

One flew over the NAW NAW nest

To say the behaviour of North Algona Wilberforce Township Mayor Deborah Farr at last week's council meeting was erratic is an understatement.

When council completed its regular agenda items, Mayor Farr suddenly rose from her seat and informed council she was fearful for her personal safety and asked members of the public to remain in chambers because she did not want to be left alone with her fellow council members.

She even went so far as to threaten to call 911 for assistance if council did not comply with her insistence they conduct a closed meeting inside a cramped office.

Not only were members of council and township staff left shaking their heads in bewilderment after this statement, but members of the gallery were left wondering why this bizarre request was made.

This is not the first time Mayor Farr has acted erratically in the middle of a council meeting. Over the last three years, there have been numerous examples. She has stopped in mid-conversation and announced she was texting her lawyer for legal advice; she has claimed to be threatened outside of chambers and to have received threatening phone calls at home.

She has cost Renfrew County taxpayers thousands of dollars with claims made to an Integrity Commissioner against fellow councillors at both the local and county level, and each time her claims were found to have no merit.

NAW taxpayers have also had large legal costs because of investigations into the actions of council members and staff.

Over the last six months, there has been a relative calm around the NAW council table following three years of turmoil, childish antics, squabbling and antics that made this council the laughing stock of the Ottawa Valley.

Both mayor and council members embarrassed themselves on a regular basis with no direction or coherent approach to governance. However, since mid-2017, there have been two qualified CAOs who helped bring decorum and discipline to council, and as each member grew in experience, the level of foolishness dramatically dropped.

But last week, all that good will and appearance fell by the wayside. The mayor once again displayed behaviour that is anything but typical. In addition to threatening to call 911, she and other councillors got into a public spat over reports that were not included in the agenda, and this juvenile behaviour can only be compared to a bickering couple going through a messy divorce.

Their conduct did absolutely nothing to add to an intelligent debate, and it made some of them look foolish and immature.

May 1 is the date the Ontario government has set for anyone interested in running for municipal office to publicly declare their intent. Perhaps this latest incident will inspire others to put their name forward and bring a more mature approach to governance in North Algona Wilberforce.

Letter

Reaching out with love

Dear Editor:

The unspeakable horror of the Humboldt tragedy has touched every fibre of life in Canada. We are demonstrating our support and love the way people do when they are feeling the sorrow, grief and pain of others.

To demonstrate this, we are sending money, we are offering blood, and we are sending messages of condolence and comfort. We are a country united in our support of people who we have never met who are overcome with almost unbearable profound sorrow.

For many days I have listened to the many messages from all over our country and was struck by the incredible warmth of Canadians.

On April 12 around 11 a.m., I picked up an interview coming from a Roman Catholic School in Strathroy, Ontario. The lady interviewed was a Grade 6 teacher, she explained, "This is a small community of faith, we believe in the power of prayer," she

said. "We are believing and praying for God to heal all the broken-hearted and begin the healing process of broken bodies caused by the accident." The teacher spoke from the heart with deep sincerity and conviction. There was an image of 80 or so children in the gym.

You can be sure this is happening all across Canada in these faith communities where children are prepared for the future, where they are given a moral education to build their lives on and are shown to reach out to others.

This teacher did not sound like she was living in a cocoon. On the contrary, she is doing her job in a world where grief so often strikes us. Grieving is painful, unbearably painful. Any one who has ever experienced grief understands it drains to the core. At times we wonder if you can go on, but thank God that's when someone reaches out to you. It's like a sunbeam.

That's precisely what Canadians are doing for our fellow Canadians from all across our country. We will stand with them and support them with our love through the funerals. We are all in this tragedy together.

Robert Potsma, Renfrew

The perils of winter driving

A View from Bulger's Corners (and Wilno and Douglas and Barcelona)



Johanna Zomers

Sometimes procrastination works in one's favour and last week's late season snowfall was such an occasion. Hurray for not having changed the winter tires. Hurray for the snow shovel and the winter boots, coats and scarves still near at hand.

I am the most annoying sort of winter driver -- timid, slow, given to pulling over to let fully-loaded log trucks by me instead of hovering over my rear bumper. Years of fearfully navigating the Wilno hills have scarred me for life as did the snowy winter trips of our childhood on the backroads of Rockingham, Letterkenmy, Rosenthal and Siberia.

