

Bill Rea ? Garbage system working well

So how do you like them so far?

In case you're wondering, I'm referring to those bins that we Caledon folks (along with everyone else in Peel) are now obliged to use to get rid of our garbage.

From all accounts, there have been a few problems settling into the new system. On the other hand, I think it would have been very short-sighted of anyone to think that everything would have gone smoothly right from the starting line. A few problems were inevitable.

That's pretty much what Peel's Director of Waste Management Norman Lee told Regional councillors last week when he updated them on the program.

?There were going to be some challenges,? he said. ?We've had some.?

And it is true that it takes getting used to. But is that not the case with all new systems? And since we're on the topic, if there are people out there who don't think much of this new method, I think they owe it to their fellow residents to speak up and tell us what method they would prefer to employ to get rid of their garbage. They must, of course, understand that dumping it on your neighbour's property (or anyone else's for that matter) is not an option. Chucking it all out into your backyard isn't an appealing alternative either, although I guess if someone wants to live with the consequences, that's up to them. Just don't live near me, okay? The settling-in problems included things like homes being missed. Actually, Lee said that was quite a large problem the first week. Again, although it would have been frustrating for the people who were impacted, I think we all have to agree problems like this would have been inevitable. But by the fourth week, a lot of the problems had been dealt with. So things are working out roughly the way they should.

Councillors raised some concerns too.

There was a suggestion that maybe the green bins should be collected every other week, rather than every week. I thought Lee handled it well by suggesting we wait until the summer heat to see how good an idea that was. Frankly, I won't be surprised to hear calls for having them collected twice a week during August heat waves. Incidentally, my wife and I are having trouble filling that bin on a weekly basis, but more about that later.

Then there's the problem of the recycling bins getting too full, and indeed, that's an issue with me too. It is, however, largely an issue of my own making. The facility in which the Citizen offices are now located (we moved in the last year) does not have recycling. My conscience gets its back up a bit at the thought of putting recyclable material into the garbage stream (and a newspaper office creates a lot of waste paper), so I've got into the habit of taking some of this material home and putting it in my recycling bin. One household bin cannot, however, handle the entire production of a community newspaper office, and Beth would probably kick me out of the house if I even tried. But I like to think I'm doing my bit.

The point, stated briefly, is our recycling cart gets full too quickly. But Lee also said it's okay to put out those blue recycling bags, if necessary.

This whole thing is evolving.

Another problem I've had was brought up at council by Carolyn Parrish of Mississauga (Parrish and I agreeing on something ? I don't know which of the two of us is more astonished). The wind tends to knock these carts over. I've driven enough roads over the last couple of weeks to see lots of carts on their sides on curbs and shoulders. I have not yet had to swerve to avoid one, but I can see that day coming. On the other side, have we not always had such problems with empty blue boxes sliding across the road, or barrels rolling on the shoulders?

But it can be a pain when they're on their sides.

In the case of Beth and myself, our collection day is Monday, meaning we are expected to have our carts in position for collection by 7 a.m. that day. My usual waking up time is 7. Since I'm not a big fan of exposing myself to the winter elements that early in the morning, I usually have the carts put out the night before. You have probably seen the ads in the Citizen from the Region with a picture depicting a woman towing her cart, running after the collection truck, dressed in a bathrobe and bunny slippers. I don't want to end up like her. For one thing, I don't own bunny slippers and I have absolutely no desire for that to change (and since I have a birthday coming soon, I hope Beth pays close attention to this sentence).

There was, however, a Sunday night not long ago when I lugged the green bin and the other (it was garbage week, if memory serves) down to the end of our long driveway just after it got dark. It was a windy night, and I looked out the window about an hour later and noticed the green bin was on its side. I got my coat on and went out into the chill to set it back up again. I tried to anchor into the ground on the shoulder of the road as best I could, then head back to the house. I got about halfway up the driveway when I heard a

thump, and looked to see the bin back on its side. The fact was we didn't have a lot of stuff to put in it. Ballast was lacking. Muttering words I can't print in a community newspaper, I dragged both carts back up to the porch, and took them both down again at 6:30 the next morning.

The other problem is where to store them. They currently take up space on our front porch, and Beth doesn't like that arrangement. I'm not too pleased with it either, but these things do take up a lot of room, and we're not swimming in alternative choices. We do have a two-car garage, but Beth and I moved into the house less than a year ago, and we're still trying to decide where to put stuff. The garage is crammed with furniture and packing boxes. I think my income tax records are in one of those boxes, and I'm going to need them in the next couple of weeks.

So yeah, there have been some problems, but like I stated above, any new system is going to have some settling-in challenges. And I thought Mississauga Councillor Jim Tovey made a good point last Thursday that we were lucky it's been a mild winter. I haven't yet figured out how I'm going to lug those carts through two feet of snow, assuming collections go ahead as planned such days. That's another challenge I have to look forward to, but so do the rest of us.

