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The Voice

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Challenge to Oosterhoff in Niagara-West



Challenger Tony Quirk, last Friday in Grimsby. BOB LOBLAW PHOTO

Six days from now, sitting MPP may be lame duck

BY NATE SMELLE
The VOICE

When 19-year-old Sam Oosterhoff was elected MPP for Niagara West-Glanbrook in last November's by-election, it appeared the first-year Brock student had taken a huge first step towards a bright future with the Conservative Party. Yet just three months after taking over the former Tory leader Tim Hudak's seat, Oosterhoff's political career is in jeopardy.

Though it is uncommon for a sitting MPP to be challenged by a fellow party member, Grimsby's Niagara Regional Councillor, Tony Quirk, has filed to contest for the controversial far-right MPP's seat.

Quirk spoke to the Voice late last week at Grimsby Town Hall, whose modernistic, nearly all-white inte-

rior, joked Quirk, reminded him of an Apple Store. Quirk placed no topic out-of-bounds, and directly answered every question put to him during the hour-plus interview, often in more detail than space permits here.

According to Quirk, discussions to replace Oosterhoff as the PC's candidate in the new riding of Niagara-West in 2018 began after the Christmas holiday. Pointing out that it would be nearly impossible for the Party to replace Oosterhoff as their candidate if he were to be re-elected in 2018, Quirk said now is the last best chance to make the change.

With no one else stepping up, and the window of opportunity closing, Quirk said he decided to make a run for Oosterhoff's seat after hear-

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Column Six

Once upon a time

The name is all in the knobs

BY MARK SHOALTS, P.Eng.
Special to the VOICE

AT THE RISK of being called late to the party (as usual) I would like to throw my two cents-worth into the East Fonthill water feature name game. I didn't contribute to the Voice's worthy contest the first time around, however ongoing events have prompted me to suggest that the Town of Pelham should take a page from the DSBN's playbook. "Knob Hill" is the perfect name for our new pond.

I know, it's not a hill, it's a hole. But E. W. Farr isn't on any "heights" either, is it? The parallels are nearly perfect.

A little-known fact that I will share with the Town (directly, no Wikipedia filter) is that once upon a time, a fellow named Steve Stavro owned a chunk of property at Hwy. 20 & Hwy. 406. Mr. Stavro was not from Pelham (and the property isn't in Pelham) but he was a very influential fellow.

As the owner of the Toronto Maple Leafs and a chain of grocery stores, his influence on Canada was arguably much greater than the influence of some guy from England who wasn't

See KNOBS next page

Council to DSBN: Change the name

BY NATE SMELLE
The VOICE

Names Matter succeeds in quest to obtain official letter on E.W. Farr issue

Speaking to Pelham Town Council on behalf of the Names Matter committee at the Council meeting on Feb. 21, resident Nancy Beamer put forth a resolution urging that the District School Board of Niagara reinstate "E.W. Farr" as the name of the elementary school in Fenwick now called Wellington Heights. Beamer asserted that renaming a school, which previously honoured a beloved local educator, after Arthur Wellesley, the 1st Duke of Wellington — a documented racist who was recorded

in the British House of Lords in August of 1833 as stating, "We do not want Jews to come and settle here" — does not send a good message to the children enrolled there. She said it also gives other communities a poor impression of the values upheld by the people of Pelham.

"It's a name that we find repugnant and offensive," Beamer told Council.

"This same Arthur Wellesley is now attached to our school and our community. We now have his values invading our area. We realize that people cannot erase history, but as we evolve as a society we do not have to continue to honour those whose values are not in line with the values of the present day."

Reminding Council that Pelham has been a proactive leader in rec-

onciliation long before the word became fashionable, Beamer reminisced on how E.L. Crossley Secondary School's mascot and logo was formerly the Chiefs. When the community became aware that this name was offensive to indigenous people and others, she pointed out that the logo was removed and the parents and the students adopted the current Cyclone.

