

The story behind the Maritime potatoes

The good that politicians do sometimes does live after them, but in ways one would never expect.

Consider the case of Arthur Eggleton, Anne Johnston, FoodShare and a small mountain of New Brunswick potatoes.

Last summer, a good-hearted and energetic person named Ina Andre asked Mayor Eggleton to support her in collecting food for the hungry.

Before Andre quite realized what was happening, she had become a member of Eggleton's "campaign council," and Eggleton had discovered hunger as an election issue.

Eggleton moved that City Council spend \$20,000 on an outfit to be called "FoodShare." It would publicize the plight of the hungry.

This infuriated Johnston, who was then an alderman trying to take Eggleton's job away from him.

She was a member of the Toronto board of health, and she had been talking about hunger for at least two years.

Eggleton's move was obscuring



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the real issue, Johnston charged. People are hungry because rents are so high they don't have enough left to buy groceries. Instead of handing out food baskets, Toronto ought to be pressing Ottawa and Queen's Park to give people enough to live with dignity.

Besides, who was Eggleton to steal an issue Johnston practically owned?

She demanded that City Council do even more than Eggleton wanted. The City should double its contributions and put up \$40,000 for FoodShare.

Eggleton won that round and went on to win the election, too.

City Council voted to give FoodShare the \$20,000 Eggleton had asked for and Eggleton handily defeated Johnston on

election day. She returned to private life.

After the political games had ended, FoodShare volunteers settled into a scruffy office across from Massey Hall.

It is nice to be able to report now that, despite its messy beginnings, FoodShare has taken on a life of its own.

FoodShare got a second \$20,000 grant from Metro in January and set up a steering committee bringing old hands from the City of Toronto together with people opening new food-banks in other municipalities.

This helped put an end to the comfortable notion that hunger is a problem only in downtown Toronto and a few "inner city neighborhoods," not in the suburbs.

People who cannot afford to buy groceries are spread across Metro. Last month alone, the North York Harvest Food Bank distributed 3,500 pounds of food.

FoodShare has become a nerve centre for the whole Metro operation. The food that FoodShare collects goes to three major food banks and winds up with 130

agencies who actually give it out to the needy.

The big test of FoodShare's capacity came when it was learned that New Brunswick planned to bury tons of potatoes because there was no market for them.

FoodShare's dynamic co-ordinator, Donna MacDonald, got on the phone and talked transport companies into donating three refrigerated trucks.

The first of the FoodShare trucks is scheduled to arrive tomorrow night, and The Star is helping to arrange for more deliveries.

Besides collecting food, FoodShare is becoming a political advocate, much in the way Johnston wanted.

Its statement of objectives includes lobbying for "income distribution, housing, social assistance and minimum wage rates, day care and work assistance programs. . ."

But FoodShare is, I think, going to be a pressure group with a difference.

At yesterday's steering committee meeting, the chairman, Rev. Stuart Coles, introduced a

spokesman from a group called Citizens For Public Justice.

His name was Gerald Vandezande, and he wants Ottawa to put \$11 billion into a "social development and job creation fund."

Vandezande complained at length about the callousness of politicians, and this angered Loren Freid, director of the North York Harvest Food Bank.

Freid is 25 years old and has spent most of his time since graduating from university as a volunteer helping the needy.

"I don't want to just get into politician bashing," Freid said. "What about unions? I'm tired of (United Auto Workers president) Bob White talking about the needs of the poor when unions have health plans and dental plans and then go on strike for more money."

You don't often hear people involved in social work questioning the role of unions.

Tomorrow, Metro Council's community services committee will receive a report saying that FoodShare is alive and doing well.

Indeed it is.

Lawyers changing their ways

By Rick Haltechuk
Toronto Star

Breaking with a tradition of secrecy, the Law Society of Upper Canada has decided to let the public have a peek into how it goes about disciplining Ontario lawyers who run afoul of the profession's standards of behavior.

The society's disciplining committee hearings, where lawyers charged with professional misconduct are tried, are now presumed to be open to the public, unless someone makes a convincing argument why they should be closed.

In the past, such hearings were held behind closed doors, although in theory they could be opened up if both the lawyer and the society agreed. They hardly ever did.

On the face of it, the society's new policy looks encouraging to those who say the public has a right to know how the profession regulates