

Time to 'blow them up and start again'

There's an old saying that those who live in tin houses shouldn't be tossing can openers. Alan Borovoy, Canada's leading civil libertarian, should have considered that back in the 1970s when he led the charge to expand Ontario's human rights commission well beyond anything ever imagined by either Ottawa or any other province at time.

Now it seems, Borovoy, long-time counsel for the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, regrets the direction that these human rights commissions have taken, particularly in two controversial cases involving press freedoms, in particular complaints against Ezra Levant, publisher of the now-defunct Western Standard magazine, for publishing the controversial Danish cartoons of Mohammed two years ago.

Writing recently in a western newspaper, Borovoy moaned that being a "censor" is "hardly the role we had envisioned for human rights commissions. There should be no question of the right to publish the impugned cartoons ... It would be best, therefore, to change the provisions of the Human Rights Act to remove any such ambiguities of interpretation."

Borovoy knows, or should know, it's not a question of "ambiguities." As a key player in the first major expansion of these commissions under the decidedly-red-Tory government of Bill Davis, Borovoy simply scoffed at those of us who predicted this would happen.

It didn't take a great genius to foresee the results. After all, if you set up an all-powerful, all-knowing commission, with little if any responsibility to anybody, stacked with true believers, and tilt the entire system so that anyone accused is guilty until proven innocent - a proof which rarely happens - it should have been obvious to anybody that the human rights zealots would continue to expand their powers in the most undemocratic and offensive ways possible.

While the Levant case involves the Alberta commission - where Levant was recently grilled by a commission commissar for the apparent crime of holding political views which the commission and a complainant to it object to - it was Ontario under Davis - and particularly under two of his senior ministers, recently-retired Ontario chief justice Roy McMurtry and lawyer-surgeon-cabinet minister Bob Elgie - who set the tone for commissions to run roughshod over centuries of due process and legal objectivity.

And there was Borovoy cheering them on. So it's a bit late now, given the harm his action set in motion, to lament the fact that the commissions are out of control and to pretend that it's only because of some "ambiguities" in the law. Ontario led the way with human rights legislation when in 1944, four years before the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it passed the Ontario Racial Discrimination Act.

Things moved along relatively well until Davis, to the chagrin of many in his own cabinet and caucus, tabbed Elgie to rewrite the human rights code, the result of which was a proposal to give human rights officers more power than the police to search for and seize private documents without a warrant and based solely on a complaint, whether frivolous or not. There was so much opposition from Davis's own party to the June, 1980 proposals, that the premier - typically - decided not to fight an election on his police state bill. But after regaining a huge majority in 1981, Davis pushed the new law through the legislature, a law which has served as the prototype for all the other provinces and has led to the sorry situation where Levant - and Maclean's magazine writer Mark Steyn - are being forced to defend their opinions simply because there are some readers who were offended by them. It is sickening for Borovoy now to lament this state of affairs. This is the same Borovoy who, during an instructive two-week period in 1981, appeared at both the federal investigation into RCMP wrongdoing in Quebec and the hearings into Elgie's infamous Bill 7.

In Ottawa, Borovoy argued passionately that the police should not have the power to search and seize without a warrant. At Queen's Park, he argued just as passionately that human rights officers had to have the powers or search and seizure without a warrant.

At the end of the day, some of Elgie's proposals - although not many of them - were modified slightly, but the result still was an overwhelming, totally biased bureaucratic juggernaut which, although supposedly set up only to deal with discrimination in housing and employment, has continued to expand its power and influence into every facet of our lives.

It's time to blow them up and start again. And it just shows what happens when a politician - in this case Davis and his crew - is more interested in catering to mouthy militants than in dealing in a reasonable way with the vast majority of people who, despite what the zealots may claim, are decent, law-abiding Canadians.



National Affairs

Claire Hoy

Candies are sometimes not so sweet

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kitchen table. Since that night, Beth and I have been dipping into it, as our moods of level of peckishness dictated.

The chocolate bars went very fast (thanks largely to Beth), the raisins went fairly quickly (thanks largely to me) and the rest of the goodies have been moving slowly but surely.

Which brings us to last Wednesday, which owing to a number of factors, is not going to be a day I recall fondly in my declining years. But the day did eventually end, and this tired old guy finally arrived home to a light supper, followed by an evening of working on the household books at the kitchen table. I regret to report that inconvenient distractions, such as work, have caused me to slide a bit when it comes to keeping up with certain domestic duties, but my stress level kept me

pumped enough that I still had some energy to make a dent in the pile of paper on the kitchen table.

So I set down to work for an hour or so. And there was the aforementioned bowl of candy within convenient reach. I figured I had earned a bit of a treat, so I tried one of the Kisses. Rather satisfying it was, so I had another. This was proving to be a real pick-me-up, so I had another.

