

Citizen comment

The public pays the bills

At a recent task force on growth in Simcoe County, Penetanguishene's municipal administration won high praise from municipal officials throughout the county for sound farsighted local planning and the extremely competent manner in which the municipality as a whole was run.

Again, at Monday night's council meeting the mayor and members of council showed sound judgement in releasing the salaries of all municipal employees to the press.

The principle that public funds pay for the work of public employees and therefore, public employees are accountable to the citizens they serve, is a sound one consistently followed at senior levels of government.

Unfortunately the same can not be said of some of Penetanguishene's neighbouring municipalities, notably Midland.

And for that reason cries of protest were raised by some members of Penetanguishene's town council when this newspaper sought to make public all the salaries of Penetanguishene's municipal employees.

Despite protests, there never was any question, at Monday's council meeting, of allowing the press to learn what the salaries of Penetanguishene's municipal employees are.

But a number of town officials raised the issue of unfair treatment by the press.

Their question was simply this: "Since

the press doesn't publish the salaries of public employees in Midland and Tiny Township, why publish ours?"

What some members of council suggested was that the press check the salaries of Penetanguishene's municipal employees, judge whether or not they are reasonable, and if so let things go at that.

That suggestion is unacceptable to this newspaper. The public pays the bills. They are the judges. The work municipal employees do is the direct concern of citizens. There should be no argument about the matter—particularly when the salaries of so many others in society have become public knowledge. (Remember the postal workers).

We can not force officials in other municipalities to release the salaries of their employees. We can however, seek to inform the public of the situation in an effort to pressure secretive municipalities to go public like Penetanguishene.

After all that's what it's all about isn't it. Service to the public. Municipalities which fail to release the salaries of their employees do the people they serve a disservice. Their citizens have a right to wonder if something's wrong.

Judging from the salaries paid Penetanguishene's municipal officials the only thing that appears to be wrong is that they're underpaid. We wonder if the same can be said of Penetanguishene's neighbours?

It's public business

The following editorial appeared in today's issue of the Midland Times. The Midland Times, like the Penetanguishene Citizen, is a member of Markle Community Newspapers. Jim Park is the editor of the Midland Times.

by Jim Park

Penetanguishene town council released the full list of municipal employees' salaries Monday night, in keeping with long-standing policy in the town. (See separate story).

And they did so with only one—legitimate—gripe. Most other councils in the area, with Midland at the head, staunchly refuse to reveal what they pay their staff members, claiming it is a private matter, of no real interest to or concern of the public. So that leaves Penetanguishene employees largely alone in having their salaries made public knowledge.

But the position taken by Midland is, of course, nonsense.

Public funds are used to pay the salaries of town office employees; public funds taken from taxation at the local, provincial and federal levels.

Salaries at the senior levels of government are released without question, and fees paid for special probes such as the Ontario one headed by Judy LaMarsh on television violence are also given out as a matter of course.

In some cases, as with LaMarsh, a public outcry results that the officials are too highly paid. In others, the opposite is true, and publication of salaries can reveal inequities or poor pay that can be a cause of poor administration and poor service to the taxpayer.

In general, the Penetanguishene salaries are notable because of the low pay scale, rather than the reverse.

Yvon Gagne, known as one of the best clerk-treasurers in the business and highly praised at the recent Simcoe-Georgian Task Force conference by spokesmen from throughout North Simcoe, earns the princely sum of \$17,000 now.

That's up \$2,000 from 1974, but compared to

what he could earn elsewhere, if he wasn't committed to his community and the area as a whole, it is relative peanuts.

Other officials are paid less than they could earn in private industry, or in other municipalities, which could prompt damaging staff turnover which is ultimately damaging to the town.

What is the case in Midland? We don't know.

Percy Ehler is known as a strong, honest and efficient man, even by his critics. Is he paid enough? Or too much? We don't know. Are people like clerk Bill Hack, planner Ken Johnson, and assistant clerk Mike Owen rewarded well enough? Or too much? We don't know.

We are already on record as believing that councillors, and notably the mayor of Midland, are underpaid. In the case of the mayor, we have said that he should be working full time, and paid accordingly, as one way of attracting qualified candidates in elections, rewarding the senior local politician for his labours, and ensuring that the job is not the preserve of the wealthy or the retired.

