

Caledon Citizen

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Editorial

The residents won the fight that didn't happen

There are some who probably expected a lot of fireworks Monday night, when representatives and supporters of the Coalition of Concerned Residents and Businesses of Bolton (CCRBB) faced Caledon councillors.

Nobody changed their positions, but all seemed to walk away from the session at least satisfied, if not happy.

The reason for this, we contend, is the two sides were able to air their positions face-to-face, rather than through e-mails or the media. It allowed for the exchange of ideas, along with some give-and-take. And there promises to be more of that, as council agreed to have a meeting June 5 with representatives of CCRBB.

We believe that councillors learned Monday night that CCRBB are not a bunch of trouble-makers, but concerned people with a vested interest in Bolton, either because the live there, work there or (in many cases) both.

And it was explained to CCRBB and their supporters that council is not insensitive to the needs of the Bolton community. And when one takes a step back from all the anger that has been evident for the last little while, that does make a lot of sense.

It also must be remembered that council is under conflicting pressures on this issue, from within the community. While CCRBB has considerable support, the agenda package for Monday's meeting distributed to the media contained several letters from residents. While many of them raised the same points (there was one case of the same latter being included twice), both sides of the discussion were represented, leading one to conclude that CCRBB's support in the community is not unanimous.

As well, we have to remember that a municipal government also has to answer to the province, conforming to requirements residents might not like. Several councillors made that point Monday night too.

We don't believe the residents of Caledon elected themselves a stupid council in November 2006. Caledon consists of a vast geographic area, but they know that Bolton contains the largest chunk of the population, as well as the bulk of the industrial and commercial development. For them not to be concerned about the well-being of the Bolton and South Albion area would be stupid.

There were concerns, and possibly expectations that Monday's session was going to turn into a shouting match between the various factions. Maybe we in the media were hoping for something like that (fights are always fun to write about). What we got was a meeting of adults, who set concerns on the table. Nothing was resolved, but much was discussed, and we think that's going to benefit the community in the end.

The point was made several times in the meeting Monday night, both from the council table and the public gallery, that everyone in the room cares about Bolton. There's just some disagreement on the best way to proceed. Perhaps some of those issues can be sorted out June 5.

Our Readers Write

Fire Chiefs urges fire safety check for cottage

This Victoria Day weekend, while you restock the cottage shelves and open the windows to the coming summer, fire fighters across cottage country urge you to do a fire safety check up as well.

Remember these four tips.

- Change all smoke alarm batteries and install one alarm on each level and outside sleeping areas.
- If your alarms are more than 10 years old, replace them.
- If your cottage has a fireplace, or gas or propane appliances, install at least one carbon monoxide alarm.
- Choose fire extinguishers for kitchen areas and garages, and conform to watercraft regulations.

Enjoy a fire-safe summer 2008!

Don Warden,
Executive Director,
Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs



Public speaking can be frightening

I'm sure we've all heard it said that the one thing people generally fear more than anything else is speaking in public.

I think it's true that most of us start off being uncomfortable getting up in front of a crowd and making remarks. Some of us get over the fear, and there are some who actually get quite good at it. People in the public eye get plenty of practice. Politicians need to be good at it. A politician who can't coherently express him or herself in front of a crowd needs to seriously look at finding another line of work.

Speaking in front of a crowd is not something I terribly enjoy, although over the years, it's something I have come to know I can handle, but I have also had occasions when I have fallen short, as well as flat on my face (figuratively).

I was once at a gathering of some friends, two of whom had been involved with Toastmasters, and they decided to set up a little arrangement, almost like a parlour game, where everyone in the group was required to draw a topic from a bowl and deliver an impromptu speech on it. It came my turn, I drew a topic and froze.

This all happened about 15 years ago. I have no recollection of the topic I drew, or the reaction to my address once it was complete. I just remember I stood there like an idiot for a couple of minutes, mumbled something that I was sure didn't make a whole lot of sense, then quickly found my chair again. And I was among friends. It frightens me to



Bill Rea

think what would have happened had I been in front of a hostile audience.

I'm happy to report things have improved with time, although like most people, I still get nervous at the thought of standing up in front of a group.

As my wedding approached 10 years ago, in my gut I knew I had only minor fears of the major step in life I was about to take, but I was terrified at the thought that I was actually going to have to make a speech at the reception to follow. My mother threw a party the night before the wedding, and I was a mess, realizing I had too many other things to worry about that I had no time for partying. And getting up in front of people, including near total strangers from my wife's side of the church, and friends of my parents who I had known all my life and who probably always thought I would never amount to anything, was near the top of my list of fears. So naturally, I was climbing the wall that night.

I eventually got home and took care of all the multitude of items I had to take

address that night, leaving the composition of a speech to the end, hoping to avoid nagging thoughts and distractions. It worked rather well too. I had written a rough draft in less than an hour, which was reasonably coherent and contained what I thought were a few nice touches of humour. And then I started to relax and breathe at a rate that approached normal.

The speech went well, although the people in the room laughed at a line that I hadn't thought was funny. But I got through it, and was followed at the microphone by my brother. Having won many prizes for public speaking as a student, I knew he'd ace my performance, and he did. I was just happy to be able to sit with my dignity in tact.

Being able to speak in public seemed to run in my family. My father was very good at it, although I don't think he enjoyed it. I well remember the evening when he got angry at my mother for lining him up to deliver a toast at a wedding without consulting him (I later heard a tape of the address he gave, and you would never have been able to tell it was done with reluctance).

I think the key to public speaking, at least occasional public speaking, is preparation. Like I stated before, I was able to relax the night before my wedding because I had been able to get some usable and acceptable words down on paper, words which I was able to tweak the next morning. And one of the reasons my dad was so angry

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