

# Speaking Out

FEB 2003

Volume 1 Issue4

## Maurice Suspended

by Jim Tolnai

So the Orillia Power Corp. Grinches are at it again. Maurice McMillan Orillia's Citizen of the Year has been suspended from his job for failing to follow operating procedures. Further the letter states that any further misconduct will result in his dismissal. Thirty five years of service, believing in a cause, being RIGHT and what does he get? Looks like HARASSMENT to me.

I have spoken to many who now say this action by John Mattinson and the politically appointed board of OPC have gone too far. Hundreds if not thousands of citizens of Orillia are ready to fight this council and OPC. Due to Mattinson's and the boards mishandling just about every issue concerning privatization, they seem to feel that Maurice should pay the price. This will blow up in their faces.

There has to be changes made at OPC but not in the employment of Maurice McMillan. John Mattinson has proven himself to be not worthy of his position. Mattinson's denial that the suspension is not related to Maurice's opposition to deregulation is really unbelievable. Remember last year Mattinson tried to suspend Maurice for exactly that. He failed so now they are trying to make Maurice out to be incompetent in his job.

I have a question. In the 35 years Maurice has been doing his job, how many times has he been suspended? If he is so incompetent then why has he been kept on for all these years? I dare say OPC has built a good case against itself for a unjust dismissal case if they try to fire Maurice.

This whole affair is nothing more than a poorly yielded political vendetta. Maurice was right about deregulation and the powers don't like being upstaged.



## OPC Board of Directors

All this controversy has wetted my appetite to know more about OPC and the people who run it. I went to the OPC web site and found the names of the people who were politically appointed to the board of directors. I must say that other than Geoff Hewett and Ray Hayhurst the other names do not ring a bell.

I know Geoff from the carwash and of course he was on council and ran for Mayor. I am very surprised that Geoff would be involved this effort to discredit Maurice McMillan and would be very happy to hear that he opposes these underhanded tactics. I always thought he was a straight shooter. How about it Geoff have I been wrong about you?

Ray Hayhurst is a name I recognize from the old OWLP but I do not know him personally. Maybe Ray could let Orillians know if he is for or against FREE Speech and the right to protest a government policy that will hurt the citizens of Ontario. Or does he believe that only people who agree with him and the government deserve to work.

I have never heard of Larry Brooksbank the Chairman and upon doing a quick check of the phone book found no listing for him. Either he does not live in Orillia or his number is unlisted. Anyway

I am curious to know who he is and what his claim to fame might be. A bit of biography might be a good idea for the OPC website so we might know the people who hold so much power over us. These people do not have to answer to anyone and I am sure their positions are safe as long as they tow the political line.

The next director is a Bruce Jackson. The name is not familiar so again to the phone book and again no listing.

The last director is a John Cameron who again I am not familiar with. I checked the book again and there are two John Camerons. It would be good again to know just who John Cameron is and what his qualifications were to be appointed to the board.

I assume that the OPC Board of Directors have sanctioned Mr. Mattinson's attacks on Maurice McMillan. I believe that we have a right to know so please let us know your position.

It would also be interesting to know these people's political affiliation. As the Packet reported seven out of nine people on council have PC affiliation. This council is the one responsible for the appointments. Would be good to know if the best people were appointed or was their appointment political.

If the majority of Directors are of the PC persuasion then we know that their enthusiasm for privatization was based on political and not public interest. We also know then that Maurice is considered a political dissident and their actions are despicable.

I have one more question. Could this council not find at least one bright woman in all of Orillia who could have been appointed to the board?

If anyone can enlighten us about these people please feel free.

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# 407 RIP OFF

The following article was in the Toronto sun. Jan. 03/03 Read it and weep because the friends of the Eves government are making a killing at your expense.

Friday, January 3, 2003

## Owners of 407 stand to reap windfall

By KEVIN MASTERMAN,  
TORONTO SUN

Drivers on Hwy. 407 are financing massive profits, not just road improvements, a Liberal MPP says.

"It has got to be one of the most lucrative investments in the past 50 years where you can put in \$700 million and 30 months later it's worth \$3 billion," said Liberal transportation critic Gerry Phillips.

He said his numbers are confirmed by the highway's co-owner SNC Lavalin's 2001 annual report that claimed their stake was worth four times their initial investment of \$175 million. They sold a quarter share of their investment for \$178 million after 30 months.

The highway owners, a consortium of Canadian, Spanish and Australian companies known as 407 International, are now allowed to raise tolls at will as long as they

Documents obtained by Phillips in the wake of the fourth toll increase in 40 months show one rate has already risen by 300%. Fees for users who don't have a transponder have risen 230%.

