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LETTERS

Council should be open to comments

Dear editor:

The powers that be have decided that Lanark Highlands citizens cannot address council about an issue that concerns them. (You may be surprised to learn that, but it's true, due to a blatantly false reading of the procedural bylaw.)

However, we still theoretically have one little ragged right to speak to council members: until COVID closed council meetings to the public, once council had concluded its work the reeve would ask if any member of the public wanted to ask a question. (The procedural bylaw says such conversations should NOT be included in the minutes – heaven forbid if the community should hear of people's concerns.)

When COVID shut down public attendance, though, the right to ask a question vanished without notice – even though the public could still “attend” by phone, and even though in other situations, those listening were allowed to comment, so clearly it was technically possible.

Now that council meetings are once again public, you'd think the question period would have been reinstated – but it hasn't been. So last Tuesday, at the break between the committee-of-the-whole meeting and the council meeting, I asked the reeve whether/when the public would regain that small right. He said it was on the list of things council was going to discuss, and mentioned the so-called problem of people who are still “attending” by phone.

Not good enough. First of all, the phone lines can be and are opened for comments on planning approvals, etc. all the time. Second, the procedural bylaw speaks to the issue, so if council wants to quash our right to ask questions, they should amend the bylaw – which they have the power to do at any time. But unless they do that, they are contravening their own procedural bylaw.

Not to mention taking away the last scrap of our democratic right to address our elected representatives.

Susan Berlin
Watson's Corners

We want your letters!
E-mail us at lanarkera@primus.ca or drop off your letter at the Era office at 66 George St. You can also mail to The Lanark Era, P.O. Box 40, Lanark, ON, K0G 1K0. Letters must be 500 words or less. We reserve the right to edit for length, clarity and accuracy.

EVERYDAY LIFE



Steve Myers cartoon

Researching Easter's origins, just because

With Easter weekend almost here (and therefore the Era office closed this Friday), I decided to figure out once and for all why, unlike religious holidays such as Christmas, Easter can fall between late March and mid-April depending on the year. When my niece was born 14 years ago on April 12, she showed up on Easter weekend. Another year, we might have been two weeks past Easter by that time.

So, I searched “Easter” in good old Google (yes, I know none of those internet conglomerates are really “good” or “old” – it's just a saying!), Wikipedia tells me that Easter's date is calculated on a lunisolar calendar (solar year plus moon phase), similar to the Hebrew calendar.

Apparently, the First Council of Nicaea in 325



Out and About
By Gena Gibson

established two rules – independence from the Hebrew calendar, and worldwide uniformity. It took centuries to figure out the details, and eventually came to be the first Sunday after the ecclesiastical full moon that occurs on or soonest after March 21.

Wikipedia adds that even if calculated on the

basis of the more accurate Gregorian calendar, the date of that full moon sometimes differs from that of the astronomical full moon after the March equinox.

Got it? Clear as mud, I'd say. So I just wait and see what my calendar tells me, and then I know what Friday I'll be off in late March or early April – or mid-to-late April, which is also possible.

Want more Easter trivia? Because I've got it for you! The English term comes from the Saxon spring festival Eostre, and Easter is also linked to the Jewish Passover by its name, origin and much of its symbolism, according to Wikipedia.

Customs across the Christian world include sunrise services (one of which will take place in Lanark; see the religion

listings on page 14 for details of this and other Good Friday/Easter Sunday services), midnight vigils, exclamations, and decorating and communal breaking of Easter eggs (I have to say I don't know the second half of that ritual; I have never communally broken Easter eggs).

Easter is, of course, first and foremost a religious celebration, although many people get together and eat ham, for some reason. It celebrates Jesus' resurrection from the dead, and is considered the holiest day on the Christian calendar.

However you celebrate – with a sunrise service, with contemplation of the life and death of Jesus, with the Easter Bunny and Easter eggs and ham – let me be the first to wish you happy Easter!