

Speaking Out

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New Publication /New

After much thought and procrastination I have decided to produce and distribute Speaking Out. Due to the inability of people dissatisfied with government policies at all levels who are unable to Speak Out. The moment of decision for me was when the Packet edited my last letter they published as well as not publishing others. So here I am at my computer launching what I hope will be a place where everyone will have the opportunity to vent. We will not edit your letters or comments and all subjects will be treated fairly.

This endeavor is not for profit but to actually let people have their say. If anyone with expertise in a given subject wants to write an article say on Energy, Education, Municipal Planning etc as an alternative to government proposals we will provide space for you.

I would like to put emphasis on current actions by all levels of government that effect people negatively. So don't be afraid to Speak Out we do live in a democracy and it is your right. But please make sure your comments and articles speak the truth and nothing but the truth.

But I also want you to send in stories that are positive. I know we could fill a thousand pages with negatives but as human beings we need positives as well. Write about family, friends, success, funny stories etc.

So welcome to our first Issue and do get involved it is your Soap Box. The alternative is reading my thoughts and stories????

James (Jim) Tolnai
Publisher/Editor



Energy Crisis? What Energy Crisis?

By: Jim Tolnai

Back last spring Garfield Dunlop stated that the government and he knew better and that privatization of the electrical generating system would end up with lower costs to the consumer. Fast forward to Sept. and it was reported that Garfield wanted us to wait out the year to see if he would be right. Well just a couple of weeks later it was reported in the Orillia Today that Garfield did not believe he was responsible for the high energy prices and he was working as hard as he could to try and get some relief for people. In the mean time the Packet had a story about a plea to stop a Hamilton area utility from shutting down the power to a young girls respirator because the family could not pay the extra hydro cost.

Garfield you should be ashamed of yourself.

City Sells Prime Land Cheap

By: Jim Tolnai

So the mayor and council figure they made a good deal selling that prime 12 acres of commercially zoned land to Mr. Orsis' company? For the paltry sum of \$1,000,000 the city sold land worth at least double that. Did the people we entrust to look after our interests do any homework on this sale? I doubt it. Well I did some research and again the taxpayers got a bad deal.

Our council changed the zoning on this land to commercial from industrial. This brought the value of the land up by my research to about \$2.5 million dollars. Although there are no lands in Orillia that compares (which makes it even more valuable), there are comparisons in the area.

Midland has a 5.7204 acre of land zoned commercial/shopping plaza across from the proposed Wal-Mart for a cool \$1,001,000. Now remember we already have the Wal-Mart so should that not make our 12 acres worth at least double? Even in Orillia there is a 4.88 acre lot on West St. listed at \$1,000,000. Sundial & Laclie 1.4 acres \$389,000. Me thinks something stinks.

Council announced after the sale that more industrial land was needed. Gee! I wonder who the city will buy this industrial land from. Who in Orillia has industrial land for sale in the Westridge area? Will the purchase of this land be for a million dollars?

If any readers have some insight to add please let us know. If any councilor wants to explain this deal and make sense of it we will print it.

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Sewer Scam

By: Jim Tolnai

I certainly would not want to be accused of neglecting the people of Severn Twshp. Especially those who live in the Cumberland beach area. I'm sure everyone has heard about the water and sewer battle taking place in this area. Residents have organized to try and stop Severn council from going ahead with this project. Based on reports in other publications and speaking with people in the area I am confident that the majority does not need or want this to go ahead.

Council seems adamant to push the project through while the taxpayers pickup all the costs. Council seems to be very determined inspite of all the opposition. Again they claim to know better than the people it will effect. I have some basic questions that need an answer. Who owns the land that will be developed if the sewers go through? There are hundreds of acres of land which will go up in value by millions of dollars. People affected are claiming that developers will benefit at their expense. Could the mayor and council confirm that they or their families have no interest in any of this property that will receive a windfall of millions if it can be carved into 50 foot lots?

Speaking Out

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County Council

By: Jim Tolnai

Simcoe County council recently voted to give themselves double digit raises. These politicians who elect themselves to look after the counties affairs have some nerve. This raise should be recinded immediately by the provincial government. County workers were told there was no money to increase their wages and settled for a fraction of what these greed driven politicians gave themselves.

