might have been avoided if all of the candidates could agree to some kind of multilateral disarmament on this front, but that seems unlikely.

The second debate (live-tweeted by the *Globe and Mail's* tireless **Kelly Grant**, who was forced to sit on the floor for part of it) was actually kind of novel: rather than the usual shoutfest where **Rob Ford** talks about the gravy train and everyone else tries to come up with new ways to call Ford on his talking points, the candidates sat down for one-on-one questions from **John Tory**, without whom no Toronto political event is complete. There were also statements from the audience, which led to some interesting moments, such as these from the *Globe* live blog:

"This is a conversation among friends," Rocco A says. Someone shouts, "You're not my friend!" Tough crowd.

What would you do for affordable housing? [Sarah Thomson] blames prob on poor planning, wants more mixed income and portable rent subsidies. Sarah calls TCHC "the worst landlord in the city." Audience member calls her on it. "That's not true!"

But really, less and less is being gleaned about the candidates through the endless rounds of debate. In fact, the candidates appear to be increasingly worn out by them. **George Smitherman raised the issue last week during the debate at Pinewoods**, and his campaign manager tweeted that they get hell when they object to the schedule.

It's tempting to mention that there will be a ton of arguments waiting for them in the mayor's office, too, but that would just be mean.

- [Liveblog: Toronto Mayoral debate \[Globe and Mail\]](#)

by **John Michael McGrath**

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