

Congratulations Caledonia: You have no Voice

June 27, 2007

It has now been a full year since I first got involved in Caledonia. A year ago the media was completely focused on Native Land Claims and Native Rights and paid little attention to the victims in Caledonia.

Don't get me wrong though, since I, like most Canadians, am more than willing to have our Government resolve Land Claims Issues and Governments should respect Native Rights. But those Land Claims and Rights do not include creating additional victims because some are frustrated with the Government.

A year has passed and once again the media doesn't care about Caledonia or what happens to the residents there. What media takes any time to interview residents of Caledonia for their views? Who really cares whether a person with an AK47 is running around on DCE or whether there are fires on DCE and intimidation of residents?

Why would any Canadian take any time to help the residents when the residents have spent so much of their time coming out against anyone who tried to help? When I got involved there were residents like Kevin Clark, Anne-Marie VanSickle, etc. who spoke up, many more who took photos & videos of what was happening while other residents wrote letters to editors. None of this is happening now.

I do understand that the Government used various departments to intimidate residents. Some residents who were vocal suddenly had visits from Childrens Aid while the OPP tried to use the Immigration department to deport an active resident. To silence some residents the OPP would approach their parents or show up to people's homes claiming they received 911 calls. One resident in his 40s had his mother, who is a senior, visited by senior OPP officers to pressure her to get her son to be silent.

Furthermore, Caledonia had so much infighting between the old boys and new residents, between those working with the Liberals versus the Conservatives, those seeking future political office and those looking for financial rewards that anyone who stepped forward automatically stepped on someone's toes and therefore became the enemy.

What national media back then cared to cover the stories of the residents? Do you remember that few residents, if anyone, even trusted the media a year ago?

Within six months I had the media talking daily about Two Tier Justice in Caledonia. The media across this country were printing stories about the problems faced by residents and by the end of 2006 few, if any, natives were being interviewed by any media. The topic had become Law & Order and the Rights of all people to be treated equally under the law.

The OPP & Ontario Government intimidated and pressured the County to take part in an endless attack upon me and anyone else who still was willing to speak out.

The residents foolishly allowed themselves to believe lie after lie. The first repeated lie was that Negotiations were going well and just a little more time was needed. The second lie was that the Native occupation would not be allowed to continue into the winter. The third lie was that the Ontario Government would provide a fair and reasonable compensation.

All of these lies mixed with repeated statements by Governments about the pending 'end-of-the-world-if-you-get-involved' caused many to hide in fear. Governments always prey on the fear of people - remember the Liberal advertisement about Canadian Military with guns in our cities in the last Federal election?

Even when the OPP & the Government are caught in their lies they just invent new lies to tell residents. Fantino spent four months on TV, radio and in newspapers blaming us for officers being injured and for all the problems in the town.

But I didn't get involved until June 17 and didn't go to Caledonia until mid-July. Our first March was on Oct. 15, 2006.

Before I got involved the power station was destroyed, the highway was dug up, the bridge was burned down, US border guards were attacked, there was an attempted murder of OPP officers, numerous residents were assaulted & intimidated and numerous other events occurred that no media cared to cover.

But somehow I am to be blamed for all this plus 200 years of failed Government relationships with Natives.

The new lie is that we are the only problem in Caledonia, but one many in Caledonia accept because of their fear and because most people don't care enough about their neighbours to get involved. It is easier for residents to believe that I am the only problem in Caledonia than to deal with reality. It is easier for residents to forget about people on 6th line than to do something to help. Of the 40,000+ residents in Haldimand County a mere 125+ took part in the convoy to Queen's Park and this with the backing of Councilor Grice, Mayor Trainer and MPP Toby Barrett.

Since the beginning of the year, the residents of Caledonia have demonstrated quite clearly that they do not want to have a voice. Their silence is deafening.

So where are we today? The media neither cares about the views of the residents nor any of the many events over the past two months – including the AK47 event.

McGuinty used the OPP and various Government departments to intimidate residents. McGuinty used the Caledonia Alliance to silence other voices and to clear the way so no one in Caledonia has a voice during the upcoming election.

