

Chickens get their day in court

Family challenges local zoning laws by keeping livestock

By Cole Breiland

What was supposed to be a home school lesson in science and agriculture for then 12 year-old Kayla Bacher has become a lesson in local government.

Her parents will go to court today to challenge the charges that they had broken local zoning bylaws by keeping livestock.

The couple's pro bono legal representative from the Canadian Constitution Foundation, Karen Selick, told media that they will be using a defence of officially induced error.

When the Bachers got the chickens two years ago, they thought they had done their homework.

Kelly Bacher said she went to the Trent Hills municipal office to ask if it was possible to keep chickens in the city, and was given information on what animals could be kept as pets. That information did not list chickens as prohibited.

"If they didn't want us to have them they should have told us right up front," said Bacher. "I never would have gone through the trouble of doing it, that was money we had to pay for the hens; we had to build the coops; we had to buy their dishes, we've got to constantly feed them."

"We wouldn't have put that money out if we thought there was a chance they would be taken away."

They kept those chickens without complaint until they moved to their current Duxsee Street residence. In June, two months after they settled in the neighbourhood, the municipality received a complaint.

In response the family gathered a petition of almost 200 signatures to have the municipality look at changing the bylaw.

The municipality commissioned a planning report from Clark Consulting on the advantages and disadvantages of allowing chickens to be kept in urban spaces.

The report looked at examples of other municipalities, including the cities of Guelph, Kingston, and Niagara Falls, as well as the neighbouring municipality of

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Kelly Bacher

Quinte West.

The report concluded by suggesting if there was support from council and the community, the municipality could implement a permit system with rules for number of chickens, coop size, and coop placement.

However, the Trent Hills council decided to maintain the restrictions on agricultural activities in urban residential areas during an Oct. 4, 2011, council meeting.

The Bachers were not in attendance during that meeting, claiming that they were not notified personally, though the municipality made a public announcement in newspapers of the issue.

According to the meeting minutes, four of seven members of council Bill Thompson, Meirion Jones, Kim MacNeil, deputy mayor Rosemary Kelleher-MacLennan and Mayor Hector Macmillan spoke against revising the bylaw, all felt that chickens belonged outside urban areas.

Ironically, the Bachers are taking care of an extra chicken of unknown origin, given to them by the municipality after it was found roaming in Campbellford. They have to keep the hen in a separate indoor coop, because it does not get along with the family's other chickens, which have grown up together.

Since Oct. 4, 2011 meeting bylaw officers have inspected the property multiple times, giving them revised deadlines. The Feb. 3, 2012 visit proved to be the municipality's last.

As to why they did not get rid of the chickens after any of those inspections while continuing to try and change the bylaw, Mrs. Bacher said it is "the principle of it, and the fact that after two years, you are attached to them."

She adds that "it's like a dog. You feed and water and clean up after it every single day after two years. I never thought I would say that about a chicken, but you become attached to them, they become part of your routine."



Cole Breiland

Twelve-year old Kayla Bacher feeds the family's chickens in their winter coup in the backyard of their Campbellford home Feb. 20. The family's first court date to fight the charge of breaking the municipality's zoning bylaws by keeping the chickens took place today.

Student government gets word out about elections

Students must go online to choose candidates

By Megan Voss

The Loyalist College Student Government is trying to get the word out about elections as much as they can.

"We've got flyers out as well as through the Facebook page, e-newsletters and our website: loyaliststudents.com," says Nancy Simpson, returning officer.

To vote, students must go online to loyaliststudents.com, provide their date of birth and student number. Then, they can select one out of two candidates in three

different categories.

Last year's voter turnout was a mere eight percent, and in the hope of having more people vote this year, Simpson says students have the opportunity to win \$500 by voting online.

Christopher Detering in broadcast engineering has been acclaimed as student president, since he was the only candidate.

"I don't think anyone ran against me because when you think about it the title of 'Student Government President' can be intimidating," he says.

"Since most of our current board is leaving at the end of this year, someone with no experience on student government might be a little scared to take the big chair."

On the college's voting website, Detering writes that he feels that he could bring more of himself into the role of president.

"I feel it would be a valuable experience for me," he says. "I also feel very attached to this college and want to see it grow and succeed as much as possible."

As president, his wish is for more classroom space.

"Classrooms have been converted for several different non-classroom uses and it's having an impact on the students and scheduling," he says.

He also hopes to work to lower cafeteria prices, expand the cellphone extender program beyond the pub to other dead zones around the school and work to make pub nights more enjoyable for everyone.

"I'm most looking forward to another year with the student government. This past year, as Media Studies Leader has been fun and a learning experience for me about what the student government actually does for students. I want to listen to what the students have to say and help make what they want, happen."

"Also, I don't think people fully realize what we do and that as a member of the board we really can make change around the college. I think most people think we just organize pub, but there's so much more to it than that and that's where I think the reluctance to run comes from."

"I'd encourage anyone who wants to make change around the college, to make it a better environment for everyone, to run in next year's elections."

Participants eat it up at pancake event

Shrove Tuesday event marks the beginning for 40 days of Lent

By Megan Voss

The atmosphere at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church was about as light and fluffy as the pancakes they were making.

Traditionally, Shrove Tuesday is the last day before Christians begin Lent – the 40 days before Easter, when some people do not eat anything that comes from an animal, such as meat, eggs and dairy.

