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# The morning after the night before

I'm writing this column the morning after the night before.

It's that 'next day after having little sleep' feeling that most newspaper people experience after covering an election.

In that quarter century I've been working as a member of the media, I've lost count how many federal, provincial and municipal elections I've covered, burning the midnight oil into the wee hours of the morning to get that special 'moment' when the chief protagonists in the game meet, as one concedes defeat to the other, like some convoluted pair of modern gladiators.

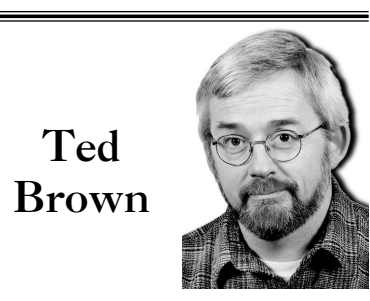
It's the rule— any politician worth his/her salt should drop by the other guy's party and congratulate him/her on a great campaign.

Tuesday night was no exception.

At 9:30 p.m., I started at Liberal candidate Bruce Bowser's headquarters to watch the returns come in. Keeping in touch with editor John McGhie by cell phone, at 10:30 p.m., I decided the place to be was at Michael Chong's camp, located in Acton, since he was winning by a considerable margin.

When I got there, Chong and his wife Carrie had just arrived, and were in the midst of a small media scrum, where they were on camera, and answering questions about his victory.

Chong moved inside, and within the hour he delivered his



**Ted Brown**

victory speech to his supporters, as well as accepting congratulations from defeated Liberal candidate Bruce Bowser. After repeatedly blinding both politicians with a camera flash, it was time for me to head back to the office to get the finished newspaper put to bed.

After editing the images, I was able to get out of the office by 12:30 a.m., but editors John McGhie and Cynthia Gamble, as well as reporter Lisa Tallyn, had to work, finishing their stories, and confirming numbers. (Those are the times I revel in being a photographer.)

Driving home, I thought about past elections— some recent; others eons ago.

I felt a certain relief at the joys of shooting digitally. Years ago, I'd have been in the office dark-room halfway into the night, developing film and waiting for it to dry, before printing the photos for publication.

I thought back to how much things have changed since those early days. In my early elections, we had no cell phones, we had

no two-way radios, we had no way of communicating with our office, unless there was a pay phone nearby, and no other reporter was using it.

I thought of the different ridings we've had— one time I was in Oakville, covering Otto Jelinek's victory party (his organizers did give media members comp bar tickets, but failed to do the same for volunteers— not a great way to attract volunteers in the political arena.)

I thought of my first time covering Chong, where I had to shoot in Fergus, and return home to electronically file images for all the Metroland newspapers that the riding encompassed.

Covering elections is sometimes fun, sometimes frustrating, and is always a bit stressful.

I must admit however, the job has been made much easier with the addition of communication devices like cell phones and Blackberries.

And digital photography is so much faster, allowing me to pull those images up in seconds.

But as I got home, and finally slid beneath the sheets to get some much-needed sleep, I realized there is one thing that will never change for any journalist covering an election.

It still takes HOURS to get one's mind to gear down enough to finally get to sleep.

—Ted Brown can be reached at [tbrown@independentfreepress.com](mailto:tbrown@independentfreepress.com)

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# Social housing units to get \$2M in upgrades

The Region is dishing out almost \$2 million to upgrade social housing units throughout Halton.

At its meeting last week, regional council approved a social housing capital repairs plan that'll guide the disbursement of \$1.8 million the Region received from the Province.

The funds will be used to address high-priority repair needs and energy efficiency improvements, a Region staff report said.

A little over \$500,000 will be allocated for unexpected repairs

and \$350,000 will be available for energy efficiency improvements.

Almost \$1 million will be distributed to social housing providers who have or are expected to deplete their reserve funds by December 31, 2009 to cover their high-priority repairs. The staff report indicated that a few housing providers have depleted their capital reserve funds already and others are expected to do the same by next year.

Council directed staff to report back by April 30, 2009 with a list of social housing

providers and projects that receive the funds.

A motion passed by council also authorizes Regional Chair Gary Carr to write to the Province to thank it for the funding and request continued financial support for social housing.

Carr will also be writing to the minister responsible for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to underscore the importance of the federal government's role in ensuring the viability of existing social housing through continued financial support.



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