County councillors should be elected by the people and not by each municipalities politicians. They answer to no one and frankly don't care what you or I think.

Also defeated by county council was the proposal to cut their numbers in half. Seems the majority of them didn't want off the gravey train.

Disgusting

Orillia Transit Advertising

Heard a spot on the radio the other day that would be funny if it were not so weird. The ad was for advertising on the Orillia Transit buses. It extoled the virtues of this form of advertising. The ad stated how your ad would be seen by thousands of people and business would boom.

Now why would Orillia Transit have to advertise on one format to be able to sell ads themselves. Are they making so much money from their ads that money is no object and can be wasted? Who was the genius that thought up this campaign?

For more on transit see pg.3

Herd Them Up Move'm Out

Garfield Dunlop and his government lost another battle to the people. It was recently announced that the Orillia Care Centre would be closed and the residents moved to who knows where. The residents and many others did battle with the government and won.

The centre won a reprieve for another 12 months. Do these people who hold so much power over these seniors remaining years really think that people will allow them to herd these people like cattle in any direction they choose.

There are no new beds being created so where do they think they will move these people? Besides why should these people leave their community?

What a cruel and uncaring bunch to put these seniors through this exercise. Garfield claims that there is no money to operate this home. But then Garfield doesn't think that ex minister Cam Jackson spending like a drunken sailor on his expense account is doing anything wrong. Now that the minister is gone why don't we requisition his expense account and create 5 or 6 new beds so that the most vulnerable may live out their time in peace and security?

Orillia is not the only community to be treated in this manner by the Tory government but hopefully it will be the last. Write and phone Garfield, the Premiers office and every other minister and let them know you will fight them tooth and nail to protect our seniors from their abuse.

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Orillia Transit vs Taxis

Orillia buses run empty most of the time and problems with the taxi industry are still with us. I spoke these words two years ago when I ran for council. Today the old problems still exist and new ones have been created. Buses still run empty and taxi fares have increased by up to hundreds of percent.

In my campaign I suggested that there was a better way to handle transportation in Orillia. It is simple and would not cost the taxpayer any money. With Kyoto coming public transportation will become a key element of meeting it's targets.

To fix the transit problem just answer the question "why don't I ride the buses". Your answer will be inconvenient. Buses run hourly in Orillia. That means a two hour window to do a 20 or 30 minute errand. So people opted for using cabs which were flat rate. Now a \$4 cab ride has been made into an \$8 ride and yet the buses are still empty and the cabs are empty too. I think it's time to look at my concept.

Why not stop spending \$400,000 on each bus and subsidize their operation to the tune of hundreds of thousands more each year and offer 20 minute service. Why can't the taxi industry and council get together and work out a deal for cabs to take over the transit job? During the transit hours instead of buses use cabs to move people. I am told that there are over 50 cab licenses in Orillia. That means at 4 people per cab 200 people can be moved every 20 minutes at peak times. The four buses don't have that capacity.

So now your wondering how this works? It's simple. Any cab company signing on would supply good quality vehicles and accept transit tickets as payment during the 6am and 6pm window. The public would share the ride just as they do on the buses now. If an individual wants a cab all to themselves then they would order up that cab as they do now and pay full fare. Fares can be deposited into boxes. The cab company then submits an invoice for collected tickets to city hall

and are paid weekly. Cab companies will require some help to modernize their fleets so money from the sale of the buses and money that is being used to subsidize the system now would be paid out on a per car basis to them. This results in a zero cost to make transit more convenient. Cabs after 6pm to 6am then run as cabs only and charge whatever the market will allow.

Cab licenses could be limited to what is required and a very stringent inspection of contracted cars could be instituted. A three strike your out rule that is enforced would keep the cab companies in line.

This is a win win situation for all parties without throwing more money at it. Let's hear from all concerned as to work out the details and start the process.

a trusting person did not bother to check

Are Electricity Contracts

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It has been reported that hundreds of thousands of households in Ontario signed energy contracts with dealers in the hope of saving money after deregulation. Well I must say it appeared to work until more information surfaced. I will relate one persons experience with a contract.

