

# It seems we're wired for more than making money



THOMAS FROESE  
OPINION

Lately I've been thinking about being a billionaire.

Billionaires sometimes jump off tall buildings after cutting their kids from the will. Read John Grisham's novel "The Testament" for more on this.

No, the billionaire life isn't for everyone.

When it comes to money and work and these things, I just tell my kids, "Kids. Be patient." I don't remind them of the day that doctor assessed me and, somewhat shocked, said that I'd live to be 100. (And maybe outline said kids and their inheritances).

My own formal relationship with money and work started in the Walper Hotel in Kitchener. It's a long-standing place on the corner of King and Queen streets that's hosted everyone from Al Capone to many of Canada's prime ministers.

My job was to wash everything in its banquet kitchen. I was happy for it, my first real job. I didn't think about the Greeks, about Plato or Aristotle. Those dudes pooh-poohed any notion of work, especially anything more physical than pontificating in a toga.

So that hotel job didn't pay enough for a yacht. But it helped with journalism school.

Prior, I'd worked at the family business. This included the garden, a hopeless piece of earth so large that the gravitas of its vegetables, years later, gave way to a handful of houses complete with fair-sized yards. After the great garden's bonnage, a hotel kitchen was The Promised Land.

Eventually, I started writing for newspapers. So I'm still not getting seriously rich. This might also be because I feel closest to my centre when I'm at my laziest.

Now work and money should go hand-in-hand. And by money I'm thinking what you're thinking, that



THOMAS FROESE PHOTO

Reflecting on gardening, the contradictions of labour and his own work experiences, Thomas Froese writes, "I made peace with all this, as much as anyone might, anyway, when I was a young reporter."

is more money in-hand. Even so, it seems we're wired for more than money.

Suspicious views on these matters have always been around.

One human origin story from ancient Babylon involves the god Marduk, who supposedly created our world from the body of a slain enemy. He made humans for the grunt work of caring for the place, a job he didn't care about. How's that for work incentive sucked from your human soul?

I suspect the reality is closer to this. There's a world. We're placed in it. We maintain it. (Apparently not well.) But our work is less about a curse and more about being co-workers, even co-creators, alongside an active and caring Maker. This makes work, at least as originally intended, a relational gift.

We can appreciate what the psychologists call "flow," falling into work like you might fall into a dream.

Sometimes work even has more of a sustained rhythm, a spiritual bliss. And that idleness? (Let's call it idleness, not laziness). Without it we'd get lost in the weeds, no quiet or space to see things half-clearly.

So maybe good work is like connecting with a good love, a relationship bringing meaningful things —

some good humour, with any luck. Even new life. Still, there's a reason why the birthing process is called "labour."

Which brings us back to gardening. I made peace with all this, as much as anyone might, anyway, when I was a young reporter. I bought a simple garden hoe, painted it gold, and, as a wedding gift, gave it to my father when he married his second wife.

Despite my shaky relationship with that hopeless garden, at the wedding I then shared what the place taught me.

Thirty years on, with my father now in eternity, that same golden hoe is somehow back with me. It's now in my backyard with a garden sign saying, "Sow, weed, water and wait." They wouldn't sell much if it said, "Work whatever ridiculous ground you're given, because, really, what choice is there?"

We know we're not in any Garden of Eden. It seems we're not meant to be. Labour Day is one reminder. But it's also a rather fine time to celebrate our various work, anyway.

Sow. Weed. Water. You know. It's golden.

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CATHIE COWARD THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR FILE PHOTO

The province has announced it will shut down 10 supervised drug consumption and treatment services sites despite external reviews calling for an increase in locations, MPP Sarah Jama writes.

## Ford's HART hubs' move is heartless

SARAH JAMA

The Ford government has a history of ignoring expert recommendations in favour of options that serve its political interests, and Ford's latest plan could be fatal.

The province has announced that it will shut down 10 supervised drug consumption and treatment services (CTS) sites, as well as ban future ones, despite two external reviews calling for an increase in locations across the province.

The announcement, which comes amid overlapping housing, cost of living and opioid addiction crises and the most toxic drug supply ever seen, shows a cruel and continued lack of compassion and commitment to solutions rooted in best practice.

The decision to close CTS sites within 200 metres of a school or child-care centres, or transform them into "Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) hubs" is a cruel switch when CTS operators have been calling for more addiction treat-

ment options and transitional housing beds as part of a holistic service.

This announcement seems to be an attempt to conceal the Ford government's lack of investment in our communities overall. To give an idea of just how deficient this announcement is, consider this: supportive housing providers in Hamilton are ready to build more than 400 units. The new 375 supportive housing beds referenced in the announcement would not even meet current demand in our city, let alone across the province.

The move to close these sites also pits vulnerable communities against one another — framed as a need to protect young people, especially children. But it is children who are most at risk when drug users have no choice but to use in public spaces — often parks and even playgrounds. Providing an indoor clinical area for use is the only proven defence against drug use and abandoned paraphernalia where it can seriously harm a child, a parent or waste worker.

