

LETTERS

Traffic chaos coming

Starting this weekend, hundreds, if not thousands of people will be flocking to Hamilton for the RBC Canadian Open golf tournament hosted by the Hamilton Golf and Country Club.

It's a great way to showcase the city and surrounding area — one would think, anyway.

Many out of town spectators, volunteers, PGA golfers and their teams, TV crews and a host of others will all be attempting to make their way to the golf course for a variety of reasons.

As we all know, the traffic in normal circumstances coming off the 403 from the east and the west can be challenging to say the least. Garner Road is closed to eastbound traffic. Golf Links Road will be closed as it runs along the Hamilton G&CC. Other streets in and around Ancaster will also be closed because of the tournament, which is understandable.

The city, in its infinite wisdom, has also decided to close the Linc in both directions from Friday through Monday to conduct "regular maintenance." To suggest traffic will be ugly is a huge understatement. Traffic will be chaotic from Ancaster right across the Mountain. Even some downtown streets will feel the impact of this bush-league decision.

Whatever would possess our elected officials and senior staff at city hall to make such a poor decision is beyond me.

Those restaurants and businesses who may have been anticipating an increase in business this weekend and Monday, well, you may very well be disappointed because people won't be able to get to your businesses.

Paul LaCourse, Hamilton

Local volunteer group folds

Lady Hamilton Club is no more. We have had to call it quits. Lack of support from Tourism Hamilton is the biggest culprit. All the ladies who volunteered for so many years are sad.

As one lady put it: "I have met many wonderful ladies who I consider friends. They are truly proud of our city. Many love to travel, and know the benefits of volunteering. This is a loss for Tourism Hamilton."

Ann Selemba, Hamilton

Better fireworks control needed

Re: Time to retire fireworks (May 22)

Really, fireworks have been around for hundreds of years. They do make noise and can be a nuisance and safety hazard if not handled properly. The problem with fireworks is not the actual fireworks, but those who use them.

Common sense and respect for our neighbours have gone straight out the window. We live in a "me society" with most of us concerned only with ourselves. This must change. We must learn to respect laws and work together for a better society for all of us. Ban fireworks? No. Provide better control of them? Yes. After all, cars can be noisy, dangerous and driven by one who is impaired on alcohol or drugs. Cars have not been banned, although, perhaps we need better control on alcohol and those drugs that everyone seems to be smoking these days and smelling up some neighbourhoods!

Mike LoSchiavo, Stoney Creek

Bringing people together

I'm sick and tired of all the gloomies regarding fireworks. They are exciting and bring families, neighbours and friends together. Stand up for your rights to enjoy life with the few freedoms left. If you don't like them, just go away.

Gord Baker, Carlisle

More taxes not the answer

Re: Hamilton exploring tobacco, booze, parking, land-transfer taxes (May 16)

With the recent talk about tax increases on alcohol, cigarettes and any other things the city council dreams up, let's take a look at recent history and city taxes. Companies that have closed down, gone bankrupt or left the city because it was not feasible to do business in this city: International Harvester, Canadian Cannery, Westinghouse, Siemens, Proctor and Gamble, Firestone, Beech-Nut, Studabaker, Camco, Rheem, etc. Did they not like Hamilton? Or was it the tax system that keeps going up from bad management?

