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FOAD members get the boot

By Dianne Cornish

Two Halton Hills women, vehemently opposed to a private company's plans to put a landfill into a mined-out portion of the Acton Quarry, were ejected from the Queen's Park legislative building Thursday morning.

Rita Landry and Diane van de Valk, members of the Halton Hills-based environmental group, FOAD (Furiously Opposed to Acton Dumping), were ushered out of the building after trying to speak directly with Premier Bob Rae during a press conference.

Rae had just left his office with Alberta premier Ralph Klein and was about to speak to members of the press when van de Valk approached him while wearing a mask with a large button in one nostril which read, "They lie!"

Van de Valk tried to get Premier Rae to respond to a few questions about the Acton Quarry proposal but she was escorted out of the building by OPP officers.

During a telephone interview Thursday night, Landry explained that she and members of her group are targeting Rae to make a decision on the Acton dumpsite proposal. They want the premier to ban the dump from the quarry.

"He's the only person who has the power to overturn auto insurance legislation and introduce gambling in Ontario," the FOAD president said during the interview. "We want him to make a decision on the Acton quarry issue," she added. "He's going to be our target and we're not going to rest until we get some answers from him."

Landry said it was Rae's cabinet shuffle on Wednesday which got "the ball rolling" and precipitated

her trip to Queen's Park with van de Valk. Environment Minister Ruth Grier was given the Ministry of Health portfolio and Bud Wildman was named as Grier's replacement.

Just 10 days before the cabinet shuffle, Landry had met with Grier about the Consolidated Hearing Board's decision after the preliminary hearing on the Acton Quarry landfill proposal last summer. Landry told Grier that the Board's decision indicates that the Environment Minister has the power to make a decision on the landfill application.

Grier told Landry that she would ask for a legal opinion on Landry's argument about the scope of the Minister's powers. She promised to get back to Landry with the results.

With the cabinet shuffle, Landry doesn't expect that Grier will fulfill that promise. She also contends that Premier Rae made a promise to provide her with answers about the scope of the Minister of Environment's jurisdiction on the Acton dump proposal when he visited Georgetown last January. Rae said he would get back to her soon but he has yet to follow through with his pledge.

Explaining the circumstances which led to her ejection from the legislative building, Landry said she had just watched van de Valk being escorted down the hall when she was asked by security personnel to leave.

In an effort to quell the disruption, an aide to the premier told Landry that she could speak with Rae after the press conference. However, Rae slipped through a side door after his speech. "I lost it. I just started yelling," Landry said Thursday night.

In protest of her treatment, the FOAD president donned her mask and yelled, "Bob Rae's government is raping the people of the Halton Hills' community." With her outburst, she pulled the cord of her rape whistle. She was quickly ushered from the building.

Landry said Halton Hills taxpayers have been raped because they've been stripped of hundreds of thousands of dollars to fight the dump proposal in Acton even though the government could have overruled a hearing.



Native dancer

Thirteen-year-old Star White-Eye participated in a fundraiser and traditional Native dance demonstration at the Georgetown Marketplace last Sunday. Star was visiting with her mother and sister from Chatham to help out their friends Ed and Jean Cochrane of Georgetown. The Cochranes are trying to raise funds for a Powwow in Georgetown this spring. Photo by Laura Salverda

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