

Speaking Out

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Orillia Councilors Screw

On Thursday Nov. 7/02 Councilor Downey saw fit to call an emergency council meeting. Orillia was being threatened and so councilors rushed to city hall so they could deal with this disaster. Staff were harnessed to work so that Orillia and the free world would avoid a complete melt down of society. This would all be funny except that the whole process stinks and cost the taxpayers hundreds if not thousands of dollars by the time it is all over.

The emergency was about signs that were placed by the Kiwanis Club on city property. They were warned to remove the signs or city staff would do the job and charge for the work involved. In addition the executive of Kiwanis as well as the club itself were liable to fines for breaking Orillia's sign laws. Mr. Downey being on the executive as well as the chairman of the auction committee decided that even though he voted for the law, that it should really not be enforced against himself or his organization. Hence he calls an emergency meeting.

Now remember back to last spring when Glen Wagner put signs up and was fined for doing so. Council told Mr. Wagner that they could not make exceptions to the law. So now we have a situation where the law has been changed and Mr. Downey has a CONFLICT of INTEREST big time. You see being an Executive/Director/Officer of an Incorporated body you are personally responsible for the actions of that body. To make matters worse Mr. Downey is also a lawyer who is bound by rules of the law society which he broke. A complaint has been lodged with the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Upper Canada Law Society and the City



of Orillia.

What Mr. Downey did is a blatant abuse of his office as well as his profession. The Mayor and council owe the citizens of Orillia an apology and Mr. Downey must be censured for his actions. The councillors who took part in this emergency meeting should without hesitation pay for all costs of their actions as well as apologize to Mr. Wagner and refund his \$75 fine. Obviously they lied when Wagner was told exceptions can not be made. Is it any wonder people are so cynical about politicians?

1st.Issue Well Received

Thanks to all of you who have encouraged me to go on with my effort. I must admit I am enjoying doing this little rag. It gives me a chance to vent but also I am meeting many people who think as I do. They are tired of people achieving power and then turning on the very people who gave them the power. If you have a story let me know.

Jim Tolnai Publisher/Editor

David Orchard Resources and Public Utilities

By:Jim Tolnai

Looks like Maurice McMillan has caught the attention of people. About 300 people showed at ODAS Park to hear David Orchard talk about NAFTA and it's implications on resources and public utilities. After listening it's apparent that Canada's existence as a country is at stake. Scary stuff.

Last April when Maurice setup a meeting at the Kewadin Inn only about 30 people showed up. This meeting grew ten fold so we are on the right track. Maurice did an excellent job and I find him to be a genuine person who believes in his cause and works hard.

That said I found that the meeting was too political for me. I and others feel that what Maurice is doing should be a grass roots movement and politicians and political parties should not be allowed to high jack it for their own purpose. Don't ever think that all parties would not have done the same as the PC's. They may have packaged it differently but the end result would be the same. What we need is to elect independent thinking people who when push came to shove would represent their constituents if government policy was harmful. Unlike Garfield Dunlop who believes everything he is told by his government we need some one who would actually do some research and fight on our behalf. Dunlop still believes that the hydro debt can only be paid off by privatization. He also believes that nursing homes should be shutdown because there is no money. Poppycock!!!!!!

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Our First Letter

I enjoyed your first edition of Speaking Out and support your initiative. Although I missed the presentation by David Orchard at ODAS Park, I understand that it was also very thought provoking.

The enclosed (Globe) article-Government's dramatic Energy policy change forces retailer out of business-highlights the effect our Premier's latest bandaid solution is having on those entrepreneurs who decided to get into retailing electricity. It seems that freezing electricity prices takes the (gouging-sorry) profit incentive out of the equation. Imagine.

If it weren't so diabolical, it would almost be entertaining to listen to this political party state how committed it is to job creation and stimulating business, while playing a shell game with everyone involved-including those who were supposed to deliver cheaper hydro rates. And without ignoring the pain being inflicted on consumers and existing businesses through present hydro rates, you might even feel sorry for the people who took on the retailing venture based on this governments vision.

Rebecca MacDonald of Ontario Energy Savings Corp. said her company amongst others is halting it's electricity retail operations. "We were just starting to sell because I wanted to make sure that whole market was functioning properly." Ms. MacDonald said, adding that the company had about 140,000 electricity customers. "Unfortunately, I didn't know that we have a Premier who is a complete lunatic." (Paul Waldie/Globe & Mail). I guess that says it all-but don't go way, this nightmare is far from over.

Allan Baker/RR#4 Coldwater

By: Jim Tolnai
Maurice McMillan
OPC Director

Here is a suggestion for Orillia Council. Seeing that the board of directors and John Mattinson were wrong, wrong, and wrong about deregulation and Maurice Mcmillan was right, right and right it only makes sense that Maurice be invited to sit on the OPC board. He will contribute his 30 some years of experience in the Public Utilities business and maybe John and the board would learn from him.

Now I know that the board and John wanted to fire Maurice because they were so sure about deregulation, but I am sure Maurice would let by gones be by gones and work for the benefit of the true owners of OPC the citizens. Why he may even be instrumental in convincing the board and John that the citizens interest comes first.

