

Bill Rea ? Great time at the Fair

Having been born and raised in a big city (namely Toronto), the idea of an agricultural sector was something rather foreign to me, although I have been on a learning curve working many years in an agricultural community.

Marrying into a farm family helped a lot too.

And since there are a lot of people living in Caledon who are in the same situation, they probably have similar feelings.

That's what made this last weekend so special to me. I got to spend a lot of my time at Caledon Fair. True, there were other events taking place in town over the weekend, so it was more of a case of dropping in at the Fair several times.

It's events like this in the community that I really look forward to. Granted, they can be a little hard on the feet, and I'm usually dead tired when I get home after a day of walking all over the fairgrounds, but there's something at the end that tells me it was all worthwhile.

This year's fair was again filled with all the things that makes a community come out, and the main thing was a lot of people having a good time. And last time I checked, that was a main object of the exercise.

I took in a lot of things over the three days, from the Truck and Tractor Pull Friday night to the Pedal Pull Sunday afternoon. There was a wide variety of exhibits, attractions and activities to attract the curious. There was also entertainment, and of course the fair-type of food. I spoiled my dinner both Friday and Sunday nights.

As usual with such events, a myriad of volunteers came forward to put it all together and make it all work. It's often that we hear words of praise for volunteers, simply because those words are so fitting, as well as being true.

It's also true that the weather was very cooperative this year, with the electrical storm taking place early Saturday morning, bothering only those of us who were trying to sleep.

But I thought it was a good show, and my compliments go out to all who were responsible.

Watch out for scam

You have probably heard of this scam that's been making the rounds of late.

People subjected to this routine return home to find a message from some guy, purporting to be from the federal revenue department, relaying the information that you are in some tax trouble, and you had better call the number you are given fast.

I bring this up now because I received such a call last Thursday. I think it was about 5 p.m. My wife was out of the house, and I had yet to get home from work.

I had planned to take down direct quotes from the message and repeat them here. Alas there was the electrical storm early Saturday morning which caused a brief power interruption at our home. Such blips are enough to erase any saved messages on our answering machine, including the outgoing greeting extended to people who call us, admonishing them to leave us a message, or else.

So I regret to report I'm relying on memory to do this.

It was not the first time we had received such a message. It always sounds like there's a bad connection involved, meaning some of the words are garbled. In fact, it almost sounds like recordings of individual phrases have been spliced together, and then played back.

Also, no names are mentioned. One would think if we were getting a call from a government agency with the message that one of us were in trouble, they would at least specify whether it was Beth or I who should start looking for a lawyer. But if memory serves (and Beth backs me up on this), we were told the message was for ?You.? I guess that's a little more personal than being told the message is addressed to ?occupant.?

Also, the person calling didn't identify himself. He just said he was calling from some outfit like the Canada Revenue Agency, but my memory tells me that wasn't quite it. He also wished us luck if we (he didn't specify exactly who) didn't make the required call immediately.

Am I worried about being in trouble with the Feds over my taxes? I am not.

I pride myself on being an honest man, who shows due diligence with that annual ordeal known as income tax. True, some of the calculations can be tricky, and some of the procedures to be followed can be subject to interpretation. And since I am also a human being, I am quite capable of making the occasional goof. But I have always done my best. If there are problems; if I do owe back taxes, I am convinced the amounts would be relatively minor, and the issue could be settled most amicably.

I do not now, nor have I ever had a problem with paying my taxes. As I have written many times in this place in the paper. I understand why we are all obligated to pay a certain amount in tax to various levels of government. Like all of you, I expect a certain amount of security from government against possible attack from terrorists and the like. I also want good roads to drive on and good hospitals if Beth's health or my own takes a turn south. And I expect the government to make sure certain standards are

maintained in the food I eat, the air I breathe and the water I drink. I dutifully push my garbage or recycling bin to the end of my driveway every Sunday evening, confident that it will be picked up sometime the following morning. Why am I confident? Because I have paid my property taxes, therefore I expect that level of service. And I have found the service to be quite satisfactory for quite some time.

Besides, if I were in serious arrears with the government, I strenuously doubt they would approach me with a snarky message on my answering machine. They would more likely to ask me to call a number (granted that could be part of a scam too, although there would be plenty of ways to find out).

Besides, this phone message came last Thursday, which happened to be the day after Beth received her income tax refund, and two days after my cheque appeared in the mail.

No, we did not take this seriously. But I'm worried there are some people out there who might.

If you get a message like that, just erase it, and say, 'Go to hell?' to your answering system while you're doing it (that electrical storm robbed me of that pleasure).

If the government genuinely has a problem with you, they'll let you know through proper and very fair means.

That is one of the things you're paying taxes for.

Beyond that, my advice is to ignore such messages. True, the first time I heard it, I got a little anxious. But I let my common sense take over.

Now I find it amusing.

No worries here!

