

## Egypt's future remains up in the air

Sometimes, the saying goes, a change is better than a rest. But not always. Take, for example, the dramatic "changes" the world has witnessed over the past few weeks in Egypt, resulting in the hasty retreat of long-time dictator Hosni Mubarak, toppled by what has generally been heralded around the world as a spontaneous outbreak of democratic fever by an oppressed people.

That Mubarak has oppressed his people is certainly indisputable. That the huge, and, more impressively, mainly peaceful demonstrations by hundreds of thousands of disgusted Egyptians ultimately ended Mubarak's rule is equally indisputable.

What remains up in the air – and looks even less likely than it did – is the widespread notion in the media, political circles and elsewhere, that we were witnessing the birth of democracy in one of the world's oldest and most historic countries.

It ain't necessarily so. Sadly, at this point anyway, it doesn't even appear likely. As things currently stand, they've replaced one military dictator with another. Keep in mind that Mubarak was head of Egypt's Air Force and took over the presidency from his role as vice-president after the assassination of president Anwar El Sadat in 1981. He has ruled with an iron fist ever since.

And while it's easy, and understandable, to get excited about the prospects of democracy in action, it was always premature – and incredibly naive – to assume that the widespread public outpourings of outrage in Egypt would lead to a western-style democracy. We did the same thing in the late 1970s over when the "people's revolution" ousted the Shah of Iran, only to watch that country become more radical, and certainly more hostile to the West, when the Mullahs replaced what, by a comparison, was a tame autocracy.

And now in Egypt we see the ascension of the military once again, with Field Marshall Mohamed Hussein Tantawi taking over as the country's head of state now that Mubarak seems to have shipped his ill-gotten personal fortune abroad and headed for the hills.

Remember all those TV pictures you saw of the peaceful protesters camped in Cairo's historic Tahrir Square? Well, the first order of business for the "new" regime was to send in the army to clear the square, wielding wooden sticks and shields, and force the protesters to leave.

They also suspended the country's constitution, dissolved parliament (which is what the protesters wanted), but installed Tantawi and ordered the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces to rule "for a period of six months or until (parliamentary) and presidential elections are held."

They also announced an intention to ban strikes and other labour assemblies, not exactly a strong sign of democratic tendencies, while making an open-ended, vague promise of a referendum on constitutional amendments. At the same time, a military spokesman warned against anyone creating "chaos and disorder," no doubt reserving for the military the absolute right to determine just what constitutes "chaos and disorder."

And so it goes. Some opposition politicians are trying to put a positive spin on things, claiming it is "a victory for the revolution" because it dissolved Mubarak's corrupt parliament and promises a referendum.

But the reality is that despite the upheaval, Egypt remains a military dictatorship. Not that this is entirely bad from a western, geopolitical view. After all, Mubarak – unlike many leaders in that region – was western-friendly and did enforce a shaky "peace" treaty with Israel which has helped avoid an all-out conflagration between the Israelis and their hostile neighbours. There is no reason to think the newly installed military regime will be any more interested in picking a fight with Israel – and with the west in general – than Mubarak was. So this is good.

And Egypt, already a fiscal basket case, certainly will need a firm hand at the top if it hopes to have any chance to recover economically from the fiscal damage incurred during the last few weeks which has brought the country's financial life to a complete standstill and – fiscally speaking – has made a bad situation worse.

We can always hope that things will improve. Perhaps Tantawi won't be as bloody-minded as Mubarak was. Perhaps the much-hated Egyptian police force will calm down and treat the people with a modicum of respect.

And – let's really be optimistic here – perhaps the new regime is serious when it says it hopes to refashion a government based on the idea that "human freedom, the rule of law, support for the value of equality, pluralistic democracy, social justice and the uprooting of corruption are the bases for the legitimacy of any system of governance that will lead the country ..."

Time will tell. But we'll have to wait and see.



**National  
Affairs**

**Claire  
Hoy**

## Our Readers Write

### Caledon will work better if we work together

There has been much discussion recently that Caledon council is not transparent or accountable, and that there is no democracy in Caledon.

We do not agree.

To say council is not transparent or accountable is either not to understand how things work, or as in the old saying, "There are none so blind as those who do not wish to see."

Democracy means we the citizens of Caledon decide who will represent us. We do that by our votes. When some candidates lose, it doesn't mean that the "wrong" people have been elected, and that there is no democracy in Caledon. It means that we, the majority, have decided who should represent us. Maybe you didn't vote for the current council, but that doesn't mean that they won't do a good job for you.

This was a nasty election. It's over. Let council get to work to do what we elected them to do.

This council has an excellent chance to do some really good work. They are not going to agree on all issues, but they will be able to discuss things without the rancour of the last few years. They will be able to form a consensus and thus be working for us, not some personal, private agenda.

