

ORONO Weekly Times

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On a clear day...

We are back from our two week annual Christmas shutdown, and grateful for a holiday and opportunity to recharge our engines.

A lot has gone on locally in the two weeks we did not publish a paper. On the day our last edition went in the mail, December 16th, the Olympic Torch came through our village for the first time. All the local school kids were bussed into Orono, and just before 1:43 p.m., the downtown core was crowded with spectators, though we still don't know who it was that carried the torch through the village. At the end of the Orono leg of the run, the flame and the runners boarded the torch bus, which went on to Newcastle. In Newcastle the torch was carried by Mandi Doris, the captain of the Durham College Woman's Volleyball Team and a resident of Ajax.

On the same day the Torch came through Clarington, the Region of Durham lost a USB key containing personal and health information of Durham residents who attended H1N1 vaccination clinics operated by the Region's Department of Health. I received a letter dated December 23rd, marked 'Personal and Confidential' from the Region of Durham, notifying me of the breach of privacy relating to my personal health information, due to the loss of the key. The letter states the Health Department has no reason to believe the device was deliberately taken, and an individual attempting to access the information on the key would have to know what they are looking for and how to find the information in order to access my personal health information. I went to a Regional clinic on Wednesday, November 18 for the H1N1 vaccine and on Sunday, November 22nd I came down with the H1N1 flu.

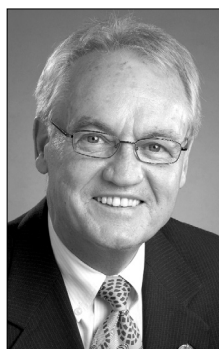
On Monday, December 21st, Darlington Nuclear Power spilled 200,000 liters of radioactive water into Lake Ontario. The following day the Region of Durham issued a news release notifying residents that water from the municipal water supply system is safe to drink. The Region claimed they were undertaking hourly water sampling at the Oshawa, Bowmanville and Newcastle water supply plants and test results indicate there is no affect on water quality. There have been no further updates from the Region or Ontario Power Generation who operate the nuclear power plant in Courtice. Orono's drinking water comes from a well, and was not at risk.

That was last year. We are now into a new year and a new decade. The year 2010 happens to be a municipal election year, and the posturing has already begun. I suspect there will be no seats acclaimed this year as we have had in some past municipal elections. The Clarington council we have today is a far cry from the dictatorship style council run by former Mayor John Mutton. While the current Mayor promised to "Lead an open, honest and accountable municipal council," in his 2006 election campaign material, he was unable to deliver on all his objectives. Council business did seem to be handled in a more open and accountable way this term, but Mayor Abernethy never did seem to get a handle on the leadership role. He also promised to "Listen on important issues such as energy, environment and growth." The majority of Clarington residents, if asked, would say he listened to Regional Chairman Roger Anderson, rather than his constituents, in supporting the Region's proposal to build a garbage incinerator in Courtice.

These councillors passed their first budget with the highest tax increase in recent memory, yet each one of them probably made promises towards reducing taxes in their election campaigns. Tip: don't believe any candidate who promises to lower taxes, unless they say they are going to achieve a lower tax rate by reducing services, that is the only way it can be done.

The Ryerson students who presented their school project for the redevelopment of the former Boys Training School to councillors this week, showed a great vision for what that property could become. Questions raised by councillor centered around where the money would come from, because Clarington wasn't responsible for preserving a site that had provincial and federal significance. Who was going to pay the CAO of the company the students had envisioned, who would run the facility, and who was going to cut the grass? There was clearly no appetite on council for a new and exciting vision. They didn't have to accept the plan outright, but "nothing ventured, nothing gained."

It would be nice to see candidates running for council positions who have a vision for Clarington, who see possibilities rather than obstacles.



Staying in Touch

MPP John O'Toole

ments as we visit with neighbours and welcome the New Year. I hope to see you at our 2010 levee.

Speaker of Legislature is Special Guest at Levee

Hon. Steve Peters, Speaker of the Ontario Legislature, will be the special guest at my New Year's Levee in Newcastle Sunday, January 10. The Levee is at the Newcastle Community Hall. Hours are from 12:00 noon to 3p.m.

Our 2010 Levee will include a "Mine to Mace" photo exhibition that describes the refurbishing of Ontario's parliamentary mace with two gems that were donated from production at Ontario's first diamond mine. The De Beers Canada Victor Mine is located near Attawapiskat in Northern Ontario. Although maces were once used as weapons, they are commonly found today in parliaments around the world where they serve as a symbol of the authority of parliament and the democratic process.

After the busy Christmas season, it's time to relax, and enjoy music and light refresh-

January Deadlines for Volunteer Awards

Now is the time to nominate the special people throughout Ontario who build stronger communities by serving as volunteers. There are three categories, which cover youths and adults from every sector.

Volunteer Service Awards recognize continuous years of service with a community organization.

The June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Award (JCOAA) recognizes superlative volunteer work undertaken by individuals, groups or businesses.

The Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers is presented to outstanding young people who volunteer and who are between the ages of 15 and 24.

Deadlines are January 25, 2010 for the Volunteer Service Awards; January 15 for the June Callwood Award; and January 31 for the Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers.

Further information is available online at www.ontario.ca/honoursandawards. You can also contact our Constituency Office for information. We may be reached at 905-697-1501 or 1-800-661-2433 and by e-mail at john.otooleco@pc.ola.org.

Ontario Raises Small Claims Limit to \$25,000

As of January 1, 2010, the monetary limit for matters before Ontario's Small Claims Court will rise to \$25,000. Previously, the upper limit was \$10,000.

This is one of several changes to Ontario's civil justice system going into effect in the New Year. The changes are intended to make it easier, faster and more affordable for people and businesses to access justice and use Ontario's civil courts to resolve disputes. The new rules for civil justice follow a report by Associate Chief Justice Coulter Osborne and advice that the Attorney General received from consultation with citizens.

Other changes include:

- Increasing the monetary

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