Pancakes, sausages and juice were being served at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Belleville on Feb. 21.

Several people arrived early before the event began, donning aprons and getting the run-down of what to do for the evening. While a few people stood at tables, flipping pancakes, many others were dishing up plates with sausage and pancakes to serve to the people seated around the tables set up in the church basement.

Peter McNaught was among those who were working at the griddles. He only attends the church occasionally, but happily agreed to help make pancakes for the evening.

"Well, no pancakes came back!" he joked, after watching as a plate of sausages and pancakes were successfully delivered to an attendee. After fiddling around for a while with the amount of batter he poured onto the griddle, as well as the temperature, he was more confident about the pancakes being cooked all the way through as time went on.

And although Janis Drummond, who was selling cookies, is a regular attendee, she doesn't follow the traditions of Lent either. Like McNaught, she helps out at the pancake supper as more of an outreach to the community.

Rev. Anne-Marie Jones was sporting an apron along with the rest of her volunteers.

"My job is to greet people as they come in," she said, relieved as a few more people trickled into the room.



Photo by Megan Voss

Peter McNaught pours pancake batter onto a griddle at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Belleville, Ont. on Feb. 21. Although he is not a regular churchgoer, he enjoys helping out with various church activities and community events.

She was a bit concerned with the lower turnout than last year, but was still in good spirits.

"There are about six or seven other churches in the area," she said, noting

that could be a reason for the smaller amount of people attending this time around.

A common theme for the evening was that it was simply a social gathering to

enjoy sausage and pancakes. Jones explained that not many churches follow the tradition of not eating anything that comes from an animal for Lent.

"Catholics will, though," she said.

E-cigs disaster brings new awareness

No nicotine allowed in electronic smoking devices in Canada

By Sharon Kallaste

Tragic news south of the border has sparked some new awareness on the devices here in Canada.

E-cigs are electronic smoking products—electric vapour cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos and pipes. Those that contain nicotine are illegal here in Canada.

While smoking an e-cigar on Feb. 18, Tom Holloway, 57, of Niceville, Fla., lost several teeth, part of his tongue and suffered facial burns when the product exploded. The home office he was working in at the time also received minor fire damage from the battery explosion of the e-cigar.

CSPnet.com and the Digital Journal reported this week that the incident has raised suspicions about a possible modification to the original manufactured product.

E-cigarettes and other similar tobacco smoking simulating devices are battery-operated. The filters can either contain a nicotine solution or a non-nicotine flavored liquid. A vapor is produced and inhaled similar to that of a tobacco cigarette, cigar or pipe.

Like many other electronic devices, and appliances, the end users can purchase aftermarket parts to 'beef' up the performance making appliances work faster, give longer battery life, or provide more power.

Olivia Caron is a media relations officer with Health Canada.

"There are basically two categories of the electronic smoking products, with nicotine and without nicotine."

"Those with nicotine are illegal in Canada and those without are required to have market authorization. To this date, there have been no approvals granted by Health Canada," said Caron.

In a backgrounder, Health Canada advises Canadians "not to purchase or use electronic smoking products, as these products may pose health risks and have not been evaluated for safety, quality and efficacy."

The product components fall under several governing authorities indicated in the backgrounder.

"Nicotine is a drug subject to the Food and Drugs Act. The delivery system component is a medical device subject to the Medical Devices Regulations."

"Any electronic smoking product associated with nicotine or with therapeutic claims falls under the *Food and Drugs Act* and its regulations, and requires market authorization from Health Canada to be imported or sold in Canada."

To be granted market authorization for an electronic cigarette product, a sponsor would have to submit scientific evidence demonstrating the product's safety, efficacy and quality, the backgrounder states.

Electronic smoking products without nicotine or any other drug and without therapeutic claims are not subject to the Food and Drugs Act and its regulations.

"We have only had a few general inquiries about the e-cigarette, not much really," said Crystal Roach, public health nurse, with Hastings and Prince Edward Counties Health Unit. Roach has worked for the unit for the past nine years.

"Belleville has the highest smoking rate in eastern Ontario. We are in an area of available cheap cigarettes, as well as a social economic stylus—low paying jobs, unemployment and a high senior population, which all contribute to this statistic," said Roach.

The products without nicotine raise potential questions of being a possible avenue for a smoking cessation aid, such as nicotine gum and the nicotine patch.

"We will not be promoting or generating any awareness about these products unless expressed approvals have been issued by Health Canada, of which we have not heard anything to date," said Roach.

Local retailer Fast Freddy's gas bar has chosen not to supply electronic smoking products.

"There has only been a few inquiries here at Free Flow, and most likely the reason why our district manager Janet Hill made the decision not to sell them," said Karen Baptiste, site manager at Lakeview Plaza in Shannonville.

A sampling of five convenience stores in the Quinte area turned up not a single e-cigarette, with or without nicotine, for sale. It would seem some local retailers are taking heed of Health Canada advisories and strict regulations.

Loyalist photojournalism student Jeff Peters, 21, of Kingston, was given a pack of U Smoke as a gift with an incentive to quit smoking. Peters has been smoking for six years.

"They taste like raisins and when you drag, they burn and feel just like a real cigarette."

"I just don't have the willpower to quit. I guess until I smarten up or get sick with a tumour or something, I will find my motivation, that's the reality of it," said Peters.