"We would like to think that in 2017, we the Pelham community are still striving to inspire our children to go forward and stand up for what is right and proper,

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PUBLISHER'S CORNER
by Dave Burket

Town Hall and the stifling of dissent

Dear Editor, below you will find my letter re the subject line. I have attached all of my contact info but I respectfully ask that if possible, and if my letter is published, you [don't use my name], and only identify me as being [from Pelham]. [Given the type of work I do for the Town] I want to avoid possibly creating any internal dissension or repercussions. Thank You.

So began the letter to the editor this week than runs on page 4, under the headline, *Disturbed by design change.*

Usually I like to keep it light in this little corner of the paper, nothing more provocative than talk of the tastiest fish and chips, or whose flower arrangements are nicest (still Gilbert's!).

But the last few weeks have seen a new attitude starting to gel around town. Echoing the line in the movie *Network*, residents are fed up and they aren't going to take it any more.

Lately the Town has lurched from one misstep to the next, starting with firing someone for alleged-

ly making too much money; to the revelation that the Mayor was quietly communicating with the DSBN, without Council's knowledge, about the E. W. Farr name-change debacle; to the Town's apparent readiness to cede a portion of a public park for an unneeded soccer field to the very same school; to the shock news—absurdly late—that the new Community Centre design is 9,000 sq. ft. too small and the claim that a change in bricks and wall materials will pay for the error. Finally (well, "finally" for the time being), the reappearance, with myste-

See *DISSENT* back page

Hwy 20 speeders nabbed
On Family Day, a Niagara Regional Police Traffic Enforcement Unit found plenty of business on Highway 20 near the corner of Timmsdale Crescent in Fonthill. Between 9 and 11.15 AM the unit conducted speed enforcement in this 50 km/h posted zone. Police say they issued 15 speeding tickets to drivers travelling between 75 and 85 km/h.

Bowl for Kids' Sake
During their Feb. 21 meeting Pelham Town Council received an invitation from Big Brothers, Big Sisters South Niagara to enter a team in the annual Bowl for Kids' Sake tournament. The organization's executive director, Barb Van Der Heyden reminded members of Council that the coveted

KNOBS
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even sure where Canada was. The population of the Leafs Nation in the last quarter of the 20th century was probably larger than the population of Upper and Lower Canada in the first quarter of the 19th century, so more people lived and died on Mr. Stavro's whims than those of some guy working on a beef recipe.

Funny thing is, Mr. Stavro decided that Hwy. 20 & Hwy. 406 was a strategic location for another outpost of his empire, and like that other guy, while he may not have actually got-

IN THE NEWS



Mayor's trophy was once again up for grabs. The Bowl for Kids' Sake tournament is Big Brothers, Big Sisters' largest annual event, and this year's fundraising goal is \$45,000.

In recognition of Canada's 150th anniversary, participants are asked to dress up as their favourite iconic Canadian hero, animal or symbol. Teams of four to six must raise a minimum of \$200 to help support youth mentoring programs in the community. This year's

event will take place this coming Saturday, March 4, from 4:30 to 7 PM, and on Wednesday, March 8 starting at 4 PM, at Jeff's Bowl-O-Rama, 968 Niagara Street in Welland.

Before wrapping up their presentation, the organization awarded Mayor Dave Augustyn with a plaque of appreciation, recognizing Pelham's past support.

Historic section of library needs name

Council discussed the naming of the original section of the Maple Acre Library at their meeting on Feb. 21 after receiving a letter from Mary Lamb, of the Pelham Historical Society, suggesting that the room be named, "The Paterson Room," in honour of Mrs.

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ten around to any building plans, he had the generic footprint of his other establishments for reference, and he had a good name. What might have become Knob Hill Farms never actually did, but then that other guy never actually put up his dukes either, or even threatened to.

So, we have an enterprise that was speculated on, was similar to other such enterprises in other locations, and was even unofficially mentioned to someone once or twice. The one that didn't actually happen would have been a link in a chain of similar redoubts, and it was at least nominally connected to an influential personage in the lofty reaches of power over a sometimes struggling but always ambitious nation. The proposed location of

this place that was never built is not actually close by the new East Fonthill development but is several kilometres down the road from it, yet another amazing parallel to DSBN criteria for naming a school.

