



APPLE CIDER SALES: Ewan Williams (seated left) with older brother Calum were open for business on Thanksgiving weekend hoping to attract thirsty customers in the village of Eden Mills. — Denise Paulsen photo

Guelph/Eramosa council candidates have their say

By Frances Niblock

Candidates vying for a Guelph/Eramosa Township Council seat introduced themselves to voters at an all candidates meeting last Wednesday in Rockwood. After hearing biographical information for each candidate, ratepayers posed questions to the hopefuls, and then each candidate was asked to briefly sum up.

Here's what they had to say.

Mayor Chris White: "You can walk out that door and see things that this council has done — there's a splash pad right there, there's a medical centre there and we've provided services to this community with budgets that have remained at inflation, so I hope you like the direction we are going in."

Mayoral candidate Clint Martin: "(The Township) is being sued on a regular basis... I think I know why, but I can't prove it. You don't get sued if you do everything right. Per capita we have the highest insurance policy costs in Southern Ontario."

Ward one acclaimed newcomer David Wolk: "Good government at all levels commits to information transparency. You deserve nothing less, and that's what I'm committed to deliver."

Ward two incumbent Councillor Roger Knapp: Not seeking re-election.

Ward two candidate Cory Woods: "Voter turnout in 2003 was only 29 per cent, and in 2006, it was only 40 per cent and that means, in essence, that only three or four of very 10 eligible voters actually do come out and vote. That number really surprised me — I'd like to see 100 percent (turnout)."

Ward two candidate Nick Dalton: "I think that one of things I can bring to council is a different way of thinking as a small independent businessman and someone who is involved in agriculture, I think that perhaps my views will be of greater advantage..."

Ward two candidate John Gough: "(Eluding to a question about developing an equine feature in the Township) Gough asked, "how can we differentiate ourselves from everything else around us?" I think we do need to do that. I think I can make a difference..."

Ward three incumbent Councillor Doug Breen: "It's been an honour to be here since 1997 when I first ran for council. I think that I've shown myself to be fair, I think I've shown myself to be reasonable."

Ward three challenger Teresa Gibson Smye: "We all worry about the taxes whether we live here or not. My campaign revolves around fiscal responsibility and accountability and I'm, asking for your vote on October 25."

Incumbent Ward four Councillor John Scott: "What is the role of a councillor? It is to develop and evaluate programs and policies, to provide services and solid administrative practices... to have financial integrity, to achieve consensus between all members of council before moving on to something new..."

Ward four challenger Steve Liebig: "Over the years I've heard you say it has to stop. Garbage costs, taxes, business developments, and housing developments — I'm here to listen to you, to work with you without any of the crap and get things done efficiently, properly and within budget..."

County Council Ward 7 candidate Don McKay, (His wife Barbara is not seeking re-election): "I would bring my managerial experience of the past 40 years to work and look at decisions that need to be made on your behalf. I'm a high-energy, dedicated, sincere, outgoing and knowledgeable team player."

County Council Ward 7 candidate Bill Cloutis: "All I can say is I'm asking for everyone's support to allow me to be their voice and representative at County Council."

House of Commons reform motion passes

A motion to reform Question Period, moved by Michael Chong, Member of Parliament for Wellington-Halton Hills, passed in the House of Commons last Thursday by a vote of 235 to 44. The motion orders the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to study various options and propose changes to reform Question Period, and to complete this task within six months.

The centre of Canadian democracy is Parliament, and the heart of Parliament is daily Question Period in the House of Commons. For 45 minutes each day, Question Period provides Members of Parliament an opportunity to hold the government to account by asking questions. Through the national media, mil-

lions of Canadians follow Question Period each and every day.

According to recent Nanos-Policy Options poll, Canadians overwhelmingly disapprove of the behaviour in Question Period. Furthermore, more than four out of ten Canadians refused to vote in the last election, the lowest voter turnout since Confederation. Both facts are evidence of a growing gap between Canadians and their Parliament. Chong's motion proposes six changes to reform Question Period, in order to improve decorum, elevate debate and restore the ability of Members of Parliament to represent their constituents by asking questions of the government.

"During an election, I

promised to reconnect Canadians with the democratic institutions that belong to us all," said Chong. He added, "Question Period reform is a first, but important, step toward the reform of Parliament."

"I want to thank all my colleagues, from both sides of the aisle, for their support, advice and encouragement," Chong said. He added, I also want to thank our local Wellington-Halton Hills riding association for their ideas, many of which were incorporated into this motion. Their support and sound counsel have been invaluable."

Chong's final comment was that, "This motion proves that you can build bi-partisan consensus and get things done for all Canadians."

Michael Chong Chair of Heritage Committee

Michael Chong, Wellington-Halton Hills MP, was elected Chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage last week Chong was nominated by fellow Conservative, Dean Del Mastro, and his nomination received the unanimous consent of the other members of the committee.

"Committees are where much of the work of Parliament takes place. It's an honour to be entrusted with the responsibility to chair this committee," said Chong, who added, "I'm looking forward to working with all members and parties to ensure the proper functioning of this committee."

Chong's election to Chair of Canadian Heritage will end his role as Chair of the Industry Committee. "I want to thank Industry Committee members for their confidence over the last two years. We accomplished much, holding hearings on the auto sector in the spring of 2008, hearings on the census this past summer, and passing anti-

spam and not-for-profit legislation."

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage was created in 1994, and provides oversight over the activities and spending of the Department of Canadian Heritage. The Department of Canadian Heritage is responsible for national policies and programs that promote Canadian content, foster cultural participation, active citizenship and participation in Canada's civic life, and strengthen connections among Canadians. As well, the

Committee studies and reports on matters related to public broadcasting, Canadian history and heritage, amateur sports, and the audio, visual and literary arts.

"Thirteen years ago, I co-founded the Dominion Institute (now the Historica-Dominion Institute), an organization committed to raising awareness about Canadian history and civics," said Chong. He added, "So, I'm happy to chair this committee, to promote Canada's arts and heritage, which touch the lives of so many Canadians."

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