

## LETTERS

## Ford is laughing at us

Many have been crying out in anger, in total disbelief, and with solid opposition to the way in which the Doug Ford government has thrown integrity away. Ford is laughing at us. The press realizes that there is wrong here. The political parties recognize there is wrong here. Indigenous communities recognize there is wrong here. Citizens across the province recognize there is wrong here. In fact, adding up all who see the wrong, they number in the majority. There is a solution. Anger with Ford accomplishes little. He is solution. The solution lies with those who do not support him. Find out who your MPP is. If that person is a PC, ask of them, "did you support this behaviour by your government?" Answer, yes. They do, as the legislation was passed by their majority in the house, no doubt about that. Here is how it is stopped.

All those who oppose, unite as a single political entity with a strong leader in the next election. Don't vote Green, NDP, Liberal or any others. Pick one credible candidate in each riding, under the new banner "Ford must be stopped." Develop plans to solve housing, pollution, health care and opposition to Greenbelt use. In most ridings, this combined, undivided support will soundly defeat the Conservatives.

David LaCombe, Burlington

## Give us our Greenbelt back

Premier Ford is confident there has been no criminal activity on his watch; therefore he has no fear of being investigated by the RCMP over the Greenbelt dealings.

Criminal activity has already taken place when for one, a premier before the election assures the public of not going into the Greenbelt and then does. The public, when voting for Ford, were lied to, causing their vote to be lost.

Not rightfully consulting with First Nations is yet another criminal act. So truly grateful to First Nations chiefs who will be calling for the take-back of all Greenbelt lands. They are a people who know the connection and importance of their Mother Earth, while the premier appears always ignorant. They also want the resignation of Housing Minister Steve Clark. Totally agree.

Step down and away premier, but before leaving, give us our Greenbelt back.

Faye Sathans, Wainfleet

## Will CN block projects?

With the proposed Strachan Street HATS project mere metres away from the stalled Jamesville redevelopment, one wonders if CN is going to block both projects.

David Collier, Hamilton

## Encampments at city hall

I think that the forecourt of city hall would be a good choice for unhoused people to set up temporary residence. That way their sad situation would be at the forefront of politicians' minds. It might motivate them to actually attempt to find solutions more quickly. Why should anyone else's neighbourhood be more appropriate? Out of sight, out of mind perhaps?

Pat Ward, Hamilton

## Ford the bulldozer

If 81 per cent of Ontarians believe transitioning to 100 per cent clean electricity is the right thing to do, yet Ford is bulldozing ahead with many new natural gas plants, the question is who is right and who is wrong. Who is representing the folks of Ontario?

Another question: Who is supplying these generators and who is getting the five-year contracts? Could this be another Greenbelt scam?

Jane Wilkinson, Dunnville

## One step forward ...

Although I was encouraged by the large turnout at Hamilton's first Pride celebration since 2019, I was disturbed by a homophobic slur recently sprayed onto the door of a Hamilton hostess.

This is particularly concerning due to the rise in hate and hate crimes against the LGBTQ+ community. Recent efforts to address the discrimination, here in Hamilton, across Canada, and worldwide, have been unsuccessful. As a result, rates of homelessness and suicide among this group remain alarmingly high. It is our collective responsibility to send a message of zero tolerance of all forms of racism and hate. It is only by prompt police response to such incidents and charging the perpetrators appropriately that we can ensure that all citizens feel safe and welcome.

Andrea Rado, Hamilton

## An icon is coming

A Canadian musical icon is coming Oct. 16. The humble but great 78-year-old Bruce Cockburn is performing at FirstOntario Concert Hall. Having seen him multiple times, I can attest that this incredible musician and songwriter always puts on an amazing show. He is selling out elsewhere, but I noticed ticket sales are slow in Hamilton. We lost several Canadian musical icons this year, including Gordon Lightfoot and Robbie Robertson. Don't miss this chance to support another incredible Canadian musician before it is too late!

Casey Duffy, Hamilton

## Overcoming obstacles on the road to a joyful Pride

ADELE BARRETT

Last weekend, our Pride festival was held on a beautiful cloud-free day at Pier 4 in Hamilton, overlooking the water. This is a love story.

The beaming but tired woman behind sunglasses is my daughter, Jennifer Barrett, mom to three incredible kids, wife, psychologist, and new board member of Pride Hamilton.

Jen volunteered to make the family area of the festival the best she could, and make it she did! Given all of the grief the LGBTQ+ plus community endures and the hate that keeps being reported everywhere, and how awful the news is, Jen managed to create a loving and fun little spot of paradise for all stripes of families. She also brought together an incredibly diverse group of volunteers. And she had to overcome a disaster to make it happen...

On Pride festival morning, Jen and her husband Ben, a local family physician, jumped in to their packed-to-the-roof family van to discover that eight to 10 bins stuffed with youth clothing, collected and curated and organized over many months, had been stolen. Someone broke into the van overnight and made away with the precious haul, meant to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ folks who might be struggling for support, or just needed a cool piece of clothing, for free! More about this disaster later.

Fortunately safe in the house, Jen had also put together many bins of craft supplies, beads, stickers, lollipops, cookies (from Cake & Loaf), paints, rocks, toys, hula hoops, balls, you name it, to facilitate a joyful place for children and their families to hang out.

