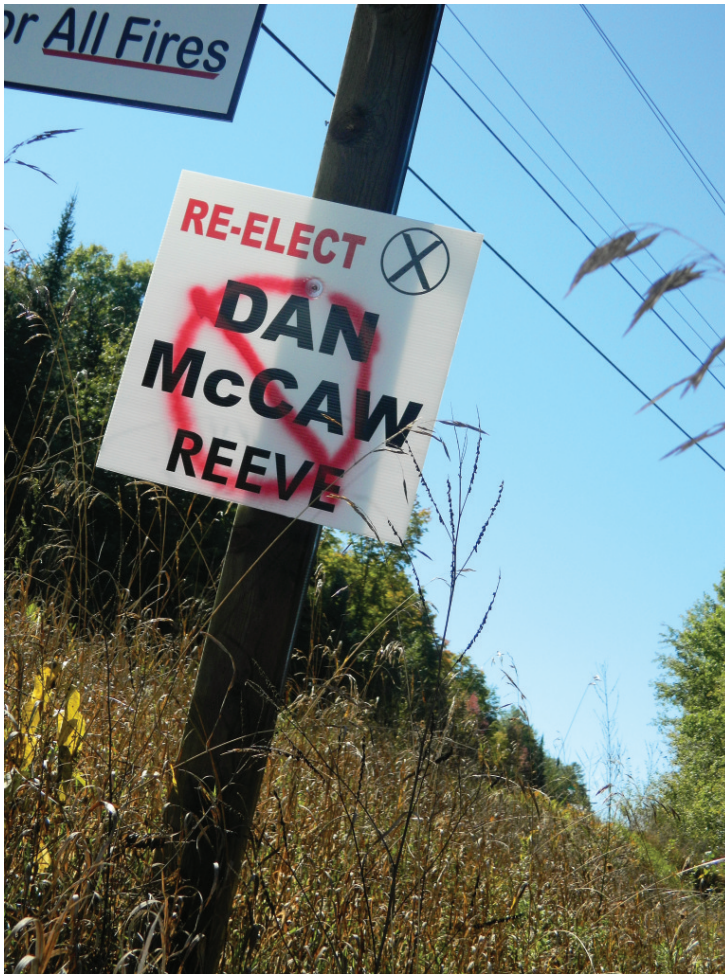


Election signs defaced



Municipal election sign located on Hwy 620 near the east boundary of Wollaston Township which has been spray painted, while others have been torn down or stolen near this same location in the past two weeks. JIM EADIE

By Jim Eadie Special to This Week

With the municipal election contest underway, evidence of theft or damage to election signs has reared its ugly head already in Wollaston Township, as well as other nearby municipalities. In the past two weeks signs posted by current Wollaston deputy reeve and candidate for reeve Graham Blair have been knocked over, damaged, pulled out and thrown into the bushes, or simply disappeared.

?In my opinion, none of this is politically motivated,? said Blair. ?It is just plain vandalism.?

Incumbent Reeve Dan McCaw is having troubles of his own. Someone has spray painted two of his signs on Hwy 620, one at the east Wollaston boundary, and the other at the intersection with The Ridge Road.

?The one with the X on it, I think I will leave it there,? chuckled McCaw. ?I do want people to mark an X on my name in the ballot box.?

McCaw has decided not to report the matter to the police for the time being, ?unless I get a good idea who did it,? he said. ?I can't understand why anyone would want to destroy election signs. They can't vote.?

It is also understood that some other candidates have lost election signs. All of the problems have occurred along Hwy. 620 between the hamlet of Ormsby, and the Wollaston Lake Road in Coe Hill.

McCaw noted that in several other nearby elections, both the Township of Havelock Belmont Methuen and the Municipality of Centre Hastings, there are bigger problems this time around with damage and theft of election signs.

?I guess we will have to do it like our former reeve and warden Albert Vader used to run his election,? said McCaw. ?One sign ... in the back window of his car!?

Anyone identified damaging or removing election signs can be subject to arrest and criminal charges for mischief to property or theft, which can result in substantial fines and/or a jail sentence.

All of the candidates spoken to called for respect for the democratic process and protection of the right of citizens who have chosen to stand for public office.