But the salaries of elected officials have to be made public, so the press and citizens know what salaries are and can argue a case for increases or decreases.

In the past in Midland, that has not been the case with appointed officials, who often, in smaller communities, wield more authority than their nominal political bosses. Penetanguishene has set an example, again this year, that should be followed in Midland and the rest of Ontario.

We pay the bills. The work the employees do is the direct concern of citizens. There should be no argument about the matter—particularly when so many others in society have what they earn become public knowledge.

Simple really, unless there is something wrong with the pay scale, and if that's the case, the public should definitely know about it.

It's public business.

Sugar and Spice

Tough time for teachers

by Bill Smiley

This week I had the chore of sorting through a huge pile of applications for a job on our high school staff teaching English. One job and about 80 applications. That's the way things are these days in the teaching game.

It's a cruel world for young people trying to break into the profession. Armed with their pieces of paper on which it says right there in print that they are now qualified teachers, they sally forth to put into practice their high ideals, their love for young people, and the results of four or five years of university slugging.

And what do they find? A vast indifference. Nobody wants them. Principals want people with experience. But how do you get experience if you can't get a job? It's an old story in the world of free enterprise, but it's still a sad one for those caught in the vicious circle.

It's exactly like another facet of the system of which we are so proud: banking. If you're broke and need money, a bank won't loan it to you. If you're rich and don't need money, you have to beat off the bankers with a stick.

I couldn't help thinking, as I sat toying with people's lives, of the vast change that has

taken place since I began teaching, about 15 years ago.

Those were the days when the great post-war baby boom was hitting the high schools.

Principals were raiding industry for technical teachers, business for commercial teachers.

If you had a university degree, it was as much as your life was worth to walk past a school. A lasso would snake out, you'd find yourself getting a hot sales pitch in a principal's office, and next thing you knew were standing in front of 35 kids with your mouth hanging open.

Anyone who was not obviously drunk or noticeably retarded had a pretty fair chance of winding up in teaching.

One daily newspaper ran pages and pages of teacher-wanted advertisements each spring, and school boards spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on advertising.

I remember one spring when I could have taken my pick of 28 jobs as an English department head, by picking up the phone.

Those were fat times for the young graduating teachers, too. Armed with nothing more than a puny B.A., they could pretty well pick and choose where they wanted to work and live.

Each spring there was an event which came to be known rather cynically as "the cattle market."

School boards from all over the province would take over a big hotel in the city. Potential teachers would flock in by the thousands. It was a seller's market.

The student teacher walked the halls, checked the signs on doors. If he deigned to knock, he was snatched through the door by a principal, had coffee or something stronger forced on him, generally given the glad hand and usually assured a job, even if "he" happened to be a bald female with green teeth.

Of course, the pay wasn't much then, about \$4,000 to start, but that was worth more than twice as much as it is now.

When I was hired, I wrote a letter applying for the only English teaching job left in the province. The principal was on the phone the minute he got my letter. He couldn't believe that I had an honor degree in English. Apparently I was the only person left in Canada with such a degree who wasn't teaching.

Just two years later, I had a department headship forced on me. I didn't particularly want it. Ryerson Institute wanted me to go there and teach journalism. The president of Waterloo University wanted me to go there and handle public relations and teach some English.

If I were fired tomorrow, with my honors degree and 15 years experience, I'd be lucky to get a job in Nooknik, teaching English As A Second Language to Eskimo kids.

I checked with five of my colleagues in the English department, who entered teaching during those halcyon years. Three of the five were hired by phone, sight unseen.

Now, we sort through a vast sheaf of applications. Here's a guy with a B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. in English. Discard him. Over-educated, no experience. Here's one with an honor degree, excellent recommendations, just out of teacher's college. Discard her. No experience.

And when we narrow it down to six or eight, they have to show up for grueling interview (gruelling for me too) and may have driven 300 miles for it, and drive home with nothing to show for it but a hearty "Thank you for coming."

The whole thing makes me sick. There's a great waste of talented young teachers, many of whom, in disgust, go into some other way of making a living.