Wouldn't it be great to have a person on our side for a change? If you agree fill in the form below and get it to your councillor so that he/she may act on your request.

I wish to nominate Maurice McMillan
for Director of OPC

Name
Address
Tel:
Sign.

Speaking Out

13 Creighton St.
Orillia, L3V 1A9
Publisher/Editor
Jim Tolnai
Ph: 327-5717
Fax 327-5974

e-mail info@dynamicwealth.com
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37 Children Receive Bed Kits



Taryn Tolnai presented a cheque to Marg Goodchild of Sleeping Children Around the World for \$1110 which was raised at the Tolnai families annual Hungarian Goulash get together. Taryn was the host for this years event and she did a marvelous job. With great energy and enthusiasm she sold tickets to our fourth annual due. Taryn as official host also chose Sleeping Children Around the World as the charity to benefit from our families efforts.

Each year in August our family hosts around 80 people at our home for a Hungarian goulash cookout. Everything is home made from the goulash which is cooked in a great pot on a fire outside to the fresh baked bread, cakes, pies, tarts, pickles, salad dressing, etc. It's great fun and an honour for our family to host friends at our home and be able to help those less fortunate. Thanks to Taryn's effort we were able to raise enough money to buy 37 (\$30 ea.) bed kits for children in the third world.

Sleeping Children Around the World is a wonderful charity where all funds (100%) go to the children.

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Deregulation Sinks

By: Jim Tolnai



Who would have believed last April how the proponents of deregulation would change their tune. These people are falling all over themselves laying blame on anyone and everyone. First Eves, Dunlop and company blamed the weather for high energy costs. When that did not fly they blamed hydro for not getting Pickering (generating plant) up and running. Then they blamed the Ontario Energy Board for following the rules Eves and company setup. Then they blamed the Public Utilities that they forced to become not Public as being greedy. And now the Municipalities.

Wow!!! Eves and Dunlop take absolutely no credit for this energy folly. Folks don't fall for this SCAM that the PC government is trying to pull off. Do not think for one minute that these people giving a rebate and capping prices have changed their minds about privatizing. What they want to do is get re-elected and then they will nail our collective behinds to the proverbial wall. This party and the people running it must be sent packing. They do not deserve anyones support and until the rank and file members of the PC membership wakes up keep them from power. The Common Sense Revolution was really The Con Revolution.

Ernie Eves is trying to distance himself from Mike Harris who he worked with and supported in decimating our education system, social programs, energy etc. And of course locally Garfield Dunlop supported all these policies. Now as the cartoon above shows that everyone is abandoning the deregulation ship busily

blaming everyone else. but themselves.

This is not the time to sit back and let up on the government. We have not won until the PC's clearly apologize to us and pledge in writing that deregulation will be reversed. Locally Dunlop should pledge that if the government does not return to full public energy then he will leave the caucus and fight them to the end. Does Garfield have the "gonads"???

Everyone must get involved. Talk to your friends , relatives, neighbors etc. to get involved. Make the local political parties pledge that they will work for your interest and join all the parties so that you can work from within to have the right people nominated to run in the next election. Then make sure that who ever you vote for has your interest at heart not their own ambitions.

Back To Work

Catholic secondary teachers were legislated back to work by the Ontario government. It was reported Garfield Dunlop stated that he had received several hundred letters and e-mail from parents asking him to legislate an end to the strike. Too bad Garfield did not listen to the thousands on de-regulation. This will be good for the kids but the teachers still do not have a contract. If Garfield and the government were really concerned for the kids they would not have allowed a strike to begin. Either education is an essential service or it is not. Why should parents and kids suffer every few years over these strikes. If you force teachers back without dealing with the reasons for the strike you have accomplished nothing. So come on Ernie, Garfield and company smarten up and treat the teaching profession with a bit of dignity. If you wish to have peace with the teachers you must regain their respect and trust as a government.

Mayor Admits No Vision

Mayor Stevens and several councillors attended a Chamber of Commerce breakfast where questions were posed to them. One of the questions posed was concerning the Mayor and councils vision for the future of Orillia. The Mayors answer could have been written by Stephen Leacock himself it was so funny.

He stated that he nor council really had a vision for Orillia and that "we're creating a vision as we go". Is this guy for real? Are the councillors attending for real? How can any organization the size of Orillia operate without a plan for the future? Although I was not at the breakfast so I am relying on reports from people who did attend non of the councillors took exception to the Mayors words leaving me to believe that he spoke for all councillors who were present.

So my next question is "Why do we need these people"? It's obvious they have no course set for future development. This also explains why when Downey called his emergency meeting there was no vision as to the consequences and why non of the councillors questioned his conflict of interest. This is why council did not question why 12 acres of prime shopping center land was sold so cheap. Did council not even think that selling this 12 acres creates a monopoly as far as shopping centers go.