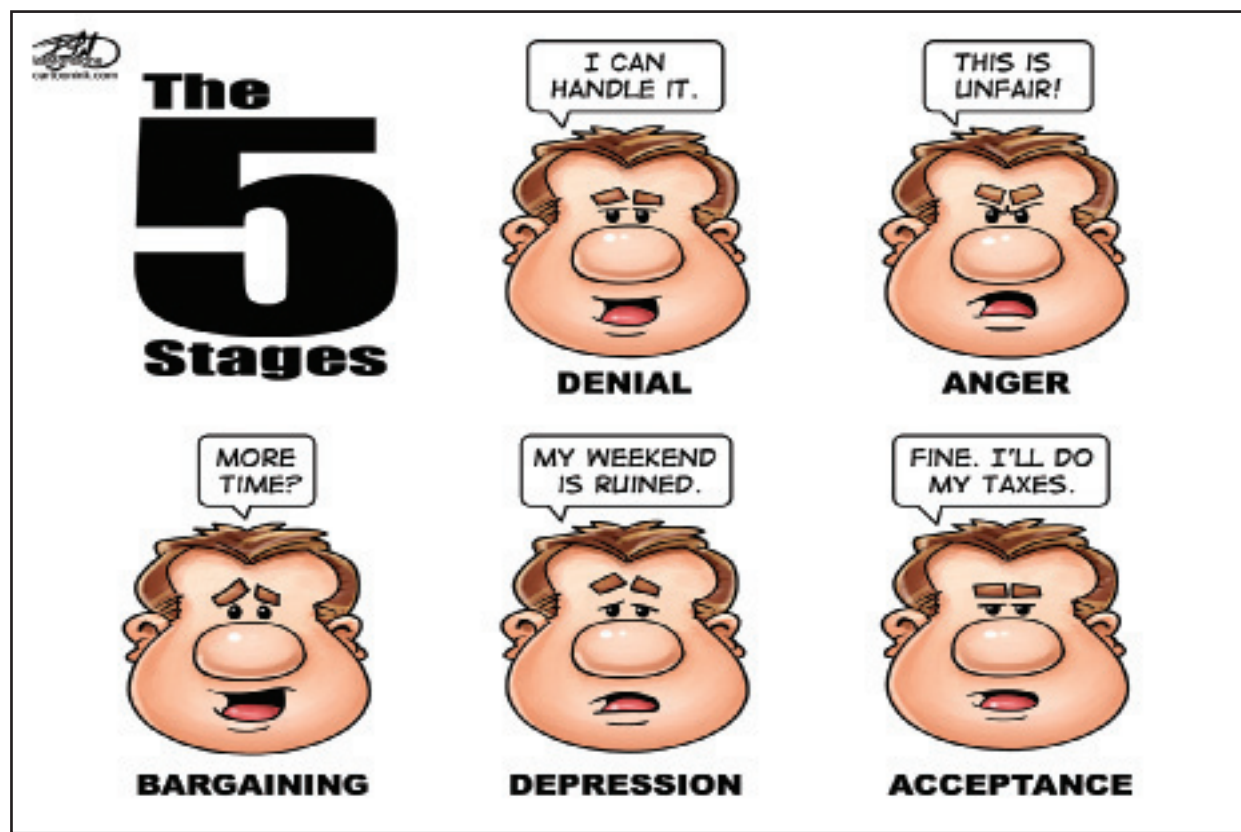
In those days, the snow-covered gravel roads thawed into bottomless muddy-rutted bogs. People carried chains to put on their tires and every excursion in winter and spring was liable to end by being stuck either in the drifts or in the mud. Teams of horses were kept busy pulling vehicles out of various predicaments and I have memories of a loaded log truck labouring through greasy mud, being helped by a more reliable hay-eating version of 'horsepower' hitched to the front axle.

We are so accustomed now to just going where and when we want to, regardless of weather or road conditions. Our father, whose driving skills were learned as an adult when he first came to Canada, was not a big fan of venturing out in bad weather if it wasn't necessary.

variable and sometimes two weeks away was sufficient. Dad's second tactic was to glance at the sky and to announce that the weather wasn't looking good. If it was blue sky and summer, then a thunderstorm might be coming. Any other season, it could be snow, freezing rain, sleet or fog.

If all else failed, he would announce that the truck or car wouldn't start. Seeing as how in those days we had a collection of ancient finicky vehicles, that was often unfortunately the truth. In short, every childhood expedition had an element of uncertainty, of worry, of the nagging sense that if we did somehow manage to arrive, there was no guarantee that we'd ever make it home again.

Although I now travel blithely by planes, trains and buses throughout Europe, driving myself to Ottawa is an almost impossible ordeal. But I have come to terms with my driving phobias. I have discovered an alternative to the Queensway which involves taking the 'cowpaths' via Carp to the west end where I can park my car and take a city bus!



Democracy has gone to the dogs

Democracy, according to the late Winston Churchill, is one of the worst systems of government, except for all the others that have been tried and found far worse.

I think Winston was thinking about it before the rats outnumbered the democrats, the rats being the members of the Opposition Party who formed the previous government and did such a pee-poor job of governing that the voters kicked them out. If we had not done so, China would now own most of Canada's natural resources, and we would have become a puppet communist country.

It is now being run by Big Business for Big Business only, and to hell with the people -- like it or lump it.

I have lived and worked in Canada's mid north and have spoken to other workers who spent time in the far north. The word I have received is that no human being deserves to live in that northern squalor.

