

Bill Rea ? Make sure you vote!

I was talking, a week or so ago, to a man who has been working on the campaign of one of the people currently running for mayor of Caledon.

He had a couple of observations to make about the campaign (some of which I agreed with), which he delivered with a certain amount of passion. Whether I agreed with him or not, I had to accept that he was convinced about the rightness of a lot of what he was saying. One of the things you learn fast in my line of work is there are a lot of decent people out there carting around views with which you disagree.

Then launched into a tirade against people I have very little use for as well, namely people who don't vote.

I have stated many times in this forum that I cannot understand people like that. I have been eligible to vote for going on 40 years, and the only time I didn't make it to a polling station was for a municipal election that was held while I was away at University in St. Catharines. My parents made sure I was registered to vote in Toronto, which was my permanent base in those days, but things got in the way and I wasn't able to make it home for election day. Besides, I was too busy studying politics to be up on the issues at home, if that makes any sense.

So with the exception of that one blot on my record, I have always made a point of getting out to vote. The fact is that when I turned 18, I couldn't wait for an election so I could start voting. I even made sure to cast a ballot in October 1992 in the referendum on the Charlottetown Accord, even though the final days of that particular canvass coincided with my father's funeral arrangements.

But this man I was talking to recently was so animated it was hard to get a word in. Thus I had trouble telling him he was really preaching to the proverbial converted.

No matter, his points in this regard were well taken.

He highlighted his argument by bringing the name Hubert Corless into the discussion.

Young Hubert was born in the family farmhouse on what was then known the 5th Sideroad (now Queensgate Boulevard in Bolton) in 1899. During the First World War, he and an older brother joined up. He was just 17 when he became a casualty at Vimy Ridge. That was a very bloody battle which historians believe marked Canada's coming of age as a country to be reckoned with.

Many of you may have heard of this young man. There is a street in Bolton named after him (not far from Allan Drive Middle School), and there's also a small parkette named in his honour, complete with a stone commemorating his sacrifices.

The man I had been talking to referred to that stone, bringing up the memory of young Hubert and the others like him, who risked, and all too often lost, their lives so people like us could have a voice in choosing our government. Like me, he couldn't understand why so many people don't avail themselves of that right for which so many brave young men and women have sweated their life blood. Think of Afghanistan for a second.

It is true I had heard of that street in Bolton, although I had never had occasion to visit the parkette. And I knew nothing about the stone until the man I was talking to mentioned it.

So I took a couple of minutes Friday to check it out for myself. That's when I took the picture that appears with this column.

I am fully aware that there are other stories like that of young Hubert. They have been told many times, and we're sure to hear more next month when Remembrance Day observances are held.

Had it not been for young people like Hubert Corless, the concept that we know as voting could be something foreign to us.

That ballot waiting for you this coming Monday is something young men died to get you!

It occurred to me that I would have a hard time thinking of a better argument to get people out to vote.

On the other hand, there's a practical side to the issue.

We human beings are very good when it comes to complaining, but not so good when it comes to actually doing something about whatever it is we're bellyaching about.

There are lots of issues in all parts of Caledon, including Canadian Tire, Highway 413, aggregate pits that no one wants to live near, taxes that are never low enough for most people, urban sprawl, traffic congestion, facilities for seniors, recreation facilities, trust in government, etc. The issues have been discussed at some length at various candidates' meetings. There are so many of them that I can't believe all of you don't have an interest in at least one of them. The best chance you have to do anything about them is upon you now, and that involves getting out to vote.

I'm a busy guy. I work hard. Many of you see me at events in all corners of the Town of Caledon. I seldom take a day off, and there are tons of things around the house that my wife wants me to address. Yet I plan to get out and vote.

You say you don't have time to vote? Don't give me that rubbish!

If I can find the time to vote, so can you.

Young Hubert deserves at least that