Phillips said a commuter travelling with a transponder from Mississauga to Markham for work will pay an additional \$500, amounting to \$4,500 a year.

Phillips has asked the public accounts committee to review the deal.

I hope you can see the similarity between this story and what the government is attempting to do with HYDRO. Just think sell a publicly owned asset to your friends at a fraction of it's value creating a privately owned monopoly and allow them to charge whatever they want. The PC's want to sell assets of \$38 billion dollars for 5 billion dollars and allow them to charge whatever they want regardless of the cost to generate the electricity.

The 407 is not the first of these sweetheart deals done by the PC's. Remember Bill Davis and SKY DOME? The dome was supposed to cost 100 million dollars then went to 200 million and finally ended up at close to 1 Billion dollars. At that debt load it was impossible for it to be financially feasible. So what does the government do? They sold a Billion dollar asset for \$100 million leaving us to pay the difference. and not having the asset to boot. Folks this party has been pulling the same trick over and over again. If we let them get away with Hydro it will be catastrophic for Ontario. You see we can go around the 407 and we don't have to go to SKY Dome. But can we live without ELECTRICITY?

What is very worrisome is that members of the PC party allow these things to happen and have not figured out that they are being had. They nominate people like Garfield Dunlop and work to elect him and he repays them by supporting and working hard to sell off their birthright. Wake-up people you are being had again and again and again. If you don't want the Ontario PC's to go the way of the federal PC's get rid of the con men, there is still time.

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### Speaking Out

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# The Water Report

LONDON, ON, Sept. 18 / 02 /  
PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -

Working to ensure that water supplies are free of disease-causing microorganisms may be only part of the battle. Many municipalities now find themselves having to contend with chemical contaminants as well.

Increasingly, toxic chemicals are being detected in water supplies throughout North America and Europe -- substances such as NDMA, pesticides, herbicides, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and endocrine disrupters such as 1,4-dioxane. N-nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA) has recently attracted significant attention from the water treatment community as a potent and potentially wide-ranging water contaminant. A by-product of various processes, the substance is considered a human carcinogen that is hazardous at extremely low concentrations.

1,4-dioxane is most commonly used in the manufacture of solvents. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has designated it as a probable human carcinogen.

Large quantities of pesticides are used all over the world. In the U.S., the National Water Quality Assessment Program found pesticides in 95 per cent of the streams and rivers and in 50 per cent of the groundwater sampled. According to the European Environment Agency, "groundwater quality is threatened by pesticides in almost all European countries."

Dec. 02 news reports stated that the Humber and Don rivers which run through Canada's largest city (Toronto) were loaded with herbicides and pesticides. Water should be of great concern whether you live in town or pump from your own well.

In the 50's, 60's and 70's cigarette manufacturers vehemently denied the connection of cancer and smoking. We know that was a big lie and it looks like some company executives may end up going to jail. In the 80's and 90's chemical companies claimed their products were safe to use as they broke down and did no harm to the environment. Welcome to 2003. The above report on the state of our wwater supply should concern everyone and immediately. With 95% of streams

cents per day. For well water there is the problem not only of chemicals but also bacteria and costs are a little higher, but never the less it is worth the investment. For more info give me a call 705-327-5717

## Citizen of the Year

Congratulations to Maurice McMillan on his being named Citizen of the Year. The Packet could not have made a better choice. We all owe a debt to Maurice for his courage and intestinal fortitude in fighting for all of us against hydro deregulation. He was ridiculed, suspended from his job, threatened and who knows what else. Maurice stuck with it and turned out to be right.

Maurice keeps fighting and I ask everyone to support his effort. Unlike our politicians Maurice does have our interest at heart.

Contact your councilor and let him or her know you want Maurice on the board of Orillia Power Corp. A man with his integrity and knowledge is badly needed..

## HYP-O-CRITE

gutless provincial and federal government should be responsible for the health of it's citizens. Yes this is a health issue and that is provincial responsibility.

Anyway in reading this article I came across a quote by Mayor Stevens that made me boil. Now remember the mayor agreed to the Special Council meeting to suspend the sign bylaw regarding the Kiwanis club. He saw no problem and gave his blessing. Well in the article on Smoke it was reported that John Forrest requested a public meeting to get feed back about the city's no smoking bylaw but the request was ignored by council. The mayor goes on to say, "When bylaws are put into place, they are put into place to be of a permanent nature and council felt there was no reason to review it. To pick an issue like this and go through that whole process all over again is just not necessary." said Stevens". Funny how in Nov. when Downey calls a special meeting of council to exempt the Kiwanis club from the sign bylaw (passed by this council only months earlier) Stevens and council went along with it. I guess only some bylaws are of a permanent nature. Then a week or so later without public debate they permanently changed the by-law in an effort to justify the special meeting and the exemption.



