



LETTERS

Enough ranting about Ford

It seems that Doug Ford is the lightning rod for anything remotely uncomfortable in our lives. Almost every article and letter I read is a complaint about Ford.

The comments published in The Spec leave me assuming that Premier Ford controls everything from weather, to the rotation of the Earth. The projection of blame and constant whining about him is nauseating.

Ford was elected by a majority of voters to do a job. A job, that many of these whiny people, couldn't comprehend. If you don't like Ford's decisions or policies, then speak with your vote and spare us the entitled and myopic ranting and protesting.

Troy Smillie, Hannon

Who gets to be the PM?

Re: Would you hire any of Canada's federal leaders to run your business? (June 26)

Well, I'm sure we all appreciate Craig Wallace enlightening us on who is really qualified to be prime minister of Canada. I have a couple of issues with his list of qualified candidates.

The first one is that this is still supposed to be a democracy — so every Canadian should really be eligible for the role, not simply those of power, privilege and wealth. The civil service is there to provide the expertise to advise on policy and manage implementing legislation.

The second issue is that at least two of the three candidates Wallace suggests are just another set of neo-liberals who think of people as disposable liabilities and who are driving this country into the ground while privatizing everything from education to medical care.

What we need is a prime minister and a government to put an end to the endless cutting of services for the poor, sick and working class, while handing tax cuts to the already too-wealthy oligopoly in this country.

We need someone to reverse the race to turn every aspect of public life into a profit centre. We need a PM and party for whom the idea of Canadians living in tents is a national disgrace; jurisdiction be damned — not one single Canadian should be living through the winter in a tent and standing in a food bank lineup. And frankly, the much-lamented deficit is a manufactured artifact made and used by the neo-liberals to justify all the cuts and misery for average Canadians.

Wayne Stansfield, Hamilton

Will any units be affordable?

Re: Chedoke development on Mountain brow moves forward (June 26)

I read the article about all the new housing units proposed on the Brow, and the preservation of the Cross of Lorraine, that was erected as a symbol of hope in the fight against tuberculosis. It is commendable that we are preserving history.

The plans call for lots of new housing. The only thing I didn't see was any mention of affordable housing units.

People living in tents are in desperate need of sustainable housing. Without affordable housing, the encampments will grow. Issues of poverty, mental health and addiction will grow.

The fight to find a cure for the epidemic of homelessness is just as vital as the fight waged against TB in the past. Million-dollar houses will not fix the situation. We need a symbol of hope for this epidemic. Build affordable housing.

Sharon McKibbin, Hamilton

Advertising is out of control

Thanks to the players in the finals between Edmonton and Florida who are proof that despite the incompetence of Gary Bettman, hockey remains the most exciting sport in the world. Thanks to the immense greed of the NHL owners the game itself has become a backdrop to what they're really presenting: advertisements.

The owners, not content to be billionaires, have made the game a visual eyesore with signs, logos and superimposed animation everywhere. From the ice, to the boards, seating, scoreboard, uniforms, skates and sticks they push products, not the game.

How long before the players wear sandwich board advertisements over their long-johns underwear and the owners bring the Goodyear blimp out of retirement and fly it among the rafters?

Gary Johnson, Hamilton

Thanks for the extra care

I am writing to commend the service we have had from our very conscientious Spectator delivery fellow. He has always been respectful with the paper neatly folded in the mailbox daily.

However, we have recently had construction work at the front of our house making the regular mailbox delivery impossible. We now find our morning read carefully slipped under the door of the carport where it never gets wet. We are impressed.

Ann Lawton-Barry, Hamilton



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Remember the dreamers



THOMAS FROESE
OPINION

It was a national daily, a letter-to-the-editor, and it said this.

Canadians, all of us coast-to-coast, need the Oilers to win the Cup to feel better about ourselves, so we don't have to stick our sorry Canadian heads in the oven, or the toilet, or some other humiliating place because this is now the hopeless state of things.

Ottawa's scorched earth policies have left a dismal landscape without hope or pride or honour, said the writer. And if the Oilers could somehow win it all, it wouldn't just be for Connor McDavid or Edmontonians or Albertans, but for every Canadian's emotional survival.

So now that the Oilers, after a valiant battle, haven't returned the Cup to Canada, where are we? Is there nothing to celebrate?

I won't argue about hockey bringing good things. I'm the guy who brought ball hockey to Uganda, where, under the African sun, someone today, stick in hand, is surely declaring, "We're Manchester United!" before bouncing a hockey ball off their head.

But while figuring out what's wrong, or right, with our country, let's remember its birth, like any birth, wasn't any walk in the park. Prior to July 1, 1867, while Canada West (Ontario) was supportive, only 37 of 62 delegates east of Ontario even wanted a new nation.

French speakers feared losing their language and Catholic identity. Growth and power were with the Protestant British. Which didn't excite Indigenous peoples, either, who'd lived in the region for thousands of years.

Nova Scotians feared higher taxes, but their delegates overruled them. New Brunswick delegates and the public both opposed Confederation. Even Prince Edward Island, which hosted the delivery of this baby nation, didn't join the party until another July 1, six years later



THOMAS FROESE PHOTO

A boy holds a Canadian flag at Lake Louise, Alta. Reflecting on trips across parts of Canada with his children, Thomas Froese writes, "With any luck they'll each keep something of the people and the land and the spirit of it all, even as anyone living here should get to know Canada's soul."

in 1873.

