

# POINTS OF VIEW

## After all these years, it still feels special

Even though I grew up on Martin Road deep in the heart of Hamilton's East End, ever since my return to this city people have wanted to show me "the real Hamilton."

They have done it with a mixture of pride, a sense of style and a genuine love for a city that they know is greatly misunderstood.

In fact, more than one friend has cautioned me not to write about it or tell too many people. "We don't want all those people from Toronto finding out and moving here," they say, only half in jest.

As I finish up my first year as editor-in-chief of The Hamilton Spectator, I wanted to share an eclectic list of Hamilton happenings and highlights from 2007.

Here goes:

■ **The Bonanza Bakery.** A small shop tucked into a residential area on Murray Street in Hamilton's North End. Park on the street and then join the line at lunch for delicious submarine sandwiches or the special chicken or



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veal sandwich complete with onions and all the fixings. And the price cannot be beat. (Sorry for telling the world, Steve Buisit, but as every good investigative reporter knows, everything ends up in our copy.)

■ **The Stairs of Hamilton.** When I got here, my colleague and old friend Paul Wilson printed off a map from the library because I was wandering around at night looking for the four sets of stairs. Though I have a vague childhood memory of climbing the stairs, I have now made this a regular habit since my return. There is

nothing like reaching the top to see an absolutely beautiful view of the city while getting some great exercise at the same time. I still think Chedoke is hard to find, Dundurn and James are favourites and the Wentworth stairs a special treat only for the hearty of mind and soul.

■ **The Hamilton Spectator newsroom.** I like it best in the early morning before anyone else gets to work. The size of a football field, messy desks, ringing phones, TV screens and the sound of the police radio. I fell in love with it the first time I walked into this building in 1980. After all these years, it still feels special.

■ **A hot summer day in June** on the campus of McMaster University watching the Hamilton Tiger-Cats practise before the first game of the season. There were a couple of hundred people there on a brilliantly sunny day when Sports Editor Rick Hughes and I went over to see the team before the first cuts were made,

when the whole season was ahead of us and hope was in the air.

■ **A meeting with Dr. Bill Evans,** president of the Juravinski Cancer Centre in his crowded office on Hamilton Mountain. As hard as it was to walk into the building, spending an hour with Evans makes you remember how precious life is, how lucky we are in Hamilton to have such world-class health-care facilities and what special work so many people do when it comes to working with an illness like cancer.

■ **Watching McMaster University vs. The University of Western Ontario Mustangs,** high above Ivor Wynne Stadium on a crisp fall Saturday with the ubiquitous Ron Foxcroft, and a team of guys evenly split between cheering for Mac and Western, me stuck right in the middle.

■ **Tuesday nights at West Town.** Come listen to local musicians like Hamilton's own Kim Koren play original music. The talent of local Hamilton musicians is outstanding

even if it makes Wednesday mornings a little harder to take sometimes.

■ **Baranga's on the Beach.** Hamiltonians are in love with their waterfront and one of the nicest surprises is to see how much they have reclaimed it, whether it was during a summer boat tour of the Harbour, or a late night summer's walk past Williams Coffee Pub.

■ **David Braley's transformational gift of \$50 million to McMaster University.** It is one of a string of gifts this year that is part of a \$400-million campaign that will only make Hamilton better.

There are so many more memories, people and places to write about.

Tell me a few of your favourite Hamilton spots or 2007 moments.

**May the spirit of the season be with you and all you love.**

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# Maternal health must top agendas

## About 525,000 mothers die annually in childbirth. Some just bleed to death

BY THOMAS FROESE

KAMPALA, UGANDA ♦ A pregnant woman here in Uganda's capital was recently beheaded by her husband. Maurine Ampire, 38, was a mother getting close to delivering number six.

It's one picture of life here, and a comparable image to the lack of voice that pregnant women have worldwide. No voice. No choice. Just death, and often violently.

Some 525,000 mothers now die annually in childbirth, 99 per cent in the developing world. That's 1,450 a day; or one every minute. One in four simply bleeds to death. Millions of children then also perish.

Some of these moms are just girls with underdeveloped bodies, married young, or defiled. Others are forced to have so many children without child-spacing that they're just digging their own graves.

Uganda is among 13 countries that share 70 per cent of all maternal deaths worldwide. In Africa, others are Tanzania, Kenya, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Angola.

Outside, add Pakistan, Indonesia, China, India, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

Incredibly, these deaths are virtually all preventable. But they continue due to lack of skilled birth attendants and emergency care at delivery, often fuelled by cultural myths and patriarchal attitudes.

It's among the planet's biggest stories. But you likely haven't heard much about it; haven't heard that from 1980 to 2000 more women — about 12 million — died in childbirth than of AIDS; haven't heard that other crises, like say, in Darfur, pale in comparison.

In an information-soaked era, why not?

There's plenty of talk about human rights and mutual respect and gender equity these days. Much came from



Dr. Jean Chamberlain Froese

world leaders at the recent Commonwealth Summit in Kampala, just days before Maureen's head was taken off. But we remain miles from even old maternal death targets, like the Safe Motherhood Initiative of 1987 to cut deaths by half by 2000.