There's a whole slew of old teachers still in harness, who are hanging on because archaic regulations make them hang on until they are too old and sick and stupid and tired to do any use to anyone, merely to draw their pensions.

Surely in a country with our resources, and in an age when the computer can make accurate projections, we can do better than use this outmoded system of supply and demand, which may be all right for the cattle market, but all wrong for human beings.



Letters:

Cries of protest from the North West Basin

No to carryings on

Sir: I've just read in the Citizen May 21 issue about the Toanche cross that Monsignor Murray of Saskatchewan agrees with the Penetanguishene members that the cross could be changed and be lit up.

I'm very concerned about this. I wonder if they have given any consideration to the people residing in the area of the North West Basin; the transient people that will gather there—as well as some of the local ones, the garbage that will be left behind, the noise to all hours of the night and no doubt other

carryings on.

At present I am working along with the North West Basin Parks and Recreation Association for the betterment of the area, and I know a lit up area without supervision would be most detrimental to all concerned people in the North West Basin and the surrounding district.

A voice from the North West Basin

No to drinking

Sir: I am very much against having this cross redone, as my husband did a very good job on the present one he rebuilt for Monsignor

Castex a few years. This would attract girls, boys etc. to gather at nights which the neighbours I am sure would not want plus they would also come by boat as a meeting place for night drinking and parties. Who wants that. Okay, if it's for only a day or two but not to stay.

With time (short) they would do more damage then enough to the place and cross itself. So let's leave it as it is peaceful.

A landmark lover

No to a new cross

Sir: I as a Citizen of the North West Basin, oppose the change which the town of

Penetanguishene wants to do to our Toanche cross.

My objections as a mother of four are: The amount of people who would be attracted to it would cause pollution and garbage scattered, along our roads and lawns.

Why not leave it as it is - a landmark which is clean and peaceful so parents can live with peace of mind.

We feel that this landmark belongs to us and is not for Penetanguishene to change.

Yours truly,

A concerned mother, RR 2 Penetanguishene, Ontario.

Drapeau's winding his magical wizardry once again

by Larry Green

What was that you just said about the 1976 Montreal Olympics, Jean Drapeau?

They're actually three months ahead of schedule and you have the charts to prove it? But we thought you just said, just less than a week ago, if we remember correctly that unless the Quebec construction unions went back to work soon, the '76 Olympic site would not be finished and Montreal would be stuck with the "costliest ruins in history."

Now which is it? Oh, you say that you kept the fact that the games were really ahead of planned construction targets a secret because you didn't want the construction unions to know about it, which might have spurred them into causing further delays.

Montreal Mayor Jean Drapeau has an amazing talent for reaching into his bag of tricks and pulling out, if not a white rabbit, at least the right facts and figures to disprove something he said just moments before.

Last Wednesday, while Mr. Drapeau was appearing before the International Olympic Committee in Lausanne Switzerland, he drew on an impressive array of background documents to demonstrate, much to the relief of the committee that the Montreal Olympic site would be completed in plenty of time.

Showing the flare that helped Montreal land the Olympics in the first place, Mr. Drapeau said that much of the site would be finished between December and February of next year.

The fact that the facilities won't be needed until July brought about a big sigh of relief from both the Olympic Organizers and Canadian government officials who feared losing face if the games had to be moved. Despite the assurances given by Mr.

Drapeau, confusing reports began emanating from Lausanne indicating that the games were really two per cent behind schedule, and not three months ahead. The three month lead on targets could have arisen, not from construction schedules but from planned time to have the site finished before the games were to begin.

The only thing that has prevailed so far, despite the stout balding Montreal mayor's wizardry with words, is the fact nobody knows if the games will be completed on time, and that more union trouble is possible.

The labour problems besetting the Olympic site in Montreal are just a part of wider labour unrest in the Province of Quebec. So Mr. Drapeau's earlier public postulations about the Olympics not being completed were mere grand-standing. Grand-standing designed to force the Borrasa government's hand in taking action against the labour unions which were tying up construction throughout Quebec.