At the same meeting the fact of the Orsi companies controlling Orillia's development was brought up. It's true that if all the available land for development is owned by one individual all of us are at that persons mercy economically. So the suggestion of annexing land from the townships was broached. Does Orillia really need to annex or should we be more creative and not make sweetheart deals. Taxpayers in Orillia can not afford growth of the kind we now have. Developers must pay their way or not be allowed to develop. Use up the land which is going unused along West St. Fill the A&P building and the plaza down there. Develop the Tudhope building on West and Colborne. Fix West St. so that cars don't get rattled. There is no shortage of projects just of vision.

Development Fees Paid Up?

Bob Ripley came before council and declared that after an exhaustive search through the financial records he determined that the Orsi companies had indeed paid development fees. If anyone recalls Roger Tudhope the former city engineer claimed that development fees were not paid for the Westridge development to the tune of 1/2 million dollars. Now Roger had been claiming this for many months publicly and possibly years privately. The treasury department did not seem to know about this controversy during Rogers tenure.

Fast forward to several months after Rogers departure and much controversy. Mr. Ripley comes before council and states that indeed these charges were paid years earlier. It took the department months to find out what monies paid years earlier were really for.

Now I have a simple question. How can the payment of 1/2 million dollars be hidden from Roger and the Treasurer for so long. Shouldn't all payments to the city be accounted for and proper receipts issued to the payer? Further why should it take months for this declaration to be made. Being a suspicious person I must say this whole affair does not seem right. Are there other monies not accounted for? Mr. Ripley stated that because engineering was responsible for the fees the Treasurer was not aware of the controversy. From now on his department would get involved billing and collecting monies. Excuse me but isn't that what the Treasury is supposed to do in the first place? If I didn't pay my bill with the city for \$100 they would be all over me wanting payment.

I urge council to ask the cities auditors to have a look at the books. If such a large sum of money is not accounted for properly what other surprises might crop up.

If what Mr. Ripley reported is true then Roger Tudhope and Mr. Orsi are owed an apology, and the wrong person was let go. Roger was doing his job and was let down by the Treasury Department. If his report was not true then the auditors should report back to us.

Property Owners Beware

I received my property assessment for 2002 in November. It showed that my property value had grown by \$10,000 on June 30/2002 from the year before. Now remember that these values are supposed to represent market value. Only one problem. I purchased the property on June, 28, 2002. I paid \$10,000 less than what the assessment people claimed the market value was.

Where are these people getting their values from? I think that they should be renamed The Guesstement Dept. Market value is based on value that a property is sold for. In assessing my property which changed hands only two days before assessment a grave mistake was made.

I phoned the number on my notice sheet and the chap there told me I must appeal the assessment. I told him that if his department would reimburse me for my time and effort then an appeal I would make. But alas no such funds are available and all my time and effort could not be compensated even though it was their mistake. I then went to Ramara Township for relief, only to be told that I had more information on my assessment than they had. It seems the assessment people had not provided Ramara with the assessment lists. Rather than argue I asked for help in getting to the right person with answers to my plight.

Having been furnished with name and number I phoned and was connected to voicemail. Here I was given the option of leaving a message or phoning another number. I of course opted for the other number. I dialed with great anticipation that my dilemma would be solved only to reach voicemail prompting me to leave a message.

So I left the following message. "My property has been assessed way above market value and I would sell said property at your price. So when do you want to meet and finalize the deal? If you are not willing to buy my property then I want copies of how you came to this unfair assessment?" Received a call back that no appeal was necessary as they had adjusted value. CHECK YOUR ASSESSMENT!!!!!!!!!!!!

Our Planet

Old Mother Earth is taking quite a beating. I am therefore happy that maybe society is waking up to the fact that if we wish to survive as a species things have to change. I don't want to preach to anyone about how to live but I do want to share what our family is doing to help the environment.

First, our vehicles are all 4 cylinder models. We average over 40 miles to the gallon. Our house is well insulated but due to age our windows need replacing. I am doing this at the rate of several a year. In November 2001 I changed most lightbulbs in the house to the energy efficient models. These bulbs are expensive but they payed for themselves in the first year. Before deregulation and the price increase in hydro rates we were saving twenty dollars a month on our bill, and probably double that at the higher price. I also have not had to change any of these bulbs over the last 12 months. Fixtures which would not accept the bulbs remain incandescent and are being changed regularly. Unfortunately local stores only carry a limited selection of sizes. I do urge these stores to look at stocking a variety. I have been told that IKEA in Toronto has a large selection so on my next trip I will be heading there. I will report back on my success.

As a family we have decided that lights, computers, TV, stereos etc. should be shut off when no one is watching, listening or using. When I leave the room the light is shut off. It sure helps with the bills but mostly energy is not being wasted.

We also re-use and recycle as much as possible. Instead of throwing things out I put it out front with a sign. You would be amazed at what people will pickup to use. I have put out light fixtures, furniture, old bathtub, tires, bicycle etc. We now have found that the diabetes society picks up more than clothing and are now donating hard goods. Why they will even pickup furniture. Great way to help out and save the dump from filling up. If we all do a little we can save our environment.