

# Enjoy your vacation

Councillors, gasp, are just regular folks, and everyone deserves a holiday

So Capital Coun. Clive Doucet has decided to take a couple of weeks of holidays.

Oh, the shock and horror of it all.

Doucet has not only taken some time off himself, but seems he cares enough about his office staff to give them the time off, too.

The news of the office closure is on his website and is also on a phone recording at his office.

Really, the only thing Doucet did wrong was be honest and up front about his holiday plans.

Apparently, your mom was wrong, honesty isn't always the best policy.

Here's the thing: Though they might not always act like it, city councillors are really just regular folks. And everyone deserves a holiday.

Doucet and his office staff could take lessons in evasiveness and paranoia from some of his colleagues on council.

A recent stroll down councillors' row had many councillors' assistants doing their darndest to explain away their councillor's absence — saying everything but the truth.

College Coun. Rick Chiarelli's office staff won the paranoia award, doing verbal somersaults to avoid admitting he was on holidays.

Asked if he was in, their

bodies turned rigid.

"He's not in at the moment," said one staffer.

Oh, so he's at city hall but just not in his office?

"He's not available at the moment," the same reply came back.

That night, Chiarelli e-mailed the *Sun*, explaining he was on holidays in the Grand Can-

yon, but was still in touch — and available to help.

A recent notice on the door of Barrhaven Coun. Jan Harder's office stating the councillor was on holidays was quickly torn down by a former assistant. Just who did he want to hide the news from?

Harder, who used to say she never took holidays, has finally realized taking time off to recharge makes you a better politician.

Back to Doucet. Apparently, not only is Doucet taking holidays, but the downtown councillor apparently might not be around to fulfil his duties as deputy mayor. Councillors take on those duties on a rotating basis, without that, who'd be on hand to cut the ceremonial ribbons?

In the political arena, of course, his fellow councillors — instead of being supportive of each other — often love the opportunity to get back at someone whose polit-



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CITY BEAT



SUN MEDIA FILE PHOTO

Coun. Clive Doucet speaks to the press in April. Councillors, like Doucet, are entitled to vacation time, writes Susan Sherring.

ical views they don't share or who's rubbed them the wrong way.

Doucet, no buddy of the mayor's office, took it from all sides.

The mayor's office, through chief-of-staff Eric Lamoureux, said they had no idea Doucet would be away.

The mayor's office staff una-

ware? Again, shocking!

West Carleton-March Coun. Eli El-Chantiry, who usually takes the high road, complained councillors should be working co-operatively with the mayor's office. (This is clearly a case of do as I say and not as I do. But that's another story.)

"We (councillors) should be

working co-operatively with the mayor's office and the city clerk's office and they should have been notified," said El-Chantiry. "If the mayor is out, the deputy mayor should be here."

Nice.

Just to show you how little attention some pay to what goes on, turns out Doucet had a motion passed at council, designating Gord Hunter as acting deputy mayor, should both Doucet and O'Brien be away at the same time.

Innes Coun. Bob Monette said he doesn't understand the "paranoia" surrounding councillors taking holidays.

"Everyone is entitled to holidays. I'm not judging anyone. Every councillor has their own way. Myself, during the summer, there's always someone at the office, at least one person."

"I have shut it down at Christmas time. It's not drastic, with technology today. It's not the end of the world if you're not sitting there at the office."

"Councillors work long hours. The ones who judge are his constituents. You're basically reporting to your constituents. They're the ones who have the final say," he said.

Clive, enjoy your holiday.

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