



Photo by Rachel Psutka

Ron Sayeau (right) was one of around 100 protesters at the robo-call rally held on Wednesday afternoon at Market Square in Belleville. Hosted by the Prince Edward Hastings Federal Liberal Association, the Rally for our Rights invited concerned citizens to listen to local politicians and voice their concerns about the robo-call scandal currently plaguing Parliament.

Demonstrators rally in Belleville

Local Liberal Association plans Wednesday event to protest robo-calls

By Rachel Psutka

Robo-call protesters rallied Wednesday afternoon in Belleville's Market Square to discuss the issue currently plaguing the federal Conservative party.

"The rally is taking place to protest the voter suppression that has gone on through at least the robo-calls used by the Conservatives in the last federal election," explained Lenore Begley, president of the Prince Edward Hastings Federal Liberal Association.

"What we want is a judicial inquiry to begin, and look at all the things that went wrong, with full consequences attached. This would involve a review of the Elections Canada Act, since the penalties there do not fit the crime."

Carrying placards with pointed slogans such as 'Say no to Third world corrupted elections in Canada' and 'We need a prime minister not a dictator', around

100 protesters showed up in the Belleville public square to listen to several speakers, including members of the Liberals, NDP and Green parties.

"We have different political philosophies, but we know what it means to be Canadian and we know what it means to have our democratic rights to a free and fair election tampered with," said Begley.

Green Party supporter Gary Magwood was asked to speak as a representative of all voters.

"This is a citizens' rally. Regardless of your political stripe, this affects all of us," said Magwood, emphasizing his neutrality.

"Given the recent headlines, there are some pretty serious and far-reaching implications to this story, and I suggest the collective outrage will force the current government into a bunker mentality," said Magwood. "I think if we take a reasonable approach to it and go at them in a way that reflects the democracy, citizens calling for a public or judicial inquiry...is, I think, a very appropriate and measured response to what's going on."

Magwood and Begley both emphasized

the importance of writing letters to political representatives, specifically MP Daryl Kramp, as a way of showing disapproval and contributing to change.

Begley also said it is important to contact Elections Canada if people received any of the robo-calls prior to the last federal election.

"People need to report the calls received," said Begley. "We don't know the full extent of the calls in this riding, but there's an ongoing investigation into disappearing mail since April here. We're not immune."

Michael McMahon, the NDP candidate for Prince Edward – Hastings and runner-up to Kramp in last year's federal election, had some harsh words for the Conservative party.

"If they were innocent, they should really welcome a judicial inquiry to clear their name," said McMahon. "Why are they opposing the inquiry? Why are the Conservatives not here today, demanding that 'Yes, please, judge? Check us out, we're clean.' That's not what's happening."

Among the protesters was Helmut Enns, a self-described 'anything but Con-

servative' voter who brought along his own sign using a canoe paddle as a stick, holding it aloft throughout the rally.

"To me there's a feeling of if the government wants to elected through deceit, through tricks, and through lies, how are we supposed to expect them to govern any way other than through deceit, through tricks and through lies?" Enns asked. "How can we assume they are representing us? I sort of feel like they've lost that. They've lost my trust."

Reached in his Ottawa office on Thursday, Kramp said that the veracity of the claims must be investigated before any conclusions can be drawn.

"Unfortunately I think it is based on a lot of misinformation, erroneous information, unfortunately even some fabrication, and certainly not some accurate information, but that's not up to me to pass judgment on that," Kramp said in a telephone interview. "That's obviously the responsibility of the people that are organizing that to hopefully present the truth. Whether or not that took place, I'm not going to comment."

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Connecting girls goal of march

By Tiffany McEwen

Women and men alike gathered March 8 to march in Belleville to celebrate women's rights and equality on International Women's Day.

As they walked through the downtown streets, they chanted "What's our goal? Connecting girls, inspiring futures," which sparked a wave of supportive honks from passing cars.

International Women's Day began in 1909, a year after women first protested for better wages, shorter hours and the right to vote, and has since been celebrated all over the world.

Citizens of Belleville are doing their part by organizing and participating in several events around the city.

The women's march, which began at 11:30 a.m. at Bridge Street United Church, was the first community event planned for the day.

Organizer Mieke Thorne said she was very pleased with the turnout, calling it "wonderful."

"We want young people. We want people to be aware," said Thorne.

Local secondary school students participated in the march, which more than doubled the attendance originally expected.

After the march a documentary, The Power of Love Versus the Love for Power, was shown. The documentary outlined the struggle of women in Zimbabwe.

Café Sans-Souci on Front Street was also showing support for Women's Day by holding a cocktail reception open to the public from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

"I want to help. It's my way of giving back to charitable organizations," said Sans-Souci owner Greg Sheridan.

Sheridan said that Women's Day covers more now than it has in the past, becoming about more than just violence.

"I think International Women's Day has changed from the movement of the '60s. It's moved or evolved into much more."

During the reception Kristin Crowe, who co-organized Strong Women, Strong Communities, will be skyping in from Mexico, where she has been asked to speak.

Sheridan said the event was designed to build camaraderie and encouraged both women and men to attend.

More than 100 people are expected to attend.

Give electronics a new use

By Kristen Haveman

Your old run-down electronics could not only find a new use but could also help a child with cancer this Saturday in the Zellers parking lot in Belleville.

As part of their class assignments, Loyalist post-grad PR students have to put together a fundraiser in the community. This year they have teamed with Quinte Waste Solutions and Ontario Electronic Stewardship to have a free electronic waste drop off.

Amanda Oliver, a student in the post-grad PR program said that all funds this year would go to Camp Trillium. She said they are excited to be able to help the community and to raise funds for a cause that is so wide reaching.

Camp Trillium offers support and place for recreational activities for children affected by cancer and their families. Oliver said they hope to raise enough to help send a child in need to the camp.

"Everyone has some relation to cancer, whether it's a child, a grandparent or family member, almost everyone in the community has been touched by cancer," said Oliver.

She also said that it is important that old electronics are disposed of properly as the plastics and metals can be melted down and reused.

The website for the Ontario Electronic Stewardship says that E-waste is not garbage. It not only contains valuable materials like base and precious metals, but also plastics and glass that can be safely recycled to manufacture new products.

The site further explains that proper disposal of electronics keeps substances like lead, cadmium, beryllium, mercury and brominated flame retardants out of landfills.

The drop off is March 10, at the Zellers parking lot from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. They are accepting items like cell phones, printer cartridges, monitors, televisions, radios and speakers.



Photo by Tijana Martin

Bulls take win

The Belleville Bulls take on the Peterborough Petes at the Yardmen Arena on March 7. Curtis Mayer scores a goal helping the Bulls to take the win with a 6-5 game. For story and another photo, see page 7.