

Thank you Glen

Good afternoon every one, when I was first approached to take on the Chair of our chamber I had second thoughts, actually I was waiting to hear from Barak Obama - If he wanted me, to join him as his running mate. But I have not heard from him yet.

It's with great honor that I accept the role of your Chair for the up coming year.

I first joined the Chamber in 1997 after a customer of mine told me I should join the Chamber of Commerce as it would help me with my business and connect me with the business community.

Well he was right about that and that brings me to my message today.

Since day one I got involved with the Chamber. I have served on a number of committees and made an effort to attend almost every event. I treat our events as a business appointment and if you look at it that way you will attend more meetings and come away with information you can use.

I meet many people who join, and hang the certificate up on their wall and that's it. To get anything out of an organization, you have to get involved and attend meetings at least once a month.

When we surveyed our members a few years ago networking was their number one reason for joining the chamber. Unfortunately many people expect to make a sale the next day after meeting a new person; it does not work that way. Networking is a lot like dating, networking is about building relationships, not about handing out business cards. If you make a connection with some one at one of our events have a coffee with them to find out if you can help them and vice versa. Remember people do business with people they know and trust, and it takes time.

Many people in this room have benefited from networking - Jack Eigenmacht, Glenn Lott, Rod Johnson and many more. Make the effort to attend our events and it will pay off in the long run.

Most of you may not know, but our CEO is a star amongst Chamber CEOs across the country. When I attended the Canadian Chamber of Commerce Conference back in Sept and I told people I was from Richmond Hill they said, "Oh you have Leslie Walker", and had nothing but praise for her. So I would like to thank Leslie for all the achievements and hard work you have done for our chamber.

As the Town of Richmond Hill continues to grow and prosper I hope the same for our Chamber in the year to come. I look forward to working with the Board of Directors and all of our Members to achieve our goals in the coming year.

One of my personal goals as I take on the Chair will be to get more people involved in our Chamber and work towards our Mission: to foster a business environment that enhances the success of our members and improves the quality of life in Richmond Hill.

Thank you

Earl Sky, Chair of the Board 2008-2009