As I was contently chewing on this confection, while working away with pen and calculator, I got the feeling there was something else in my mouth that shouldn't be there. I immediately thought there was something foreign in the candy, so I quickly ran to the nearest convenient receptacle and spit it out, taking care that Beth didn't see what I was doing (decorum must always take some priority).

It took a couple of seconds of flicking my tongue around my mouth to deter-

mine the real problem, and I let out a groan that Beth couldn't help but hear. She asked what the trouble was.

"I think I just broke a tooth on this (blankety-blank) candy," with frustration in my voice.

You did realize there was some point in starting this column with references to As Time Goes By, didn't you?

In fact, I had knocked out a great big filling from a tooth that's seen a lot of the dentist's attention over the last several years. It was going to see more.

Now unlike a lot of people (my late father springs readily to mind), I have never had any particular problem with going to the dentist. Indeed, as a kid, going to the dentist was an excuse to get out of school early, and in later years, it was an excuse to get in to work late that even quieted my workaholic tendencies.

My father, who could have stared down King Kong if he

had the opportunity, was a different sort. A picturesque description of one's last trip to the dentist would have put him out for the count.

That's not to say I was looking forward to the trip, which I was fortunate enough to be able to arrange for the very next day. My dentist is a very nice lady, but I knew she was going to holler at me for my stupidity, as I deserved. She did too, albeit in the nicest possible way. And while the dentist doesn't scare me, like most people, I'm not fond of having my teeth drilled, even if it does get me out of work.

The upshot was the dentist was not too sure what to do about the tooth. I have to report back in a couple of weeks.

And on the advice of both my dentist and wife, I am giving up Kisses for life, at least the molasses kind. As for the other kinds of kisses, those details are for other types of publications.

Recent Winterfest was another big success

I would like to start off 2008 by wishing everyone a very happy, safe and prosperous New Year.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Caledon Citizen for allowing me to write a column that informs the residents of Caledon of important issues and provides information that keeps them up to date.

It is amazing the number of residents who appreciate this opportunity that the paper has afforded me. I appreciate it and thank the Caledon Citizen very much for understanding the importance of this.

We had a very successful Winterfest recently. When I became the Mayor, I changed the way that the Town we brought in the New Year with an open house for residents. In the past it was done on New Year's day and



Mayor's Report

By Marolyn Morrison

it was very apparent to me that staff had to work New Year's Eve and New Year's Day to make the Levee happen. I felt very strongly that Christmas and New Year's was for families to spend time together and enjoy each other, so I changed the Levee to the Sunday after New Year's and we call it Winterfest.

Winterfest is an opportunity for the whole community of Caledon to come out

and enjoy swimming, skating and friendship together, along with the mayor and members of council. This year was a huge success, and I want to thank everyone who came out, whether to just enjoy each other's company or to swim or skate. We had a ball.

Councillors enjoyed skating also, such as Councillor McClure, who took a few turns around the rink with his grandchildren. Other

Councillors, such as Councillor Paterak, Beffort, Whitehead, deBoer and Thompson, enjoyed the camaraderie and friendship of greeting many of the residents who arrived to enjoy the afternoon. I didn't see any of the councillors in the pool. Maybe next year.

We had a record number of residents attend. Over 100 more this year than last year and the winner of the gift was a lovely lady from Bolton. Residents came from all over Caledon and we had a great time meeting and greeting everyone.

Thank you residents of Caledon for making it such a wonderful day and especially thank you to the staff who made all of the arrangements, decorations and served the food.

Isn't Caledon a wonderful place to live!

Bruno Iannicca re-elected separate board chair

Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board trustees recently re-elected long-time Mississauga Trustee Bruno Iannicca as chair of the 11-member board.

Iannicca was first elected to the board in 1991 and over the past 16 years, has served in leadership capacities on various committees, including chair and vice-chair of the administration and finance committee, vice-chair of the faith and program committee and vice-chair of the contract negotia-

tions committee.

Mississauga Trustee Anna Abbruscato was elected vice-chair.

Like Iannicca, Abbruscato has extensive leadership experience on the board. She is a former vice-chair of the board and has served as chair and vice-chair of numerous committees.

Iannicca has a BA degree in commerce and economics from the University of Toronto, and a diploma in management studies from Sheridan College.

He begins his second term as chair in vastly different circumstances than last year, when the board was under provincial supervision because trustees refused to make cuts to balance the board's budget; cuts that trustees believed would be harmful to students and were being forced due to chronic underfunding. This year, the board has filed a projected balanced budget for 2007-08.

"This is a new day and a new time," said Iannicca. "We have put the past behind

us and we are all looking forward to great things in 2008. As trustees, our role is to be stewards and guardians of Catholic education in our community. As chair of this board, let me assure you that we will be tenacious on this point."

The board also elected the chairs and vice chairs of its five standing committees and its representative on the transportation consortium.

Caledon trustee Frank Di Cosola was named chair of the contract negotiations committee.