We need elected officials who will sincerely work on behalf of the citizens of Caledon to achieve realistic goals. Some of this work has already been done. Instead of attacking everything they do, we should be assisting and guiding to accomplish these goals. We need to support that initiative in order to make an

### Charges laid after break-in

Caledon OPP report a 49-year-old man from Halton was charged Feb. 7 after they received a call about a break and enter in progress.

Police were sent to a vacant property on McLaughlin Road at about 11:13 p.m., and when they arrived, they found a man sitting in a pick-up truck in the driveway. Another truck, belonging to the sons of the property's owner, was blocking the suspect's truck.

From the investigation, it was determined that the suspect did not have permission to be on the property and had entered a barn at the back of the site. He was charged with break and enter with intent to commit an indictable offence.

even better Caledon. Council should be given time to work on Town business, not constantly having to defend that work.

Everyone who's encouraged and praised does a better job.

If those focussing on disruption of council's activities intend to do so in order to further their own agenda, they do so in defiance of the majority of Caledon citizens.

They do us all a disservice. Council, instead of getting on with our work, must take time to defend, again and again, decisions we ask them to make.

Don't accept that those who criticize are correct. Ask around. Inform yourself. Don't accept rumours. If you are in doubt about something, call your councillor. Ask. Read up on the rules and regulation they must follow.

It is no doubt the right of a citizen to question, but it should be done in the spirit of actively seeking information and to input suggestions.

Stop preaching that things are "hidden" at the Town. They are not. They never have been. The information being circulated isn't necessarily correct.

We should not expect government to do everything for us. If government took care of everything from cradle to grave, we would pay enormous taxes, far beyond our ability and desire to pay. We need to understand that

even though we pay taxes, there are still things needed (or wanted) that we can provide. If we want them, let's get out there and get them. We're capable and intelligent people. We can contribute in many ways and situations. There are people, who unsung, regularly do little jobs that contribute to the welfare of the Town.

A case in point – The Caledon Pool needed steps for the mobility challenged. Sure, it's the Town's responsibility. But recently, a group of citizens raised more than sufficient funds to purchase these steps, now enjoyed by many.

There are many of us who keep the grass cut on the roadsides of our property, who cut the boulevards in subdivisions, who plant small corner gardens and who care for cemeteries. They don't wait for the Town to do it. It's these small acts that make us contributing members of society. It's in the caring, doing and giving that we become better people, a better society and a better town. Young Craig Keilburger's organization, Me to We, is a wonderful example.

Let's build up, not tear down. Instead of ranting and railing, go do something to help. You not only give, but you get something back in self-esteem and a good feeling about yourself.

Carping, complaining and accusing help none of us. It serves no one well, when in-

stead of productivity and progress, we revert to name calling, accusations and dissension. This produces unrest and divisiveness in a community. We don't need or want that.

Let's take all the negative feelings and turn them into positive productivity. Bethell House, CCS, Peace Ranch, the library and the Lions are just a few of the many causes which could use our assistance and skills. If we used all this negative energy in a positive way, just think what could be accomplished for our community.

We're human. We aren't going to agree all the time. Can we disagree in a civilized, polite way? Can we work together for the good of all?

We live in a town of which we can be justly proud. How did it get that way? Ask. Think. Don't just accept information at face value. Because someone says it, doesn't mean it's correct.

Progress is achieved when we move forward. Do we all wish to move forward? If we do, then it must be together.

A team of horses all pulling in different directions only wrecks the cart. Caledon is our cart! Don't wreck it.

Bronwyn Clark,  
Bill Clark,

Barbara Sweeney,

Lorraine J. Alexander,

Linda White,

Linda Pim



**TOWN HALL**

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### NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

The Town of Caledon will be holding a Public Information Centre for the Reconstruction of Ann Street including Phase 2 of the Bolton West Downtown Parking Lot and the Southwest Humber River Parkette to give the public an opportunity to review the construction design drawings. Representatives from the Town's Public Works Department and members of the design team will be on hand to answer questions regarding both the design and construction phase.

The project includes the following key components:

Reconstruction of Ann Street to urban standards including, curbs and gutters, sidewalks, improved lighting and streetscape improvements from King Street to 50 metres west of Stern Street;  
Reconstruction of Phase 2 of the Bolton West Downtown Parking Lot to facilitate approximately 69 parking spaces including landscaping improvements;  
Completing the Southwest Humber River Parkette.

The Public Information Center will be held on:

**Date:** Wednesday, March 2, 2011  
**Time:** 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm Open House  
**Place:** Albion Bolton Community Centre, Room 'C'  
150 Queen Street South, Bolton, Ontario

Plans showing the proposed construction will be available for public review. If you have any questions regarding this project please contact either:

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