Mr. James Montgomery of Clear Lake just north of Washago signed on with a company at .059 cents per KW. Presently power is selling at .079 cents. So looks like Mr. Montgomery made a wise choice. Not so. Although his contract is for 5.9 cents he is being charged 6.4 cents. This extra charge has been hidden from him and Hydro One is doing the hiding. You see on my bill with no contract price it shows how many KW I used X.079 cents = total. On Mr. Montgomery's bill it shows KW used and the total cost. Mr. Montgomery has been paying an extra .005 cents even though his contract is supposedly locked in. Mr. Montgomery being a trusting individual

his actual KW price. Now I wonder why my non contract bill let's me know per KW cost and Mr. Montgomery does not? Would it cost Hydro One more money to ad this simple information? I don't think so. So is there a SCAM going on here or is there a rational explanation?

But wait it gets worse. It seems Mr. Montgomery has given his right away to any rebate that was promised by the Tory government. Yes a rebate is supposed to be paid for any costs incurred above .047cents per KW. The company Mr. Montgomery signed up with will be paid this money. So let us see how this will profit this company.

Lets say this company pays .079 cents (which they don't as they buy below cost) They then sell the power to Jim for .065.cents which = -.014 loss. but then the company receives a rebate of .079 - .047= .032 - .014= .018 cents profit. This is a 77% profit on their investment of .014 cents per KW.

Example: the company makes \$39.38 of profit shuffling paper. And these people don't even collect the money from Mr. Montgomery, they receive one large cheque from Hydro One. Nice work if you can get it. Who owns and runs these companies?????

Spoke to Maurice McMillan and he passed on a little info. He asked where is all the money going that is being paid to Hydro One. Here are the numbers.

3,000,000 customers
Paying average \$2 per day more
Comes to \$6,000,000 per day
Times 30 days = \$180,000,000/month
Times 3 months = \$540,000,000
And this on top of the debt retirement charge on your bill 3,000,000 X \$14= \$42,000,000X3months=\$126,000,000
Yet Hydro One only showed a profit of \$241,000,000 for the first 3 months of deregulation.

Maybe Garfield Dunlop could shed some light on the situation. What do you say Garfield want to meet for coffee?

Jim Tolnai

David Orchard

Implications of NAFTA for Canada's Sovereignty It's Resources and Public Utilities

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Introduction by Maurice McMillan, advocate for public hydro

HELP!!!

I need help distributing Speaking Out. Anyone who is interested in getting the word out can help by submitting your opinions and concerns as well as distributing each issue.

I am paying for the costs of publishing and printing and will be distributing as many copies as I can. But let's face it I have a living to make and time is of the essence to get each issue out. So if you want to help by dropping copies off at convenience stores, restaurants, doctors offices, nursing homes, individuals etc. your efforts would be appreciated.

I am starting with 2,000 copies and will monitor the interest. No sense wasting paper if we can't get all copies into peoples hands. So please call 327-5717 and volunteer to distribute as many as possible.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Politicians are reluctant to admit conflict of interest and vote on issues they should stay away from. There is a lot more conflict in municipal politics than Provincial or Federal due to the issues being closer to home. Having said this municipal politicians don't like to not participate in these votes and do not want to admit to conflict.

Should a municipal politician vote on issues that effect say a company or customer of his or her business. Let's say the mayor of a town operates a supply business that sells doorbells. A developer who is building a hundred houses needs door bells. This developer purchases his needs from the Mayor's business. The

developer now goes before council to ask council for an exemption. Should this Mayor vote or even argue for the developer? I believe he should abstain on the grounds of conflict. Most Mayors or councillors don't think this should be cause to abstain. They will claim that there is no conflict of interest because they have no direct interest in the exemption. But there is an implied conflict as this Mayor receives business from the developer. It is then in the interest of the Mayor to keep this relation going. Same can be said for campaign donations. If a politician receives money from any source that would benefit from the politician vote then that person should abstain and let others decide on the merit of the proposal. Now I am not talking about a \$100 donation but certainly \$1,000's. That is why there are laws on campaign donations. When was the last time you heard of a local politician leaving the chamber when items that really should be conflicts were voted on?