

## **Boycott Statement from Save the Geese June 20, 2006**

In a recent meeting of the Save the Geese steering committee, the group decided to launch "Skip Scotia," a boycott of Scotia's Fourth of July celebration in Collins Park, to be held on Friday, June 30. The Save the Geese group asks residents to instead attend Clifton Park's Fourth of July festivities, to be held on Tuesday, July 4, in celebration of Independence Day and Clifton Park's recent adoption of humane non-lethal methods to reduce their Canada goose population, including the use of border collies.

The Save the Geese group had a difficult time making this decision, but felt there was no other option after repeated efforts to communicate with McLaughlin and Village Trustees failed. It was thought that McLaughlin wanted Collins Park clean for its swimmers, little leaguers, residents, and visitors; instead, it seems he simply wants the geese dead. Volunteer efforts to shoo the geese out of Collins Park have reduced the population to numbers below McLaughlin's stated goal. The Save the Geese group has pledged ongoing volunteer support to the village to keep the park clean this year and in future years. Unfortunately, rather than simply taking on the problem, residents and supporters are being forced to take on McLaughlin's ego. It seems he will stop at nothing to kill the geese just to show that he's the "Boss Hogg" of Scotia.

Though many non-Scotia residents visit Collins Park, McLaughlin repeatedly states he will listen only to Scotia residents, those he was elected to represent. In response, the Save the Geese group directed its ongoing petition-signing to Scotia residents, requesting the village adopt a humane non-lethal approach in alignment with Scotia's original Goose Management Plan written by veteran Park Director Jim Marks, a plan that makes no mention of killing the geese, but instead proposes numerous effective non-lethal methods of dissuading the geese from staying in the park. By the group's estimates, in less than four weeks, petitions requesting the killings be stopped were signed by 15% of Scotia's voting population.

When Save the Geese members and Scotia residents attended the Village Board Meeting on June 14, no response was made to the petitions. Instead, supporters were shocked to find that rather than work with Scotia residents, McLaughlin decided to once again play the autocrat and announce that not only would the geese definitely be killed, but their carcasses were already contracted out.

McLaughlin announced that the geese would be analyzed and processed for human consumption via a "hunters helping the hungry" program, paid for by New York State tax dollars. McLaughlin's announcement was not what the residents of Scotia had asked for. Such taxpayer money would be better spent on purchasing less expensive and safer foods for the hungry.

To add insult to injury, at the end of the meeting, after many Scotia residents had respectfully and intelligently spoken out against the ineffectiveness and inhumanity of McLaughlin's kill plan, McLaughlin and Village Trustees were overheard referring to various speakers as "idiots." Such statements emphasize McLaughlin's and the Trustees' disrespect for the people they are supposed to represent, as well as their unwillingness to listen to any opposing voices of Scotia residents. Clearly, McLaughlin is not here to solve the goose problem.

Save the Geese members asked Scotia residents how they felt about boycotting the McLaughlin's Fourth of July celebration. After the treatment they received following the Village Board meeting, many residents and business owners said not only did they support the boycott, they would be happy to donate money to put a billboard up if it would help get the message out.

In stark contrast to this snubbing of Scotia residents by the Scotia Village Board, the Clifton Park Town Board showed they care a great deal about their residents, opting to reduce their Canada goose population by using humane non-lethal methods their voters had requested.

In celebrating Independence Day, we ask all humane and patriotic Scotia residents to *not* attend McLaughlin's moneymaker, but instead show their support for what it was our forefathers fought for—and the Town of Clifton Park has abided by—taxation *with* representation.

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As residents of Scotia and surrounding communities, the Save the Geese group advocates for the use of humane non-lethal methods in reducing the Canada goose population in Collins Park. Readers are encouraged to visit Save the Geese's Web site (<http://savethegeese.webhop.net>) for more information and ways in which they can help. Scotia residents are urged to sign an online petition to stop the killings (please visit <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/406106393>).

