

FEB - 7 2018

Mount Hope ON
Feb 2, 2018

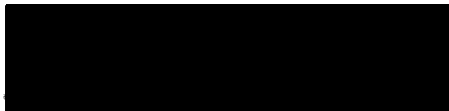
To Members of Hamilton City Council;

In searching various historical papers I came across this news clipping about Glanbrook's last mayor, Glen Etherington. Unfortunately, Glen died on September 15, 2003. His way of looking at his community (which did include the whole of the present City of Hamilton) and the process of its governance should be considered by the present members of council. It has been more than adequately expressed in the two enclosed articles from the Hamilton Spectator from September, 2003.

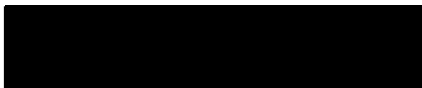
The comments expressed seem timely today in watching some of the long-winded speeches at council meetings in which the same point has been repeated almost verbatim as the talk rotates around the chambers. "I concur with Councillor" seems to be a popular lead-in for a five or more minute ramble about points already made and agreed to.

Perhaps next time, after hopefully reading these articles, a council member may consider the points made about brevity and "to the point." I'm sure staff would appreciate the potential saving of their time.

For your information.



Art French



Etherington was a true country gentleman

Used old-fashioned horse sense as mayor of Glanbrook

Not long after I heard the sad word of Glen Etherington's death, some lyrics from an old Genesis song kept looping through my head.

"I'd rather trust a countryman than a townman, you can judge by his eyes ..."

It's not the first time I've associated those and other lines from that forgotten tune with the former mayor of Glanbrook, who passed away Monday at 78 from bone cancer, poignantly taking his leave in the same farmhouse he was born in.

It may be hopelessly romantic, but during my professional dealings with Etherington, mainly when he represented pre-amalgamation Glanbrook on the old Hamilton-Wentworth regional council, he came to embody for me what I think of as typical rural virtues and values.

He was a farmer with mud on his boots but he was never slick or slippery.

He was laconic, speaking only to the point and never taking the long way around the barn to get there.

He was straightforward and he was honest, but you couldn't pull the wool over his eyes. Mild-mannered and soft-spoken he might be, but he was



Andrew Dreschel
City Columnist

no pushover.

He was astute without being guileful, sharp and savvy without a hint of arrogance, confident without conceit.

His folksy sense of humour was informed by a wisdom that ran deeper than book learning.

Finally, but perhaps foremost, Glen Etherington was a gentleman, no mean feat for a politician, particularly one whose responsibilities to his town brought him into contact with the sharks and jellyfish that shadowed the backrooms of Hamilton City Hall. He was someone to believe in, someone to trust.

I'd be less than frank if I claimed all of these fine qualities were immediately noticeable. In fact, the first few times I saw Etherington at regional council, I wondered what the devil he

was doing there. There was a sleepy, laid-back quality to his weathered, angular face. Folded into his chair, his bony elbows and knees poking out at odd angles from his loose-fitting suit, he looked more equipped for grabbing some shut-eye than nimbly following the debates of the day.

He said little and when he did speak, it was often hard to decipher. Even when his trademark pipe wasn't in his mouth, he seemed to be speaking around the stem of it.

But it soon became clear that he had the wonderful gift of summing up both situations and people in spare words rich with old-fashioned if-you-can't-afford-it-don't-buy-it farm sense.

Again, lines from that old song: "I'd rather trust a man who works with his hands, he looks at you once, you know he understands. Don't need any shield, when you're out in a field."

I remember to this day Etherington's classic comeback to Flamborough Councillor Dave Braden's allegations about under-the-table dealings in high places at regional government. It was four years ago, during municipal adviser David O'Brien's public hearings into the proposed merger of Hamilton with the five sur-

rounding suburban municipalities.

Providing no supporting proof for his accusations, Braden urged O'Brien to get the province to investigate possible and perceived corruption at the region.

I called other suburban politicians for their reactions. While they all roundly condemned Braden's allegations, Etherington mildly emptied the wind from his sails.

"I wondered if it was just one of those situations where somebody decided to make a presentation and they got a little overenthusiastic about it," he said.

Etherington's response had the subtle ring of a psychological truth. But it did more than gently conjure up the hilarious image of an overexcited Braden getting ahead of himself.

It contained a forgiving wink at human nature.

For me, Glen Etherington was that most rare of presences on the local political scene. He was a politician to believe in, someone to trust.

Andrew Dreschel's commentary appears Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Contact him at adreschel@thespec.com or 905-526-3495.

The Spectator's view: A10

Glen Etherington: Last mayor of Glanbrook

He made it a better place

Died Sept 15, 2003

Many people in the old city of Hamilton likely never met Glen Etherington and that's too bad. The highly-respected last mayor of Glanbrook, who died this week of bone cancer, was a man who demonstrated commitment to his community through his actions and hard work with youth, sports, agriculture and politics. He was truly a gentleman.

His constituency was Glanbrook, his people were rural. But his presence on regional council for almost a decade and his knack for getting to the meat of an issue had an immeasurable impact.

Etherington didn't feel the need to spout off on every issue that came to regional council, the unwieldy conglomerate of city and suburban politi-

cians that pre-dated the amalgamated city. But when Etherington chose to speak, he clearly had something of substance to say and his colleagues paid attention.

Etherington was a farmer, the opposite of a city slicker, but he was no hayseed when it came to politics. Quiet and watchful, an intent listener, Etherington saved his words to make them count on issues close to his heart. He picked his spots carefully and his comments, when they came, showed depth, thoughtfulness and, more often than not, a wily streak of humour.

His dedication to his community made it a better place to be. We will miss his shoot-from-the-hip approach and the twinkle in his eye.

— Lee Prokaska