Bruce Bochek, Stoney Creek

Put money into road repairs

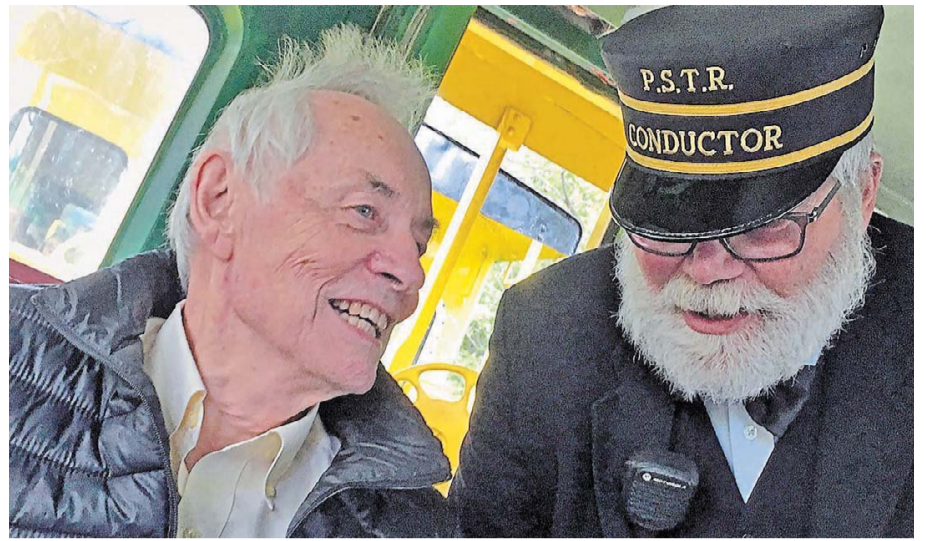
The city should stop the LRT project. It's unnecessary and serves only a minority of our citizens. The money would be better spent on our horrible roads which are getting worse and worse as the city leaves them unrepaired. I don't understand how city council can continue to ignore the issue. Soon, our roads will be so bad, we will not be able to drive on them. This council seems focused on frivolous, unnecessary spending and ignores issues that need attention now.

Diana MacKenzie, Hamilton



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THOMAS FROESE PHOTO

Gerry Chamberlain, left, enjoys a moment on the Port Stanley Terminal Rail line when aboard in 2017, not far from his birthplace in Shedden, Ont. "Our lives," writes Thomas Froese, "get edited to precious few images. A baby picture. A school portrait. A wedding. A man on a train."

A generous heart for the right things



THOMAS FROESE OPINION

"We shake with joy. We shake with grief. What a time they have, these two housed as they are in the same body." — Mary Oliver, poet

It's some years ago and my father-in-law, Gerry, is on a train somewhere between St. Thomas and Port Stanley, a Saturday touristy ride for nostalgia as much as anything.

There's a conductor and they laugh and I take a photo. It's really something, in hindsight, considering that train rides can reflect how life brings each of us ever-changing people and places. This, before our lives, any one of them, get edited to precious few images. A baby picture. A school portrait. A wedding. A man on a train.

More recently, whenever leaving Gerry's bedside, I'd squeeze his hand and say, "Bye for now." I never knew if I, or anyone, would see him again this side of eternity. He'd sometimes open his eyes, like a child looking at the world for the first time. Then they'd close again, as if seeing mysteries otherwise hidden.

"Bye for now," I'd say. Then the next day, "Bye for now." And, surprisingly, so on until all his loved

ones had ample opportunity.

This is my bride's father, Gerry Chamberlain, who died on Mother's Day, the day when, a year earlier, he last saw Margaret, his wife of 62 years. She died in a hospice called "Margaret's Place."

The previous spring my own father died.

So in three springs my family has lost three exemplars, like three seeds fallen to the ground to die and break open before — even as we observe in this world — becoming something new.

I met my father-in-law 24 years ago. His daughter, working overseas, suggested weekly dinners back home in London so her parents and I could better know each other, and organize the wedding.

They were retired. I was a journalist in St. Thomas-Elgin. That's where Gerry was born in 1937, in a farmhouse near Shedden. Challenges came early. He had double talipes equinovarus, or clubbed feet (before later becoming a formidable high school linebacker). Also, in that farmhouse, when Gerry was 16, his father died of a heart attack.

Years later, with two children and an Ontario Agriculture College degree, Gerry and Margaret returned to the Shedden area. Child No. 3, Jean, my bride, was born in St. Thomas. Then came family life in Toronto where, now with an MBA, Gerry became a long-serving Scotiabank vice-president for agricul-

ture and Aboriginal banking.

His was a remarkable journey from farm boy to Toronto banker. This is my father-in-law, a man who adapted to what life dished him, and found opportunities to learn. Years later I knew him as a man with a generous heart for the right things: growing spiritually, supporting less-privileged people overseas and loving his grandkids.

