



Viewpoint

by Alex Shepherd, MP Durham

Police Corruption

The Romans had a saying that went like this, "Quis Custodiet Ipsos Custodes." It translates to, "Who will guard the guardians?"

The question of who will guard the guardians is particularly important in light of the corruption charges brought against six Toronto police officers last week.

The charges included conspiracy, obstruction of justice, assault causing bodily harm and theft which the officers are alleged to have committed against known criminals in the Toronto area.

I'm not saying the officers are guilty. Canadians have a great deal of faith in their police forces and I for one share their faith.

But it's scary to think that those we entrust to secure our liberty, like police officers, could be deciding who has rights and freedoms and who does not. And scarier still is the idea that police officers would contemplate this kind of thing thinking they could actually get away with it.

In a democracy like Canada's the question is so very important when rights and freedoms ensure a way of life that has made our nation, truly, the envy of the world.

Millions of people have come to Canada to escape autocratic and fascist forms of government that allow police forces to behave any way they wish in order to maintain a government's position of power.

We've all heard Churchill's definition of democracy in which he said it is the worst form of government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time. I believe history has shown us, in this case anyway, that he was a wise man.

Elected officials, civil servants, the military and police officers are duty bound to ensure that they uphold and reflect the ethical behaviour Canadians have held on to

which form the very basis of our society.

I don't buy into the argument some would espouse that in order to uphold the law sometimes you have to break it and that's all these officers were doing.

That argument places all members of Canadian society on the slippery slope to disaster. We would, in fact, be surrendering our rights and freedoms to an organization that holds no accountability to us.

And if that was what they were doing then it begs the question of why were theft charges slapped on them with all the other charges.

Those of us fortunate enough to have been chosen to be the guardians of rights and freedoms know right from wrong. We know what is ethical and what is not.

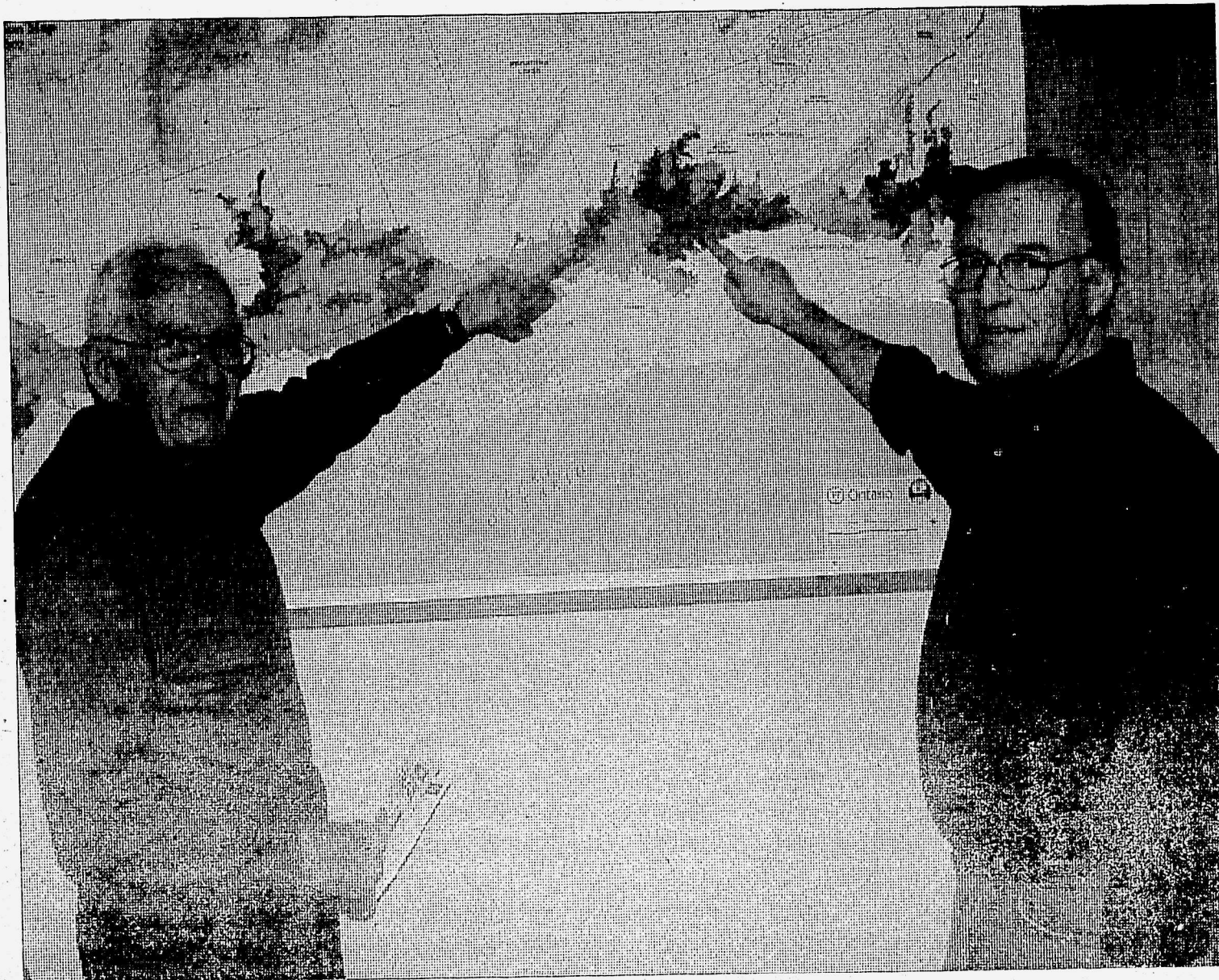
Trust and integrity are the cornerstones of what is ethical.