A year ago I leaked the Liberal Plan that was to resolve Caledonia. This Plan included naming the various people in Caledonia who were working directly on behalf of McGuinty. I named two particular people who would work to ensure that McGuinty had it easier. They were to ensure that Mayor Trainer would not be re-elected and ensure that Caledonia had no voice.

These two people were Ken Hewitt and Lorraine Bergstrand. Ken Hewitt went on CHTV with me and stated clearly that he had no connection with the Liberal Party – then he ran for the Federal Liberal nomination (surprise, surprise). He stated on TV the Alliance had received no funding from the Liberal Government but within a few days we exposed that two cheques went to the Alliance from the County from the fund provide by the Liberal Government.

Lorraine Bergstrand phoned me and told me that she wasn't part of any Liberal plan to help McGuinty. She told me that she had no connection with the Alliance either. The same day I contacted her (conversation taped) and asked her whether she already had private meetings with the key members of the Alliance – she said 'Yes'. This meeting was to get the key members of the Alliance to help fund her run against Mayor Trainer which she lost.

Now she is running against Toby Barrett as a Provincial Liberal. She is now singing McGuinty's praises, but a year ago she claimed no connection to the Liberal party. Isn't it amazing how quickly she rose through the ranks of the Liberal party in less than a year?

The people of Caledonia made a choice. They chose to follow their fears and to believe the lies of McGuinty. Just how many residents believed McGuinty about all the great negotiations that were happening or believed McGuinty about protesters on DCE not staying there over the winter?

When did Canadians suddenly start believing every word that falls from the mouth of politicians? A year ago I was telling people that negotiations were going to take years. The County, Ontario Government and the OPP were saying that negotiations were going great – that was the message every week.

Now we have Councilor Grice and the County telling everyone that they can finally start helping the residents of Caledonia by replacing the OPP, but that will not be until the fall of 2008. Did you get that, the county which told you everything was going great a year ago is now saying that nothing can be done for another 14 months.

I remember Grice telling people during the election that he would be open with the residents, then after being elected he signed a non-disclosure agreement. He told people in February he had to sign to ensure the residents would get a better deal in McGuinty's Compensation package.

Who could have known that deals made in secret wouldn't truly help the residents? Who could have guessed that McGuinty's Compensation package wouldn't really be helpful? It appears to surprise Councilor Grice that playing the same political games didn't help the residents.

But what could Grice have done?... well, instead of playing the same old political games by hiding behind non-disclosure agreements he could have organized the people to voice their views publicly. He could have asked the people who voted for him to protest at the council over such secret meetings. Instead Grice is using the same political means that have proven that residents' views are not listened to.

Under councilor Grice's leadership the people of Caledonia have not been organized. McGuinty has been able to switch the Caledonia issue to be Nation Wide Land Claims which is Federal. For months Fantino ran around claiming that Caledonia cannot be resolved until the Federal Government resolves it.

McGuinty is off the hook. Grice has been silent as he believes he is more than able to play the same political games that all politicians play. To Grice the solution to failed political games is more political games.

Grice has been out to every one of our marches including each Flag Raising Event. However, he openly lied to the people of Caledonia on TV after being threatened by Fantino's email when he told everyone that he did not support the Flag Raising Events. Instead of Grice filing a complaint against Fantino's threat he caved in and did what politicians do – he chose to lie to the public instead of taking a stand.

Now Caledonia has no voice – what national media cares to interview a single resident? The reasons are simple – their political leaders and the major players in town will do everything to ensure no one speaks out.

The town is silent – just like Ipperwash.

Congratulations Caledonia you are now Ipperwash Part Two or Ipperdonia.

We will continue our battle against Two Tier Justice. We will continue to fight for Equality for all Races in Canada and we will continue to expose the lies of Politicians.

We didn't get involved to create a political future nor for the money. We didn't get involved because of anger or hate. We got involved because average people needed a voice and to wake Canadians up to Equality and Justice. That battle still needs people who will stand – will you?