

Bill Rea ? Don?t give up

There is a good lesson that most of us have heard during our lives.

It involves never giving up, even if a situation looks hopeless.

While it is always wise to try and cut one's losses, it is also true that showing the right amount of perseverance can also pay some rich dividends. Besides, if a situation really is hopeless, you'll find out for sure soon enough.

I got a couple of good reminders of that over the weekend.

Like a lot of you, my wife and I attended the Cheers Caledon event on the Town Hall campus Friday night. The weather was extremely cooperative, and according to the best information I have, as of this writing (late Saturday night), there were about 1,200 people who attended. I think that was a lot more than organizers has been expecting. It befitted the fine event that it was. Even I sampled a couple of locally-brewed beers that I hadn't tried before (don't worry, Beth and I paid for our tickets), and I was impressed.

Some of you who were there will recall there were a couple of amusing items set up on the grounds and near the main stage, including a large checkers board, complete with checkers. I'm not completely sure how it happened, but things developed, and I found myself in match with another attendee at the event. I ended up in strategic trouble early on, but I felt disinclined to quit. I have learned too many times that sticking it out can pay off handsomely in the end. After a couple of moves that some might call lucky (I'm inclined to call them cases of inspired brilliance), I emerged from the game victorious.

The point was I didn't give up, even though things looked hopeless for a while.

And then we had to face Saturday, and the festivities that went with Caledon Day. I know there had been some calls for rain, but I had heard other forecasts calling for fairly fair weather.

I had a few other events to attend Saturday, so I arrived at Caledon Day a little later than I had hoped, but things like that happen a lot on my occupation. I arrived on the scene, fully aware that the weather was threatening. So I took pictures as fast as I could, fearing the coming rains would wash everything out. I didn't get many pictures taken before the clouds opened up. In addition to getting soaked (among my least favourite experiences), officials in charge issued warnings about possible lightning, and we were herded into the nearby arena. Since the doors were open, those of us who chose to were able to keep an eye on the progress of the rain. I did just that, and felt my heart sink every time I looked outside. Mother Nature had intervened in what was supposed to be a fun community event. To make matters worse, I had done very little eating to that point of the day. My plan had been to get a couple of pictures, then grab something to eat at one of the various food booths on the grounds (I'll leave you guessing as to which one I was contemplating), then get back to work. What I spent roughly the next hour doing was pacing about the arena, realizing how hungry I was and that I was accomplishing nothing.

Common sense was also telling me the day was done. The rain was coming down about as hard as I had ever seen it fall. I knew it was not going to last too, too long, but the puddles that were forming on the ground did not fill me with a lot of encouragement. Those conditions were not going to attract any patrons to Caledon Day. And even if it stopped and the sun came out, I figured the spell had been broken, and no one was going to come out.

All right, it was not the first time I had got a prediction wrong. If my predictions were worth anything, Hillary Clinton would be President of the United States.

There were some people who threw in the proverbial towel and went home. After the rain stopped, I patrolled the grounds and noticed a couple of vacant spots where booths should have been. I do also acknowledge there were some good reasons for some groups to have packed it in. Maybe they were displaying stuff that shouldn't be exposed too much to the elements. I know it's a rather odd confession to be made by a man in the media, but I do try to avoid being judgemental.

The fact is I thought the day was finished. It is a fact that when outdoor events are planned, the organizers take their chances that Mother Nature will cooperate, and she sometimes lets us down.

But we come again to the idea of never giving up, no matter how hopeless the situations might appear to be.

Organizers of Caledon Day, to their very great credit, stuck with the program, at least as much as they could. Some things were delayed, and others were rearranged, but the day went ahead, somewhat to my surprise.

Had I been in charge of the event, my inclination would have been to shut things down. Those who were actually calling the shots chose to push ahead. What for a while seemed to be a rained out mess got its act together. And to my very pleasant surprise, people appeared (actually lots of people) and were walking the grounds.

It was a situation that appeared to be hopeless, yet it turned out to be a pretty good day.

I should have known better. Less than 24 hours earlier, I defended a hopeless position in checkers and won a notable victory (at least

I was impressed). And Caledon Day went ahead.

Don't give up. Even Mother Nature can be outsmarted.

And if you're looking for a game of checkers, I know of at least one Caledon councillor who can be beaten.