Gerry and Marg visited my own young family while we were in Yemen, this when the Arab nation wasn't really everyone's top tourist destination. And, later, Uganda, several times.

One day over lunch Gerry told me, "You know, Thom. Our bodies aren't made to last forever." It was dementia. Then the long goodbye.

The day of that train ride, by the way, he took our kids to the farmhouse of his birth. Another day he gifted his 11 grandkids with a book on the family's history. It starts, "My story begins in the Great Depression." I find the family chronicles especially priceless.

And what are his end-of-journey, back-page parting words? "Tell the truth (even when it's hard). Love, respect and be faithful to your spouse (even when you don't feel like it). Forgive others and forgive yourself. Stay out of debt. Keep fit. Love, honour and obey the Lord your God."

Then, "I'm sure many of you (hopefully all of you) will leave behind great life stories for your descendants." And finally, "This is Grandpa, signing off. Love to all."

Gosh. I mean, is anything more needed? Thank you, Dad. Bye. For now.

THOMAS FROESE WRITES ABOUT NEWS, TRAVEL AND LIFE. FIND HIM AT THOMASFROESE.COM.

THE FUTURE WE CHOOSE

The massive climate failure of our federal political parties

GRANT LINNEY

Climate change is by far the greatest existential threat ever faced by humankind.

The housing crisis, homelessness and poverty are indeed real problems (more signs of uncontrolled corporate greed), but The Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change feels they pale in comparison to climate change's overwhelming and immediate threat to a livable global future.

Britain's Guardian newspaper recently reported that several hundred climate scientists from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) now expect at least a 2.5 C average surface temperature increase in a world where there is widespread agreement that this threshold should not exceed 1.5 C. For the past four years, it has averaged 1.2 C. For 2023 alone, this rose to 1.4 C.

The Guardian goes on to note these scientists feel hopeless, infuriated and scared. They believe government inaction will inevitably lead to more frequent, intense and longer lasting heatwaves, droughts, wildfires, floods and storms within this decade. This will in turn lead to increased famine, conflict and mass migration.

In Canada, the blame must be

placed squarely on the shoulders of all three major federal political parties.

■ The Liberals declared a national climate emergency on June 17, 2019. The very next day, they again approved the Trans Mountain pipeline. Their nine years in power have been marked by a continuing series of contradictory steps, punctuated by ongoing inaction. Their recent raising of the capital gains tax for high-income Canadians is a step in the right direction, but it can hardly be titled "fairness for every generation" when our children's future is imperiled by global climate change.

■ The Conservatives' proposed solution to climate change is to "axe the (carbon) tax," even though the Bank of Canada notes that, with its rebates, this tax is responsible for only a 0.2 per cent increase in inflation, and even though the vast majority of economists defend this step as the single most effective way to reduce fossil fuel emissions.

■ The New Democratic Party has squandered its leverage of the minority Liberals with its unilateral focus on funding for a dental care plan. Excuse me, but what's the point of such a plan if our planet is going to hell in a handbasket? And shame on the NDP for not stoutly defending the Canada Carbon Rebate. There's far too much political posturing going on at the expense

of ensuring a livable future.

This is a massive wake-up call for our federal political parties. You must make fighting climate change your No. 1 priority, and you must assume a proactive leadership stance whereby you educate the Canadian public on the absolute necessity of responding immediately and in an ongoing fashion to this existential crisis. If you decisively lead, I believe the public will follow.

You must also make a firm commitment to "move the money." Tax the colossal profits of fossil fuel companies (\$38 billion in 2022). Stop paying fossil fuel subsidies (\$18.5 billion last year; that's \$600 per Canadian taxpayer). Put these funds into green infrastructure grants, including a revived Canada Greener Homes Grant.

Human-caused climate change is the elephant in the room. Virtually everyone knows it exists and that it is critical. But we don't talk about it, because we are unsure what to do and we are distracted by myriad daily concerns. We must change this. We must speak up. We must demand immediate, far-reaching and sustained action from our elected officials.

GRANT LINNEY LIVES IN DUNDAS. HE WILL REACH HIS 1,000TH PRESENTATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE NEXT MONTH.