Mr. Stavro is no longer with us, and his bastions of capitalism have moved on to other uses, just like the other guy and his plans, but none-the-less we should commemorate this insignificant event that never happened.

So, rather than "Fonthole," I say "Knob Hill" is the perfect appellation for that depressing depression that greets you on arrival in Fonthill from the east. The name also has other connotations, and if these offend you, then the fit with DSBN criteria is complete.

NRPS impaired driving charges

In an effort to bring further attention and deterrence to driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs, the Niagara Regional Police Service reports the names of those people who are charged with an alleged criminal impaired driving offence in the Region. None of the following charges have been proved in court.

In addition to being charged, these individuals are also bound by a Ministry of Transportation 90-Day Administrative Driver's License Suspension and are prohibited from operating a motor vehicle on a roadway. The public is encouraged to contact the Niagara Regional Police Service Traffic Safety Hotline or Crime Stoppers to report those who are driving in contravention of the suspension.

The following individuals have been charged criminally with impaired driving by alcohol or drugs, driving with a blood alcohol concentration above 80 mgs of alcohol in 100 ml of blood, or refusing to provide a breath / blood sample.

- Robert L. BILLER, 26, Fort Erie
- Eric J. FONTAINE, 32, St. Catharines
- Darryl A. BLACK, 33, Barrie
- Robert P. CARRIERE, 29, St. Catharines
- Robin COOPER, 38, St. Catharines
- Graeme L. OOSTERVEEN, 22, St. Catharines
- Ryan J. O'NEILL, 36, Welland
- Allan J. MUSTARD, 26, Niagara Falls
- Christina N. COWNIE, 23, Cheektowaga NY
- Ann L. RABY, 40, Welland
- Sydney M., F. LEDOUX, 26, St. Catharines
- Erika E. RINALDIS, 36, No Fixed Abode

The Niagara Regional Police Service is committed to reducing impaired driving offences through education and the apprehension of offenders through enforcement programs like RIDE. Impaired driving is still the leading cause of criminal deaths in Canada and destroys thousands of lives every year.

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VOICE on vacation!

Margie Reitveld with daughters Cassidy and Alyssa (taking the picture) in Cuba, indulging in Margie's favourite pastime: riding in Detroit classics. *Manejemos!*

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- Giant Tiger
- Shoppers Drug Mart
- Zee Lube Express Care
- Lazy Loon
- Minor Bros Stores
- Avondale Stores
- A-1 Market
- Sobeys South Pelham
- Broken Gavel Restaurant
- Picard's Peanuts
- Petro Canada Mtl. Hwy.
- Renewed Thrift & Vintage
- Ridge Berry Farm



CHALLENGE

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ing how disappointed some of his fellow conservatives had become with the prospect of Oosterhoff remaining MPP beyond 2018.

Being involved with the PCs for the past 23 years, the 46-year-old Quirk said he has established a network of friends on both sides of the aisle, many of which have raised concerns about Oosterhoff's ability to be an effective representative for the people of Niagara-West at Queen's Park.

"He goes to a lot of events, he gets his picture on social media a lot and that's great, but he's not articulating the concerns properly," Quirk said.

"I'm also hearing that he's not listening to people when they come to him with concerns. There are groups who have come away from meetings with him and complained to me about either a lack of preparedness on the file, or a lack of willingness to listen. Or, that he's going into it with his mind already made up. He'll tell you that's 'principled conservatism,' and that he knows what his principles are. At 19, I would like to think that my principles were different than what they are now."

In a statement emailed to the Voice which appears on page 5, Oosterhoff appears to assert that party leadership continues to back him, but Quirk responds that the party executive is neutral, and that the Party was, "well within its right to deny my application if they did not want me to present an alternative to Sam."

Quirk says that leader Patrick Brown will provide a letter of support to all caucus members, adding, "I would not expect anything less from the Leader or our caucus. They have to work with each other for the next 15 months until the next election."

