

## Why such powerful feelings?

So there we were, my wife and I, with a group of long-time friends, sitting around a living room on Christmas Eve, discussing nothing in particular, when one of the group – an unapologetic leftie, alas – said the magic word.

“Sarah Palin.”

Well, from the reaction of almost everyone there – with the exception of your correspondent and a couple of the others – one would have thought that Satan himself had been introduced into the friendly back-and-forth banter.

Indeed, the wife of one of my dearest friends, who normally has nothing to say that is political, actually went into a rant about this “dreadful woman.” And she wasn’t alone in that feeling.

Which got me thinking to myself later on about why

Palin, who actually has no impact whatsoever on the day-to-day lives of those of us who live north of the border, manages to evoke such powerful feelings, both pro and con.

I thought about her impact even more with news of an extensive public opinion poll – conducted by Ipsos Reid for Postmedia News and Global National – showing that a significant number of Canadians, more women than men, named Palin rather prominently in “Canadians’ choice for top newsmaker of the year.”

What is it, one wonders, about Palin that gets up the nose of so many people?

On the other hand, what is it about Palin that draws untold thousands of fans to her speaking engagements, which gives her Alaska travel show such high ratings and which propels her book to the top of most best-sellers lists?

There’s no easy answer to this thing. I suspect that much of the animosity stems from those people who fell for the Barack Obama-as-Messiah message and are now disappointed with their hero – who was, to me at least, always just too good to be true – and are now spiteful that Palin, savagely ridiculed by the media in particular and the left in general, seems to be getting on with her life and doing extremely well, thank you very much.

I admit to a sneaking admiration for Palin, a woman who has cleverly turned her legendary 15 minutes of fame into a small fortune.

It’s odd that Al Gore, who lied and twisted facts in his fight against global warming, and made himself many millions, is rarely, if ever, attacked on a personal level for his outright distortions, the way Palin is attacked every time she slips up (which, alas, is quite often).

It seems acceptable for Gore to preach one thing and live another quite openly, but wrong for Palin to exploit her notoriety and turn herself into a corporation as Gore did. Could it be because Gore is male and Palin isn’t? Not totally. But I think that’s part of it.

When Palin recently misspoke about North and South Korea – and immediately corrected herself – the media was all over her like a wet blanket, trying to perpetuate the smear that she is stupid. Yet when Obama, during the last campaign, said he’d been to “57 states” and only had “three more to go,” it was ignored. That’s because everybody understands a slip of the tongue except, it seems, when a target slips. Then attack is fair game.

I doubt that Palin will want to run for president next time – she’s making too much money and having too much fun – but we’ll see.

It seems those Canadians who react most viscerally against Palin tend to be those who have a strong anti-American streak in them, who view themselves as “liberal” in their world outlook, and would be appalled if any of their heroes were treated with the same disdain that Palin must endure.

Speaking of disdain, nobody earned it more – nobody – than the disgraced murderer/rapist/sicko Col. Russell Williams who, according to the aforementioned Post/Global poll, was picked by 26 per cent of all Canadians asked as “top newsmaker of the year.” It’s hard to argue, although there was a letter to the editor from somebody who was outraged that Williams would be “lauded” in this way. It wasn’t a “laud,” if there is such a word. It was simply a recognition that his heinous crimes clearly were Canada’s biggest – certainly not the brightest – news story of the year. That’s all.

Also rating high was Prime Minister Stephen Harper – prime ministers are always high on the top newsmakers lists for obvious reasons – and teenage singing sensation Justin Bieber. Clearly, Bieber’s work is not aimed at somebody of my generation, but I did see him on a television show over the holidays and, while he was okay, it remains a mystery to me why he is such a phenom.

But, that’s the beauty of life isn’t it? If we didn’t have mysteries, it wouldn’t be as much fun.

Happy New Year. And I’m sure we’ll have more mysteries to ponder in 2011.



National Affairs

Claire Hoy

# There were local efforts to help people in Haiti January

The year started with celebrations, and that included former Caledon resident spending time with his family.

Jason Young was hoping the next Christmas would be spent the same way, but there would first be a tour of Afghanistan with the 1st Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment, an infantry battalion based at Petawawa.

The 24-year-old private was due to start two month training in January, with deployment slated for April.

“I kind of wanted to give something back to my country,” he added, appreciating the freedoms that he grew up with. He said he wanted to give back in some symbolic way, “on the front line, serving my country.”

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Among other things, 2010 was an election year. Cheltenham area resident Tom Dolson won the prize for being the first candidate to register, announcing he would be seeking the regional council seat in Ward 2.

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The interchange at Highways 10 and 410 was causing confusion and concerns for people living in the area, and Caledon councillors were reminded of that. They agreed to pass the concerns onto the Ministry of Transportation (MTO).

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A good crowd was on hand at the Mayfield Recreation Complex for the Town of Caledon’s annual Winterfest celebration.