Even so, there were dreamers. And, soon, a uniting western railway. So with a population of 3.4 million people, less than one-10th of today's, Canada was birthed with an uneasy union of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Besides P.E.I., within a decade Manitoba, the Northwest Territories and British Columbia joined Canada. Yukon split from the Northwest Territories in 1898, Alberta and Saskatchewan joined in 1905, Newfoundland became the 10th province in 1949, and Nunavut came into being in 1999.

This weekend, it's easy to think about other things, like the beach or what's on the barbecue. Or today's challenges. Or disappointments. Which isn't entirely unlike 1867. But to be together, even imperfectly, is still better than being apart.

This is what was decided in Charlottetown on that summer day. Different people coming together to build a future are better for it. This is our celebration.

Today, I'm in Charlottetown with Child No. 3, Hannah. Like myself, and many other Canadians east to west, she's born outside Canada, grafted into this nation's story, into its family tree.

The trip is Hannah's 18th birthday

gift. "Let's go east," I said. So we did, driving Hamilton to Quebec City, along the Gaspé Peninsula, south to, eventually, Prince Edward Island, to Charlottetown for Canada Day, before heading to Cape Breton, then Halifax, and back home.

It's the third and last of these travel Canada 18th birthday gifts for my three children. With any luck they'll each keep something of the people and the land and the spirit of it all, even as anyone living here should get to know Canada's soul.

Speaking of, Canada was first called a "Dominion" because those founding fathers in Charlottetown were inspired by the 72nd Psalm, which celebrates the Creator's "dominion" extending "from sea to sea." It's an ancient awareness also celebrated by First Nations.

Which is to say that some things are larger than nationhood. Long before anyone imagined a place called Canada, old King Solomon, who wrote Psalm 72, also wrote elsewhere that "Without a vision, the people will perish."

This puts a finger on things nicely. In celebration, or in harder times, people anywhere need a vision. In Canada, the Stanley Cup helps too. THOMAS FROESE WRITES ABOUT NEWS, TRAVEL AND LIFE. FIND HIM AT THOMASFROESE.COM AND THOMASFROESE.SUBSTACK.COM.



JOHN RENNISON THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR FILE PHOTO

When some students walk out the door on the last day of school, that could be the last time they'll have a reliable source for a full breakfast or a healthy snack until they return to school.

Summer should not be a season of hunger

SHERYL ROBINSON
PETRAZZINI

For many children, summer is a season of mouth-watering treats: fresh berries, juicy peaches, a cold ice cream cone on a hot day, or even toasted marshmallows by the campfire.

But for some children across our city, summer is a season of hunger.

When the school year ends for the summer, so do Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's nutrition programs. That means that when some students walk out the door on the last day of school, that could be the last time they'll have a reliable source for a full breakfast or a healthy snack until they return to school.

We know how hard families work to feed their kids — but we also know that the post-pandemic landscape has been incredibly challenging. Food insecurity, grocery store deserts and the rising cost of living are making it difficult for many

families to provide healthy, reliable meals. We're hearing from educators, families, and community partners that more and more children are showing up hungry at school — and educators are increasingly responding to the growing need.

At HWDSB, we are working hard to make nutrition a top priority. We know that children cannot learn when they don't have a full stomach. When children don't have access to healthy food that powers your brain and body, they don't have the ability to do hard things, or the energy required to focus and learn. We invite our students to "Be you, Be excellent" — but that is much more difficult to achieve when you're hungry.

As a board, we recently prepared a report to get a fulsome picture of the nutrition programs available at our 93 schools. What we found was a broad range of supports: some schools offer programs in partnership with our fantastic community partners, particularly Tastebuds,

the Brantford Bulldogs Foundation, and Food 4 Kids.

Other schools — 25 per cent — have no nutrition programs for students at all — not due to a lack of will or need, but due to a lack of resources, infrastructure, or volunteers. While we appreciate our partners' support, in some schools, nutrition programs are only available because an educator is volunteering their time to make it happen.

It is not sustainable for our board, our staff, or our students for nutrition programs to depend on educators working off the side of their desk.

Our goal is to ensure that every HWDSB student has access to healthy, nutritious food, to ensure they can not only focus at school, but thrive in all areas of their lives. Good nutrition not only powers your body, but also supports mental health and well-being. Alongside our community partners and fellow leaders in the city, we're creating a plan to ensure equal and broader access to nutrition programs — because we know that when Hamiltonians work together, great things happen.

Recent federal investments in nutrition programs are a fantastic first step, but we urge all levels of government to consider creating spaces for paid staff to oversee and deliver universal nutrition programs in every school board.

Simply put, we cannot do it alone. We need everyone to get on board: government, social service agencies, and particularly private industries with the means to support our children.

As individuals, we also have a role to play. When you're headed to the grocery store this summer, firing up your grill, or enjoying some fresh produce straight from the market, think about our local kids. Consider donating to your community food bank, or directly to non-profit organizations like Tastebuds or Food 4 Kids. Because summer should be a season of rest, relaxation, and joy — not a season of hunger.

SHERYL ROBINSON PETRAZZINI IS THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AT THE HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD.