

# Opinion SEAWAY NEWS

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## Champions of Complacency: Claude McIntosh and The Freeholder

I guess we're back at it. I tried to stay away from the "dirty little secret" last week (and did), but I really must respond this week to The Standard-Freeholder's personal attack on me, the Dunlops and anyone else who doesn't greet child sexual abuse and institutional breakdown with a gigantic yawn.

I refer, of course, to the editorial page piece by Associate Editor Claude McIntosh in the July 25 edition of the Freeholder.

It wasn't an overt attack. Frontal assault is not the Freeholder's style. So instead of targeting my arguments, Claude chose to fire pot shots at me from the bushes of irrelevance and innuendo.

Claude, as you know, is, one of my favorite journalists, but he has become somewhat agitated because I have challenged his foggy thinking on the child abuse issue. In my view, he and his newspaper have taken a timid approach to the appalling failure of Cornwall's key institutions (e.g. police and church) to tell the truth and protect our children.

More to the point, the institutional establishment in Cornwall — including the Freeholder — seems more interested in undermining the credibility of the courageous Dunlop family than in going after the real perpetrators of moral turpitude.

Here are the facts. A child sexual abuse allegation was covered up; the church made a \$32,000 hush-money payoff despite church

protocol to the contrary (and no one has been punished); the police hierarchy failed to pursue. But I take it all back. After reading his July



### PERPECTIVE

By Rob Roth SEAWAY NEWS

wearing blinders.

experience. Eight of those years I served as a councillor and deputy reeve for the good people of Charlottentown Township.

In other words, unlike most pencil-pushing pundits, I have put my money where my mouth is.

I also served as a director (and past chairman) of the Raisin Region Conservation Authority for 14 years; and as a director (and past vice-chairman) of the Cornwall Regional Airport Commission.

Perhaps it is because I have walked the walk in public service that my employer feels I can offer a perspective on local matters that goes somewhat deeper than an editorial ink well.

But Claude's assault on my personal credibility is of secondary concern. Frankly, I enjoy the journalistic joust. It is the persistent undermining of the Dunlops that bothers me. These people deserve better than sarcastic comments about not elevating them "to sainthood."

I dare say, they deserve to be elevated to sainthood more than the silent priests whose welfare Claude has now lamented in two, if not three, of his columns.

I'm sorry. Priests who tacitly condone immorality under a robe of silence do not enjoy my confidence.

Nor does journalism that endorses such cowardice.

My sympathy and support remain with the Dunlops and the victims of the abuse and the silence.

25 piece, I'm now convinced he has a flour sack over his head.

First of all, Claude spills much ink telling us what a good Catholic he is. So what. The Dunlops are Catholic, too?

He then engages in the time-tested technique of raising the spectre of the "outside enemy" through caustic comments about where I live. (Raising irrelevant personal matters is the ultimate refuge of a vanquished argument.)

Well, Claude, if the Seaway News had to look out of town for a good journalist, that tells you something about the quality of journalism in Cornwall, doesn't it?

In my defence, I would point out that unlike most journalists, I have from time to time gone to the polls to see if my views are that out of touch with public sentiment. And I'm proud to remind you that I have been elected to public office three times in two different Ontario municipalities for a total of 10 years elected

the issue; the officer who did single-handedly pursue the coverup was castigated by his own police force; a lawyer involved in the payoff pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice; and now dozens of dozens of child sexual abuse criminal charges have been laid.

This scandal calls for nothing short of a full public inquiry.

Instead, the Freeholder's associate editor makes sneering comments about those who want something done.

The zenith of this warped set of priorities was reached in the July 4 Freeholder when Claude called in "military intelligence" to do a handwriting analysis of an anonymous letter he received criticizing his soft stand on coverups. Although Helen Dunlop is never specifically named, the description provided by the ex-military intelligence officer (anonymous, of course) fit her like a glove.

That was simply the last straw for me. So, yes, I accused Claude in my July 19 column of