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The year started tragically for the people of Haiti, as the Caribbean nation was truck

by a massive earthquake in January. Aid was provided from all over the world, and people in Caledon stepped up to do their bit.

The results included representatives of Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace stopping at Robert F. Hall Catholic Secondary School to collect a cheque for \$17,000. School Chaplain Brenda Holtkamp said students just contributed what they could. That was combined with a few other events, such as a dress-down day.

“This tragedy in Haiti is not going to go away tomorrow,” she observed.

Luke Stocking, central Ontario animator with the Organization, said he understood Hall was tops in Canada in terms of raising money for Haiti.

“How did you do it?” he asked.

“Big hearts,” replied Principal Ed McMahon.

Other local efforts for Haiti included the congregation at Union Presbyterian Church in Terra Cotta hosting a Breakfast for Haiti.

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Canadians started the year with a prorogued federal Parliament, and many people around the country didn’t like it. A series of protests were organized, including outside the two constituency offices of Dufferin – Caledon MP David Tilson.

“This Parliament is our Parliament and not one person’s Parliament,” declared Piotr Derus, who organized the Bolton rally.

Tilson was not at either rally, but he said he had no problems with them taking

place.

“It’s a democratic process,” he commented, adding he noted the criticism. “I’ll take all that back to the prime minister.”

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Caledon’s Chief Librarian Bill Manson and Public Library Board Chair Preet Kang appeared before Town councillors, asking for their support in calling on the province to maintain the funding for Knowledge Ontario, a valuable resource for public libraries.

Council passed a motion voicing support to the Ministries of Finance, Education and Culture maintaining the funding of the program, as well as coming up with a formula to increase Provincial funding of public libraries.

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## “Home Sweet Home” By Michelle Stubbs



The Webster’s dictionary defines a home as “the place where one lives.” In reality, a home is so much more than this simplified definition. Your home not only shelters you from the cold, it also protects your

most cherished possessions and memories. Your home is not only a place to feed your body, your home feeds your soul. It’s the place where the love and support of family and friends lives and thrives. Sadly, many people living in our community do not have a place to call home in the truest sense of the word.

As Manager of the Crisis Program at Caledon Community Services (CCS), I am seeing an increasing number of individuals and families in our community, an average of six people per month, who have lost their homes or are, at best, one pay cheque away from losing everything. CCS’s experience serving this population amply demonstrates that homelessness in Caledon comes in all shapes and sizes. Job loss, family crisis, illness, mental health and lack of affordable housing are all circumstances and factors altering the lives of our fellow community residents.

Over the last eight months, the Caledon Homelessness Partnering Strategy (CHPS) Steering Committee, comprised of members representing the faith community, health and social services, business, government and interested residents, has been examining the issues surrounding homelessness, specifically in Caledon. One of the goals this committee is focused on is

engaging the community regarding the uniqueness of homelessness in Caledon, and encouraging all residents to embrace and actively commit to a sustainable plan of action.

This is a challenging goal to achieve. Many believe the problem of homelessness doesn’t exist in Caledon. We aren’t exposed to scenes of people sleeping on benches, or over street vents. Caledon’s homelessness problem is hidden. Our homeless community is quiet, out of sight and growing.

Challenges aside, I am encouraged that members of our community are beginning to respond and take notice. Individuals and groups are coming forward to share their stories and provide their ideas and concerns. Some are encountering people experiencing homelessness in the community and are expressing anger that “someone should be doing something.”

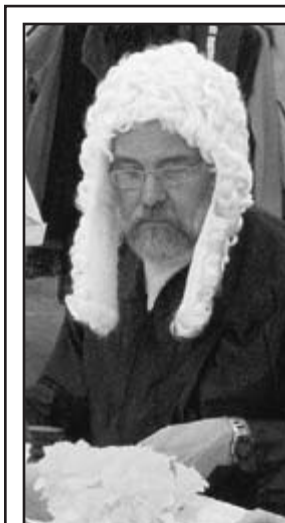
This anger and frustration is a wake up call, and can fuel the engine that drives positive change in our community. And they are right. Someone should be doing something. That someone is me, that someone is you, that someone is us. The required change and ultimate success can rest with no one individual, agency or group. It will only happen through innovative community partnerships at all levels.

This holiday season, as you spend time with family and friends, I am asking you to talk amongst yourselves and discuss what part you can have in helping to address homelessness in our shared community. I am looking forward to hearing your ideas, and how we can work together in 2011. Wishing you a happy and healthy holiday season, from my home to yours.

### How Do You See It?

Tell us how you see it. You can reach, Michelle Stubbs, Manager of Volunteering & Community Relations at 905.584.2300 ext 211 or [mstubbs@ccs4u.org](mailto:mstubbs@ccs4u.org)

This column is provided free of charge by the Caledon Citizen.



Several Caledon officials, including councillors and police officers, found themselves in a makeshift jail for a good cause. They were taking part in a Jail N Bail fundraiser for the Canadian Cancer Society, finding themselves facing silly charges in front of a wise, stern, but lovable judge.