

Your single vote really does matter

by MARK PAVILONS

?Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, Nothing is going to get better. It's not.? ? Dr. Seuss, The Lorax

What a wise man he was.

He's quite right, and there's no time like the present to heed these words.

Residents have some important choices to make on election day. Your grass roots representation is very important because it actually impacts your life here in Caledon.

From your taxes and water bills to local bylaws and development, our local councillors are the decision makers, the movers and shakers that help define Caledon.

And you can contribute to that.

Unfortunately, voter turnout in the last municipal election was quite low, a sad comment on engagement.

This year, Caledon will welcome a new Mayor and new Councillors, given the ward redistribution. New representation is good, but the onus is on us to not only vote, but welcome and work with our new Councillors.

Residents had opportunities to see their candidates in action, thanks to efforts by local organizations. While some see all-candidates' debates as preaching to the converted, they were still great opportunities to catch a glimpse of the candidates and hear where they stand on issues.

That's democracy at its core.

Each and every person who put their name on the ballot deserves the utmost respect. Entering a campaign and being prepared to serve are not easy, as incumbents will tell you.

But to serve in such a capacity is what community means.

I can say, watching them first-hand, they are all passionate about their communities and they all want to make a difference. Admirable indeed.

In Caledon, we're very fortunate to have an active citizenry, in the many service clubs, organizations and special interest groups. Plus, the efforts of local citizen groups are to be congratulated for not only providing opportunities, but being the proverbial community ?watchdogs.?

We are humbled by your dogged determination.

Canadians, whether native sons and daughters or newcomers, appreciate what this country has to offer. Just ask your friends, neighbours or owners of the corner deli. They work hard and have put everything on the line in pursuit of a dream, one that is supported by all of our principles, rules, regulations and yes, support services.

Our home community is the fountain, the communal well, where all things bubble and rise to the surface.

From our Councillors and Township staff to the patrons and visitors, support is widespread for each and every mom-and-pop business, or large corporate entity. Caledon residents are a fiercely loyal bunch.

Here, no one ? not the pizza maker or school bus driver ? should feel alone or ignored.

Behind the scenes, the various service clubs constantly grease the community wheels. They serve, pure and simple. They respond.

Our sense of community runs deep, through all of the government-related services. Caledon's Fire and Emergency Services is regarded across the province as one of the best. One of the reasons is the community-centred focus and the passion for their friends and neighbours that each firefighter brings to the table.

Now, you may ask what does all of this have to do with elections and voting?

Well, my dear friends, none of these are closed-door groups. They welcome you with open arms. They actually encourage your partnership, interaction and support. They are here for you.

Those are some of the value-added extras that come with living in our society.

But this society is contingent on many things, not the least of which is your involvement.

Residents often feel like their voices and concerns are not heard or acted upon.

In fact, being heard, and giving the public the opportunity to speak at Council meetings, is unwritten rule of this municipality.

And this theme is evident by the number of candidates in some of our wards, who've decided to toss their hats in the ring.

From all walks of life and all levels of experience, these residents are shining examples of local democracy. To ignore them, and decide not to vote is simply wrong.

Our forefathers, and more recently members of the past two or three Councils, have made it their goal to leave Caledon better than they found it. And for the most part, they have.

I could list the litany of multi-million-dollar facilities we have, and are about to receive. One only has to look around to be amazed, and proud.

Democracy continues with or without you.

Wouldn't you want to be part of your own future?

Get out and vote!