She also hosted story time with Chimera. Blankets from her own home were placed down for tiny dèrrières. Someone even donated adorably dressed, stuffed Pride bears to give away.

Back to the disaster. Jennifer put out a call to her cousin Erin, a consummate organizer and kid advocate. Erin hit up her family, again, and drove from Stoney Creek to Burlington, by 8 a.m. festival morning, and showed up with bags and bags of fresh donations.

Posts on Kirkendall Hub, and the Pride Festival Committee page on Facebook, as well, pleading for help, resulted in these generous, giving, loving communities assembling more bags of attire, some delivered



ADELE BARRETT PHOTOS

Hard-working volunteers put together this area for kids and families at Pride last weekend.

in person to the family booth. Cousin Erin cheerfully dealt with the constant influx of clothing, folding and arranging it, while encouraging festival goers to "take a shirt, fill a bag, please!" for the entire day.

Volunteers the day of, of which I was one, included Cousin Erin, Erin (yupp, two of 'em, and boy, they are the hardest working, most devoted volunteers I have seen) Rhona, George, Jason, Michael, Jack, Zara, and Ben.

It was an eventful day. One I will never forget. My grandson, Michael, performed, singing some of his original heartfelt songs. There were many other wonderful performances, including talented, stunning drag queens. There were fun food trucks, impressive numbers of giveaway treats and gifts by local businesses and local vendors.

Also a huge part of the festival's success were the patrons. Joyous, happy, loving, supportive, engaged folks and families of every description.

It was impossible not to feel the positive and uplifting energy of the crowd.

I am so happy for the Pride board members and volunteers who obviously worked so hard to make the day perfect. The list of great things



Jennifer Barrett at the festival.

done to make the day a success is endless, but includes: surrounding the entire area with protective fencing, security personnel and police attendance, food trucks, vendors, sponsors, entertainment, fantastic stage and sound, washrooms, hand wash and fresh water stations.

Everyone was respectful. I will repeat that, because I feel this is often missing today in our interactions. Respect. And, oh, Pride.

ADELE BARRETT IS A HAMILTON GRANDMOTHER, AS SHE PUTS IT, IN SERVICE TO HER GRANDKIDS.

## Our work should also feed our soul



THOMAS FROESE  
OPINION

It was in the park at a picnic table, and the talk was about food and the Greater Toronto Area's Metro grocers strike. This and record profits for Canada's largest grocers juxtaposed against thinning pay of staff who help you and me with our daily bread and everything else.

The man made a comment about fair pay and good working conditions at one competing grocer. The woman nodded. And I, just a passerby, was reminded about today's growing disparities, even as greed has been around since the dawn of commerce.

In its purest sensibilities, the labour movement is a counterbalance to corporate and systemic greed. It's good to think about it now, Labour Day weekend, while considering our work lives. It's also helpful to note that much of the gamesmanship around money and power in the workplace, like in broader life, revolves around the power of words.

Consider how unions were historically attacked. There was the old, brass-knuckle approach: "Don't organize or we'll kill you!" Later, it became more effective to attack workers by simply infiltrating

workplaces with employee plants to spread rumours and lies. Target certain people. Keep the place divided, off-balance, fearful.

We all know how words can kill. Look at your phone and what can be the devil of social blather. We know how families, communities or entire nations can be divided, if not destroyed, by deceptive rhetoric.

On the other hand, words have another power, a creative force that's more unshakable, more aligned with the axiom "In the beginning was the Word." Why?

It's a question I ask my creative writing students. So, why "the Word"? The "Logos," as the Greeks called it. Why not, "the iPhone?" Why not, "In the beginning was the microchip?" Or AI? Or something else?

Or, what if the story of life began with more than "the Word" or "a word," but an entire song, one sung with a voice so commanding galaxies are not only exploded into being, but are still moving and expanding through time and space in ways we're still discovering? And what does this say about work: about divine work, our own work or about a job well-done?

A reader recently told me my own work falls horribly short. She thought I was a mindless knucklehead for recently writing in this space, and with good fun, about our shabby bare feet. I ignored stories

of real, struggling people.

So choose better. Be more sensitive, more responsible. Life for many people is no laughing matter.

This is what she told me. And she's not wrong. More people are struggling. It's disturbing. Travel to developing nations and see even wider disparities.

Even so, anyone needs variety in their diet. All work and no play makes Jack (and the newspaper), a dull boy. Also, I wonder if by looking at what's lovely, like our feet, we better appreciate the great reversal, how, in time, the last will be first, the least-honoured will be the most-honoured, the world's hungriest, somehow, will be the most-filled and satiated.

So, about labour, maybe at its best, not its most radicalized, the labour movement is a forerunner of this mysterious reversal, an earthly step toward a future eternal satisfaction. And isn't this what any of us want in our work lives, and in our lives in general? To be deeply satisfied while receiving our daily bread?

"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's great hunger meet," is how writer Frederick Buechner put it. Our work is meant to have purpose for the broader community, and give personal satisfaction or both.

This is the nub of it. Good work has a certain spirit to it. A certain nourishment. For you, or me, or any other starving beggar.

The body and mind and spirit, after all, are intricately connected, completely inseparable. They're meant to work together. For Labour Day it's helpful to consider this part of our humanity also.

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