While other global health indicators improve, the world's poorest mothers just keep dying quietly. Hollywood icons or rock stars don't campaign for them. Cheering for motherhood isn't popular among Western feminists either, so they're silent. So are religious groups. And governments. It's all quite deafening.

I was just reminded of this after photographing Sarah Brown, wife of British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, during the Commonwealth Summit. In a breath of fresh air, she went beyond the rhetoric and social luncheons and visited Mulago Hospital, Uganda's main birthing centre. Then her personal aide forbade me from releasing the ensuing photos, strangely fearing Brown's image would somehow be tarnished in the UK.

Regardless, I released one for worldwide distribution through



PHOTOS BY THOMAS FROESE, SPECIAL TO THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

**With a Ugandan mother in the background, a nurse shows a look of concern in the maternity ward at Mulago Hospital in Kampala, Uganda. In Uganda, 6,000 mothers die every year in childbirth, among the world's highest rates.**

Reuters news, a little wiser of the silly challenges that confuse the real issues. Here's another example.

Many Hamiltonians know the work of my wife, Dr. Jean Chamberlain Froese, a McMaster University obstetrician who is the founding executive director of Save the Mothers, a groundbreaking program based in Uganda. In just two years, it's seeing results because it trains a range of societal leaders. Four Ugandan MPs are among its current class of 55.

As a result, maternal health is now on Uganda's national budget for the first time. One of the four MPs, Sylvia Ssinabulya, visited Canadian parliamentarians in Ottawa this summer. Too bad five requests for a Canadian

official to visit this unique program, just 45 minutes from the Commonwealth Summit venue, failed. For its two invitations, the Prime Minister's office didn't even bother with a courtesy reply.

By the way, Canada spends about \$4 billion in annual foreign aid to some 161 countries, including 46 in Africa, in tiny allotments that, according to a Senate report, give no results anywhere. Ottawa is rightly streamlining the system. One wonders, though, if it will ever learn to pinpoint aid to core issues, like maternal care, which, when stable, secures a country's entire health system.

Few Westerners would say it's

acceptable that so many African women are dying on dirt floors in mud huts, alone, in bloody agony, any more than it was acceptable for African slaves to be chained to ships and carried over the Atlantic. But, like during abolition, fundamental thinking needs to change. The broader public needs an awakening. And since dying mothers can't, others need to speak for them.

As 2008 marks the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, now is a good time.

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# Bryant motivated to succeed in ministry

When Michael Bryant was shifted in the October cabinet shuffle from attorney general to minister of aboriginal affairs, it was widely regarded as a demotion.

After all, attorney general is a high-prestige position, whereas aboriginal affairs is a new ministry with a small staff, responsibilities that overlap with Ottawa, and a bunch of intractable problems on its agenda.

But rather than sulk, Bryant has apparently decided to be the best damned minister for aboriginal affairs that Ontario has ever had (as well as the first).

"I'm going to make the most of it," Bryant promised right after his appointment.

This week, Bryant started to deliver on that promise with a groundbreaking deal on one of those intractable problems: Ipperwash Provincial Park.

As most readers will know, the park — which the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point say belongs to them — has been closed for 12 years, or ever since a native protester, Dudley George, was shot and killed at the site by the OPP.

Bryant announced yesterday that the government has decided to turn



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the park over to the Chippewas — as Justice Sidney Linden recommended in his report on the Ipperwash affair earlier this year.

But before the formal handover of the park, a "co-management" team made up of both Chippewas and non-natives from the surrounding community will look after the site and develop a plan for its future use. It may, indeed, remain as a park, albeit on First Nations, not provincial, land.

Bryant also announced formation of a "priorities and action committee" made up of government and First Nations representatives, to implement the full range of recommendations in Linden's Ipperwash report. "We're all in the same canoe," said Bryant.

To underscore this point, Bryant was joined on the stage at yesterday's announcement by Tom Bressette, chief of the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point, and Sam George, brother of Dudley.

"We really commend the government on moving forward on this agenda in an aggressive manner," said Bressette, adding that he wants to maintain "a peaceful, harmonious relationship" with his non-native neighbours.

Bryant was reluctant to say so yesterday, but clearly the Ipperwash deal he has put together can serve as a model for settlements of other disputes, such as Caledonia.

Of course, Bryant also needs the federal government on board — at Caledonia and elsewhere. Constitutionally, the aboriginal peoples of Canada are first and foremost a federal responsibility.

And while Ottawa has at times seemed reluctant to acknowledge this responsibility — at least in Ontario — there are recent signs of a change in the federal stance.

Last week, for example, Ottawa made a significant offer of \$26 million

to the Six Nations Confederacy to help settle a 170-year old land-claim dispute that is part of the broader Caledonia controversy.

And in Ipperwash the federal government is actively negotiating the return of an old military base on land that was "borrowed" from the Chippewas during the Second World War.

Bryant also expressed hope yesterday that federal representatives would join the "priorities and action com-

mittee" that he is setting up to implement the Linden report. He said his initial talks with his federal counterpart, Chuck Strahl, have been "very positive and productive."

Still, it is an uphill climb for Bryant, who must overcome centuries of ill will to achieve his aims.

One reason for optimism is that he is clearly motivated to succeed.

Ian Urquhart writes on provincial affairs.

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