In the heartland of Canada we have millions of hectares of federal and provincial parkland that is visited by the rich whenever they become bored with city life. If our elected people in Ottawa and the provincial legislatures are guided by the same spirit

An Old Man's Opinion

Not Necessarily Ours



Al Donohue

that guided our ancestors, sections of parkland will be set aside for homes, factories and stores. It will be a new life for those neglected Canadians, one they richly deserve.

Sixty-five years ago I worked in that wild, untamed territory called Labrador. I worked with new Canadians who hailed from almost half the countries in Europe, all happy to be called Canadians.

This time our happy Canadians won't have to travel across an ocean, just travel on dry land from hell to heaven. It will be a dream come true for Charlie Angus, who must have cried himself to sleep when he visited some of their homes. I would like to close on a happy hopeful note. We can learn something new every day, if we are fortunate enough to work in the sugar shack with my friend, Bob Watson. He informed us the longest word in the English dictionary is smiles, the reason being there is a

whole mile between the s's.

Dear Readers, I fully intended to end there, until some self-proclaimed British Peaceful Green people (Green Peace) stuck their brown noses into a matter between two Canadian provinces, Alberta and British Columbia. This is our business -- not theirs. They are forgetting we are living in a global economy, based on exports and imports. It only makes sense to use the most practical way to move our products, and the Trans Mountain Extended Pipeline is the best access to the Pacific Ocean for one of our major exports.

Here again, parkland can be a blessing in disguise. Offering the mountain dwelling Indigenous people beautiful parkland, containing lakes, rivers and forests could well be the answer to prayer, not only in B.C. but across Canada.

Financial help in clearing land, building roads, homes, factories, stores and combined schools and places of worship could be a dream come true.

This time I am really going to close. It will be about the story of the helicopter crash -- landing on a California highway, striking a Rolling Stones van, killing two of the occupants.

I am told it is the first time in history that two stones were killed by one bird. And my fine feathered friends, if you believe that story, you will believe the Sahara Desert was loaded with huge white pine trees before Barry Verch and I went to work with our chainsaws.

And look at it now.

Letter Hydro, health and hope

Dear Editor: I am a senior citizen and resident of a rural community in Eastern Ontario, the Township of Madawaska Valley. All the residents of my community, but especially seniors, resent the cost of hydro. We are also worried about a projected shortage of doctors, and consequently, our municipality is actively recruiting physicians.

We are angered to read that Mayo Schmidt, President and CEO of Hydro One Limited received \$6.2 million in compensation for 2017 while the CEOs of hydroelectric corporations in British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Quebec are paid in the \$400 to \$500 thousand range. How can the Government of Ontario justify Schmidt's outrageous salary when provincial counterparts are being paid so much less and when Ontario citizens struggle to pay their electricity bills? Please refer to the Sunshine List, which lists the outrageous salaries and bonuses being paid to the Hydro employees. It will make your blood boil!!

When most communities across Ontario and Canada are coping with severe doctor shortages, why are graduating medical students unable to obtain residency positions and complete their training to become licensed physicians? This is an injustice for the graduates seeking to complete their training and for citizens hoping for doctors in their communities. After years of dedicated, hard work medical students are subjected to a process, the Canadian Residency Matching Service (CaRMS) which is cumbersome, complicated and failing.

This year 222 grads were not matched after the first round of selections. Last year 189 were unmatched after the first round and 149 after the second. According to Alex McKeen's article on this topic in The Globe and Mail (April 13, 2018), provincial governments, including Ontario, are reluctant to look into this situation which prevents a significant number of potential physicians from serving the health needs of citizens.

Premier Wynne has failed Ontario by allowing Hydro One to bankrupt the province and exploit ordinary citizens. She has also failed to call for an inquiry into the CaRMS situation which puts the future health of Ontarians at risk. If Doug Ford is true to his word, he will not only address the ridiculous salaries of Hydro One executives; he will also call for an investigation into the system that allows the severe shortage of doctors to continue. John Hildebrandt, Barry's Bay

Correction

In a letter to the editor in last week's edition of the Leader, two words contained in a sentence were inadvertently changed by auto correct and we wish to express apologies to the letter writer, Marion Schison.

The paragraph read: "It seems that it is okay for the mayor to disrespect people, make unsubstantiated comments and then deny that threesomes were made, act surprised when offense is taken..."

It should have read "and then deny these comments were made".....

We welcome letters to the editor for publication in the Eganville Leader.

Letters should include your home address as well as telephone number for verification purposes. Letters should not exceed 600 words in length. They can be mailed to: The Eganville Leader, P.O. Box 310, Eganville, Ontario K0J 1T0 or emailed to leader@ntico.net Our fax number is 613-628-2291. The name of the author of the letter must be published.

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"Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen."

We welcome/accepts the financial support of the Government of Canada.