The possibility of the Olympic site not reaching completion, was indeed a frightening one. Over \$600 million dollars worth of housing, track and stadium facilities left like a half built pyramid would certainly boggle the minds of Canadians.

But the thought alone should provide a lesson for future Olympic organizers. Millions are wasted on facilities. Constructed in just one city, in just one country means that the games will not have the international flavour they should have.

Fostering the Olympic spirit would be much better served in years to come by spreading the Olympic events throughout several cities in a number of nations around the world. In that way they would avoid becoming a place for the host nation to show

that they can put together the biggest extravaganza ever.

Instead, co-operation among nations and organizers would be needed to bring together athletes in various centres for different events. More people would see the games

which certainly would help spread the Olympic spirit much more than centralized games have in the past.

Now that it is too late to change the concept of the games for 1976, maybe there is enough time to alter the format for 1980.

Waiting for the mail

The Hon. Bryce Mackasey, Postmaster-General of Canada, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, Ont. Mr. Mackasey:

I thought I would write to say how much I enjoy those nice television commercials and colorful newspaper advertisements which tell us to use the postal code system to make sure the mail gets through. I can state quite honestly that we use as many postal codes as we can for our subscribers, so I hope the papers are indeed getting through.

There is one hitch however. We have this reader you see, Mrs. Neil Wills, in Vancouver, B.C. She's a weekly subscriber to our newspaper and enjoys it very much. The only trouble is, you'd almost think it was a monthly publication by the time she gets it through the mail.

Mrs. Wills' husband, just out of interest, happened to keep a running calendar a few months back of the dates various weekly editions arrived at their home. It went something like this (keeping in mind the Review-Herald is mailed out from Thornbury every Thursday morning): The Dec. 4, 1974 edition arrived at their

home Dec. 20, along with the Dec. 11 edition. On Jan. 6 they arrived the Jan. 1 issue (not too bad, only five days), but somewhere along the line the issues of Dec. 18 and Dec. 25 got lost. But lo and behold, the Dec. 18 edition did arrive, the very next day - that's Jan. 7 if you're still following me.

On Jan. 22 the Wills received our Jan. 8 edition, on Jan. 27 the Jan. 22 edition (again, only five days). But it wasn't until Feb. 3 that they received the Jan. 15 issue. Somehow, Mr. Mackasey, the edition published a week later arrived a week earlier.

On Feb. 24 they received both the Feb. 5 and Feb. 19 edition. But it wasn't until March 25 that they received the Feb. 26 edition - that's a full month later.

Last week, a small newspaper story out of Ottawa quotes you as saying in the House of Commons, "Our first Canadians had a better service in smoke signals than we have today at times." You know Mr. Mackasey, I think you're right...at times.

Yours very truly,

Gary Wrathall, the editor of the Thornbury Review-Herald which like the Citizen belongs to Markle Community Newspapers.

60 x 80 feet

Looking for a tent

It's not exactly suited for puppies, not unless you have a thousand or two of them. Actually it's more likely that a giant could find a use for it.

But since there don't seem to be too many giants around Penetanguishene these days, and since neither the Humane Society nor Cestlin Bidan report a puppy dog explosion, centennial committee chairman Doug Dubeau is offering it rent free for a week to the individual or organization which can make the most of a 60 by 80 foot tent during "Old Home Week" (June 28 - July 5).

The story of the circus size tent is just one example of many instances which illustrate the kind of support Dubeau and the centennial committee are receiving from everyone. Dubeau acquired the tent, which could be used to hold beer gardens in during the day and sleep people in at night, from a person who kindly offered to let an organization use it during "Old Home Week".

Last Thursday Dubeau told of another instance in which the Centennial committee received unsolicited support. It seems a stranger came up to Dubeau and told him how glad he was to see that Monsignor Athol Murray was coming to Penetanguishene for "Old Home Week." Then, after Dubeau casually mentioned that it would cost the centennial committee \$250, to fly Monsignor Murray from Saskatchewan to Penetanguishene and back, the man offered to pay for Monsignor Murray's expenses himself. A few days later the centennial committee received a cheque in the mail for \$250.

That's support.

Now if we can only find someone or some organization which can use a 60 by 80 foot tent!

The Penetanguishene Citizen

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