# Hydro Rate Freeze

The Hydro rate freeze sure is a good one on us. Eves, Dunlop and company really think we are stupid. He tosses us \$75 and subsidized hydro rates with our money and thinks we buy it.

Bruce Galway wrote in his column back in Dec. that he did some research and found that on one day he looked into the difference between what hydro was sold for and what we paid was \$39 million dollars. The private sector who own generating capacity sold it to our supplier for \$39 million more than they billed us. Now our local utilities can't take such a loss so where is this money coming from? Dah! Us? Yes Ernie and Garfield will only take it from us under the guise of something else. Believe me we will pay plus.

So lets do some math. Let's say that the average deficit per day is only \$30 million times 365 days equals One billion/9million/500 thousand dollars for the year. Now that is a fair bit of change. Only where is the money going to come from? Will Ernie and Garfield take a pay cut? Will they stop using their expense accounts? Will they tax the profits away from their friends in the hydro business? Or will they just take it from us? Imagine Ernie and Garfield still want to sell at least 49% of our hydro assets with guaranteed profits to the buyers.

Say I have an idea why don't we reverse this mess, keep our assets, sell hydro to us at cost and add a non taxable tax to our hydro bill to pay off the debt. Let's encourage investment in sustainable generation like solar, wind and ethanol from grains and corn. Gee sounds like it might even work. But wait, that means there would be no gouging the citizens of Ontario, but worse still no huge windfall profits for Ernie's and Garfields friends.

Does anyone think that Ernie and company for once would put their electors first? I doubt it.

Our only salvation is to get involved with our governance everyday of the year not only at election time. Get out and bitch, complain and scream till your hoarse. And get rid of these con-men. If you are honest toss your hat in the ring

and run for office. We need independent people who will not be conned or bought by self interest groups. We need people who will stand up to their leaders and tell them their wrong, and fight them tooth and nail. Get involved it is your future.

Jim Tolnai

## Property Taxes

Last month I wrote about how my home was assessed for \$10,000 more than what I paid for it only 2 days before the date of assessment. Well the assessment office reversed themselves.

Any how I was speaking with Bill Way from James McDowell Sales. Bill lives on Leslie Ave. and his assessment went up by \$20,000. Now I know that real estate is selling but homes on Leslie have not gone up by that much. Again check your assessment and fight them.

The reason I brought this up is that our Mayor and council have been sending signals that they may have to increase taxes this year. They remind us that there has not been a tax increase in 3 or 4 years. Well if you believe that line I have a bridge in Brooklyn for sale cheap.

Market value assessment is a cash cow to the city and with these assessments going up there is no need to raise taxes. They go up automatically. In my case my house on Bridget Dr. was assessed at \$178,000 with taxes of \$3,600. In 2000 they reassessed the house to \$262,000 with a corresponding increase of taxes to \$5,100. That was a \$1,500 increase in taxes. (I moved).

So getting back to Bill's place. with a \$20,000 increase in assessment his taxes will rise by \$19.46 per/thousand equalling \$389 increase in his tax bill. But it seems the mayor and council are not satisfied with such a huge increase and need more. Let's figure it out. There are roughly 10,000 homes and apartments in Orillia. If the average new assessment on each property is only \$15,000 times \$19.46

equals \$291.98 times 10,000 equals \$29,198,472 increase in revenues to the city. Now add in the extra revenues generated by garbage tags, water and sewer and all the other charges they have imposed I believe we have had more than enough tax increases. Now remember back to the last election. Every candidate pledged to fight tax increases. Wonder which councillor will fight against picking our pockets?

Jim Tolnai

## We Need Input

I have had a wonderful time putting this newsletter together and will continue to Speak Out. I certainly would appreciate your views on what is going on and how you are effected. If you disagree with me tell me and I will publish it. If you have a different slant on goings on let's hear from you.

One of the criticism I have received is that our politicians know more than we do and because they have this special information their decisions sometimes don't make sense to us. Well here is your invitation to explain yourselves so we the great unwashed might understand why you do what you do.

I promise not to edit no matter how critical you are of this newsletter and my opinions. The only thing I ask is for you to keep it to around 3 to 400 words as this is a very small publication. But if you need more space I will certainly try to accommodate.

You will find our contact information

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Jim Tolnai