One of the credit card companies has a marketing tag that says something to the effect that rank has its privileges.

All politicians and civil servants must understand they have to act ethically and their behaviour, regardless of the circumstances, must be above reproach. There is no privilege or right to decide that what is wrong can be right based on the circumstances at hand.

Someone else once said that the tendency of democracies is, in all things, to mediocrity. I don't subscribe to this but I do believe that if we are not vigilant guarding the guardians we will allow ourselves to be our own oppressors.

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Roy Forrester (L) and Rick Patterson (R) indicate the Clarington section of the Oak Ridges Trail system. Roy Forrester who was the charter member of the Clarington Chapter of the Oak Ridges Trail Association (ORTA) and it's chair since the Trail was approved 'In Principal' by Clarington Council in February 1999, has passed on the reins. Mr. Rick Patterson was elected Chair of the Chapter at the group's Annual General Meeting held last Thursday evening at Orono's Heather Rebekha Lodge.

Mayor pushes for Regional Transit

In a motion presented to Councillors Monday, Mayor Mutton proposed that the Regional level of government take over public transit responsibilities effective July first of this year.

"I've spoken to the Mayors of Oshawa, Ajax and Pickering, and they agree it's time we look at transit right across the Region," stated Mayor Mutton at Monday's General Purpose and Administration Committee meeting.

Potential benefits have been identified in the Regional Transit Improvement Plan from amalgamations of local conventional and specialized transit services i.e. Handi Transit. Combined with the erosion of funding that had been provided to lower tier governments from the now defunct Greater Toronto Services Board, "All of our lower tier governments are assuming more cost," stated Mutton.

Clarington implemented its own Transit system in September 2002, with two bus loops through Bowmanville. Transit busses and services are contracted from the City of Oshawa. In November of 2003 Clarington Transit expanded its service to include a loop to Orono on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and Wilmot Creek on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

The Clarington transit service is recovering approximately 30.4 per cent of its operating costs which according to Tony Cannella, Director of Engineering is the average rate of recovery

for a new transit system.

Mutton says he feels a Region wide transit service may have greater opportunities to encourage enhanced GO services through Durham.

A Durham wide transit system gives us seamless transit into TTC, into Toronto and York Region said Regional Councillor Jim Schell.

If the Mayor's motion is ratified at Monday's Council Meeting, he will present it at the next Durham Regional Council Meeting on January 21st. He hopes at that time a report will be drawn up by Regional Staff that will be sent back to the local municipalities for their comment and approval.



Albert Werry waits for written response from John O'Toole, MPP Durham.

Is the Cole farm house (photo above), located at 5681 Acres Road, Clarington, slated for re-location, in a corridor that may be in the path of the future Highway 407 extension?

Below is the wedding party of Werry's parents taken in the sun on October 11th, 1930, in front of the Cole farm house (Sunnyslope Farm).



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