A lifelong local boy, Quirk attended Grimsby Secondary School and McMaster University (studying engineering and political science). He has served as Director of the Grimsby Chamber of Commerce, Alderman for the Town of Grimsby, Director of Grimsby Power and vice-chair of the Grimsby Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee, Chair of the Grimsby Downtown Area, and member of the Niagara Region Economic Growth Strategy Committee. He lives with his wife, Trish, and children Kathryn, 14, and Finnegan, 12, on Grimsby mountain.

When he first got involved in politics at the age of 23, Quirk described himself as being "gung-ho" for former PC premier Mike Harris's so-called "Common

Sense Revolution." Over time, he said he came to realize that the "my way or the highway" approach to politics wasn't all that effective.

"There is a maturity that comes with age when you are working with other people and you have to find common goals and common good," he said.

"You can't go into it with blinders on."

Quirk said he didn't want to be perceived as having negative feelings towards Oosterhoff. However, he believes the next election is going to be critical for the people of Ontario, and he said voters deserve a valid candidate and government-in-waiting. He said the changing landscape and boundaries of the riding are other reasons that constituents need an experienced politician at the helm in Niagara-West.

"Sam is enthusiastic and he has the energy, but the reality is that if we form government we need to have someone who can articulate our position strongly, someone who can advocate with a little bit of life experience, political experience and business experience, formulating our decisions," said Quirk.

"That is where I have a background of community involvement. I have kids in the publicly funded separate school system, I have my own property, I pay property taxes, I get a hydro bill every month. I have all those little things that will allow me to appreciate the impact of the decisions I make."

Recognizing the size of the religious community that Oosterhoff is a part of and how engaged they are politically, Quirk said he wasn't surprised to see him earn the nomination and then Hudak's seat. As someone who has managed and worked within campaigns in the riding and across the province, Quirk asserted that the Party considers Niagara-West [formerly Niagara West-Glanbrook] as one of their safer seats. The new boundaries will see the riding skew even more conservative than previously.

"The name on the blue sign is usually the one that gets elected," he said.

"That is just the reality, because as much as we would like to believe differently a lot of people aren't engaged in the process or don't know all of the details."

Quirk said he came to his faith as a practicing Catholic through his wife Kathryn. Endorsed by the Campaign Life Coalition as a pro-life candidate, Quirk and Oosterhoff are on the same page when it comes to a woman's right to choose. Unlike some fellow party-member, however, Quirk said he does not allow his religious beliefs to blind him to other points

There is a maturity that comes with age when you are working with other people and you have to find common goals and common good. You can't go into it with blinders on.

of view that can help in the decision-making process. Quirk used his stance on gay marriage as an example of political pragmatism.

"This is one of those things where I diverge with the Catholic doctrine—I have no problem with gay marriage. It actually doesn't affect me personally. I always say this for people who are still against it, I've been married for 17 years, and since gay marriage has been allowed for the last eight or nine years, so far I've not had any stress in my marriage by that, at all. Maybe that falls on the more liber-

Quirk said he comes to politics from a fiscal background, having worked in his family's business for years before taking it over then selling it nearly a decade ago. His time served as a municipal politician has helped him recognize that there are things that governments need to spend money on, and that not all government is bad. It all comes down to taxing people fairly and spending their money wisely, he said.

"I don't agree with the premise that government needs to be run like a business, because I think that

If you don't have someone who has demonstrated an ability to find solutions across broader ground, then you can get dismissed out-of-hand pretty easily

tarian side of things. When you try to dictate terms and legislate your idea of what people should be doing, that's great until it's not your people legislating."

When asked whether he thought the riding as a whole cared about the issue, Quirk said, "I think that there's a demographic on a certain age point that's not [in favour]," but that most people under 60, even if otherwise conservative, understand that the world has moved on, and take a live-and-let-live approach.

Quirk said his experience in municipal and regional politics has given him a broader perspective on the needs of Niagara-West. He said he has learned to take a more inclusive approach to politics than has Oosterhoff.

