

OPINION

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Attendance figures

"A politician should have three hats. One for throwing into the ring, one for talking through, and one for pulling rabbits out of if elected."
—Author Carl Sandburg

While Sandburg took a somewhat cynical view of politicians (as many do and often with just cause), the fact remains at the very grassroots level— municipally— being a politician is a very unglamorous job.

In today's edition, we examine the attendance record of the current council for this past term, which began in December of 2003.

As a whole, the 11 members of council have a pretty good record when it comes to showing up for work. To date there have been 64 regular council meetings and, combined, council members have missed only 29 of those meetings. That's a marked improvement from 2000-2003 when councillors combined to miss 63 meetings of the 66 held.

This term, Ward 3 Councillor Moya Johnson had the poorest attendance record, missing seven meetings. However, her unusual absenteeism was the result of a health problem and, in fact, during the 2000-2003 term she had tied for the best attendance. Rookie Ward 3 Councillor Mike Davis had perfect attendance while Regional Councillor Clark Somerville showed the biggest improvement, missing only one meeting after being absent 11 times in the previous term.

At the regional level, Halton Hills' three representatives— Mayor Rick Bonnette and regional councillors Jane Fogal and Somerville— have each missed only one of the 34 scheduled region meetings.

Along with regularly-scheduled meetings, councillors also sit on an variety of special committees and boards and a look at those attendance figures also indicate solid attendance by our elected officials.

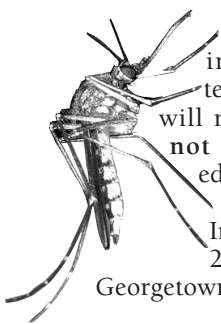
While the mayor and regional councillors pocket reasonably comfortable salaries, local councillors earn a little more than \$21,000 a year for attending the above meetings, accepting late-night phone calls about potholes, or the need for stop signs, and turning out for new business openings.

As we said, it's an unglamorous job, but each councillor knew what it entailed when they chose to run.

With this being an election year, we hope all candidates putting their name forward fully understand the commitment it takes to serve on council and that showing up is only part of the job.

Something bugging you?

Send us a letter!



Letters to the editor must include an address and daytime telephone number. Unsigned letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 200 words and may be edited for content and/or length.

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THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS

The Independent & Free Press is published every Wednesday and Friday at 280 Guelph St., Unit 29, Georgetown Ont., L7G 4B1. It is one of several newspapers published by Metroland Printing, Publishing & Distributing Ltd.

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Price: Store copies 50¢ each; Subscriptions \$26.00 per year by carrier; \$92.50 per year by mail in Canada; \$130.00 per year in all other countries. Plus G.S.T.

Second Class Mail Registration Number 6869. The Independent & Free Press is a member of The Canadian Community Newspaper Association and The Ontario Community Newspaper Association.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Is Canada helping 'convenient Canadians'?

Dear editor,

Once the Canadian government-organized repatriation of Canadians out of Lebanon has been completed, maybe we should look at the question of who these "Canadians" are in such situations.

Are we talking about Canadians who live, work and pay taxes in Canada and are on holidays or, are

they holders of "Canadian passports of convenience" and after moving away from Canada, expect Canada to help out if they run into trouble?

I myself, after having been liberated by Canadian Armed Forces in 1945, will be forever thankful to Canada for giving me the opportuni-

ty to come and live here in 1956 at the age of 21.

I look at the granting of my Canadian passport (in 1962), as a privilege, not a right.

Thank you Canada.

Marinus (Rein) Pater,
Georgetown

'Cowboy' Harper part of Bush's gang

Dear editor,

What a pity that just as the "Bush and the Boys" cowboy gang appears to be on the way to becoming international outlaws, a new figure has appeared on the horizon, riding from the west and projecting himself as a belated supporter for the old cowboy ways.

Unfortunately, as the figure draws closer, we recognize the new cowboy as Prime Minister Stephen Harper ("Stevie boy") who wishes to join in the discredited gang, although he rides a little stiffly in the saddle and his hat is fresh out of the box.

When Mr. Harper dismounts, perhaps he should reflect that he represents a country which has received international credit and acclaim for its peace-keeping activities. Peeing on war memorials is not the only way of desecrating the memories of war heroes and peacekeepers.

Ken Rumley, Georgetown

Elderly need extra care during heat wave

Dear editor,

I am writing this in regards to the recent case of two women who allegedly left a 97-year-old woman locked in a vehicle while they shopped.

I work with the elderly at a local long-term care facility. Each day we encourage and provide the residents there with drinks and to drink plenty of fluids.

Children and pets should not be locked in vehicles, so why in the world would anyone think that

leaving a frail elderly person locked in a car would be okay? Also, the last time I had to run into a store for something for a headache, it certainly did not take me half an hour.

We are in the middle of a heat wave and common sense must prevail at some point.

I honestly hope that people understand just how fragile the elderly really are.

Teresa Pollitt,
Georgetown

Less development means more water, power

Dear editor,

Re: Residents asked to cut back on water use, *Independent & Free Press* July 19.

So, let me get this straight. We have a few days with no rain, and like clockwork, the Region tells us to conserve water or face a mandatory watering ban.

I think I have a solution for the Region that will avert the impending water crisis: STOP BUILDING HOUSES!

Oh, while I have the opportunity, I would also like to offer a solution to our ever-increasing demand on the hydro grid: STOP BUILDING HOUSES!

Isn't it a no brainer that if we don't have enough electricity and water to go around for the houses that already exist, then there's a pretty good chance we won't have enough for the thousands more homes that are planned?

Matt Penny, Georgetown