

Take a hint, McHale

Posted 1 day ago DEC 04/07

Caledonia residents must be feeling like they've been naughty this year because they appear to be getting one of the worst Christmas gifts imaginable: activist Gary McHale is planning to move to the besieged community - just in time for the festive season.

What Christmas would be complete without a merry melee, like the one that happened Saturday in Caledonia with McHale once again at the centre?

This time, McHale appears to have got more than just a lump of coal as he was injured during the clash, which grew out of a confrontation between natives and a group including McHale that was protesting the presence of a smoke shack in the community.

"It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas ..."

McHale, currently a resident of Richmond Hill, has the right to move where he wants within Canada. With few exceptions, that mobility is one of the rights we all enjoy in this country.

He also has the right to stage and participate in protests like the one that turned violent on Saturday.

But this self-styled defender of justice could also take a hint once in while.

Is there anyone in Caledonia, where residents have lived with the fear and uncertainty of a Six Nations occupation for close to two years now, who would want McHale living next door?

Instead of isolated incidents of violence, the ingredients for trouble could be there all the time. The gift that keeps on giving. We're reminded that in September McHale brought his increasingly irrelevant protests to a Brantford housing project stalled by native protests.

A mere seven people joined McHale despite developer Mike Quattrociocchi, himself a critic of police and politicians' handling of native protests, having warned the activist to "stay away."

So if those who stand to lose the most as the result of native protests don't support McHale or his actions, on behalf of whom is he fighting?

And why can't he listen to the people of Caledonia, who want less conflict in their community, not more?

Surely, he can't be planning to move to Caledonia just for the reasonable real estate prices.

It appears the people who might get hurt or who have to live in fear as a result of McHale's "one law for all" agenda are completely irrelevant to him.

McHale's lawyer pointed out to The Expositor that his client was not one of the organizers of Saturday's protest.

No, the violence last weekend doesn't come down to one person. But McHale, once again, appears to have made himself the focal point of the land claim dispute.

Reportedly, there were about 60 to 80 protesters, who clashed with about 40 natives.

McHale's first rally in Caledonia, which was billed by him as possibly attracting 20,000 people, drew only 400 to 500 in October of 2006.

His second effort in December of 2006 dropped to about 200. In January, his third attempt attracted about a dozen.

Apparently, McHale mistook this growing disinterest as an invitation to move to the community.

Some people just can't take a hint.