"There is a necessity to listen to all your constituents once you get elected," he said.

"You find that heavily in municipal politics because you are being elected by people that don't care about your [political] colour. You also have to work with people of other stripes and you have to listen to their side of the story."

tricity and the transmission of electricity are fundamental things that should be managed and run by government. Water, electricity, basic needs, these are things that the government should be doing for people."

As a self-proclaimed "tech-nerd," Quirk said he likes the concept of producing wind power, however he does not like the way the Liberals have handled their implementation into the energy grid.

"The problem with wind turbines as I see it, is that the government basically imposed them on communities that didn't want them, to satisfy an ideological drive for green energy. That is fundamentally wrong."

Acknowledging that steps need to be taken to slow down and mitigate the effects of climate change, Quirk said he is concerned that the strategies proposed by the Canadian government are not worthwhile because they are only a fragment of what needs to be done globally. He said he is against the idea of a carbon tax, because he feels that taxing carbon is not going to stop people from filling their cars and using the same amount of gas.

"I have no problem with taxing consumption, because the political side of me says let's tax consumption and let's reduce taxes on income. I like that approach.... I would rather see an investment in carbon capture technology, I would rather see an investment in reforestation of the agricultural lands that aren't being utilized any more. I think that there's an opportunity to have a real investment in new technologies."

As a member of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority board, Quirk is involved in making decisions that directly impact the natural environment throughout the region. In this role, he has had to be a part of making many difficult and sometimes unpopular decisions. For instance, he was involved in the discussions leading up to the region's controversial endorsement of using no-net-loss biodiversity offsetting as a tool to promote economic development.

"I've seen all of the work that we've done on restoration projects and I have no problem with biodiversity offsetting where it makes sense and where the wetlands are suitable" said Quirk.

"We've had a lot of discussion on what's going on in Niagara Falls and it make more sense if we can do biodiversity offsetting within the current urban boundaries to alleviate the pressure on greenfield expansion, and where our biologists say it makes sense. I think that's a good approach and I think it has to be a tool

that's available."

He attributes much of the controversy surrounding biodiversity offsetting and the pilot project proposed for the Provincially Significant Wetland known as Thundering Waters in Niagara Falls, as stemming from current Ontario Wetland Assessment System. Because wetlands get points for being near a waterway, and for being in the Carolinian forest, he describes the system as "skewed against Niagara."

"Almost all our waterways feed into a great lake, almost all of our vegetation is Carolinian forest, so what might be a wetland in Niagara may not be a wetland in Chatham because they don't feed into a great lake. They don't have Carolinian forest but they could have the exact same ecosystem," Quirk said.

Quirk has been keeping an eye on the federal Tory leadership race. A close friend of Kelly Leitch for the past 23 years, Quirk said he supports her in her bid for the federal PC leadership but does not share Leitch's "Canadian values" views on immigration. However he does think that the Government of Canada needs to defend human rights when welcoming new Canadians.

"There are places in the world where women aren't allowed to vote, where gays are beheaded, where people are stoned for minor blasphemies, and if you are coming to Canada to escape that you are welcome. If you are coming here to bring that sort of thing with you, please leave it at the door," said Quirk.

Ontario Conservatives will be developing their Party's policies and platform at a policy conference this November. Heading into this conference, Quirk said it would be wise for the Party to have more pragmatic voices like his own at the table for these discussions.

"You need someone who has the wherewithal and experience to be able to say to the leader and the policy people, and the ministers of the day, this might not be the best approach, is there somewhere else we can look. If you don't have someone who has demonstrated an ability to find solutions across broader ground, then you can get dismissed out-of-hand pretty easily."

The election to nominate the party's candidate for the new riding of Niagara-West is scheduled for March 7 at the West Lincoln Fairgrounds from 6 PM to 8 PM. Quirk says that he expects a turnout of around 2,500 party members. Results will be posted on the Voice website as soon as they are available.

Additional reporting by
Dave Burket