Tragically absent from the conversation is the fact that these sites are health-care facilities. They offer connection to primary care providers, wound care, STI testing and contraception and clean needles (in a time when we are seeing more blood-borne illness, including syphilis, HIV and hepatitis). These sites and their courageous staff offer a lifeline and dignified care that most people who use drugs will not find elsewhere — hopefully long enough to build the rapport, strength and mental health necessary to seek detox services.

Workers in harm reduction are absolutely bereft in reaction to this news, fearing a return to dark times before this life-saving service with overwhelmed emergency departments and full morgues.

In Toronto, no deaths have occurred from overdose within 500 metres of a supervised injection site. CTS sites in Hamilton have seen over 90 per cent reduction in ambulance calls, taking massive pressure off the health-care system.

These sites create safety for everyone in the community and must be part of a network of services for people experiencing street level homelessness, addiction and other challenges.

If Doug Ford's government truly wants to support those who struggle with addiction to find a path out of it, and for them to stay alive in the meantime, we need proven detox models inclusive of consumption sites, needle exchange and a better plan for supportive housing investment.

Whatever your perspective on this issue, I hope we agree that \$225 million to cancel the Beer Store contract early would be much better spent solving this crisis.

We cannot encourage people to consider treatment if they are dead. How many more people will be on the street or in the morgue before this government invests in proven solutions instead of playing politics with people's lives?

SARAH JAMA IS THE MPP FOR HAMILTON CENTRE.

## LETTERS

### Courts must get tough

Re: Officers tackle armed man to prevent 'catastrophic' shooting at Winona Peach Fest, Aug. 26

"A man carrying a handgun with a high-capacity magazine was arrested at a Hamilton festival this weekend," police said Sunday. It appears the police are doing their job. Tracking and apprehending gun-toting criminals before they create havoc in a public place. Now what are the courts doing to protect us? What exactly happens to this person who had the capability of killing or injuring multiple people? Is he back out on bail the next week, as it seems many criminals apprehended are on some type of release.

Illegal gun use is increasing because the penalties are ridiculously low. How can this be conveyed to the judicial system before more innocent people are hurt or killed?

Andy Price, Ancaster

### Peach Festival loses its charm

As a resident of Winona for the past 25 plus years, I am horrified by what the Peach Festival has become. It used to bring me so much joy to walk to the park and see young people, seniors and everyone in between walking through the tents to discover the beautiful art, and snack on the delicious food that the community comes together to create. I used to revel in the sights and sounds, so proud to be from our small, charming town.

However, what happened this year, is both terrifying and absolutely heartbreaking. Over the past few years I have watched the festival become a breeding ground for trouble. It's far too crowded to be enjoyable and with the increasing violent behaviour, has completely lost its warm and inviting atmosphere.

I want there to be a place for Winona residents to raise money for the community and all the great things we do here, but every year I feel that the Peach Festival becomes a less safe place for that to happen, and a gathering that I, very sadly will not be attending next summer.

Elisa Piccirillo, Winona

### Hire team to tackle auto theft

Re: Mercedes G Wagon stolen in Flamborough home invasion, Aug. 29

We've been reading these reports for too long. The police are saying they don't have the manpower to go after the cars stolen. Why do they not consider hiring a person or persons to go after these cars and have the ability to check shipping crates and if found, either the insurance company or the car owner pay a fee that would cover the wages of the person responsible for finding it? These guys have to be stopped now or it will become a way of life if it isn't already.

Jackie Jones, Hamilton

### NDP support is important

Pierre Poilievre claimed the NDP agreed with the Liberals' choosing binding arbitration in the railway lockout. He said he "knows" this because the NDP didn't get out of the supply-and-confidence agreement they have with the Liberals. I disagree.

With continued NDP support, the Liberals can advance dental care and \$10-a-day daycare, and bring in more things to help many Canadians, like pharmacare. Maybe even more safety and stability for railway workers. These things will benefit many Canadians, and the more entrenched they are, the harder it will be for Poilievre to try and get rid of them. And you know, Poilievre wants to get rid of as many social programs and common sense regulations as he can. Anything resembling socialism and common sense regulation are like kryptonite to him.

Their excuse will be a supposed need for austerity, while giving away billions in subsidies to fossil fuelers. Their real reason is to cut taxes for the wealthy and corporations, while they hurt as many non-wealthy people as possible.

Bruno Bartoszewicz, Dunnville

### We've become too lenient

A death of a stray cat by an arrow. So disgusting. A tenant dispute that turned violent. A weekend shooting just narrowly avoided at a popular summer festival. A baseball attack on a man in a parking lot. A fire at an encampment that has neighbours fearing to walk through Gage Park.

Who do I blame? All of us. We have become too lenient with crime and have lost all faith in our elected officials. We don't vote in numbers as we once did. We allow our justice system to grant bail to repeat offenders. Our police are just, at times, fighting a losing battle. We took the police out of schools because students said to. Ridiculous!

I do not have a magic wand to fix all of the above, just three strong suggestions.

1. Our mayor needs to visit these encampments with city workers and either clean them up or shut them down.

2. Our provincial and federal politicians need to swing the pendulum to the right and deny bail to repeat offenders. Revamp the youth criminal act and clamp down on young offenders. Publish their names. If you are caught and convicted, you will be punished, not just given a slap on the hand.

3. Put a police liaison officer in our local high schools this coming school year. If students protest, too bad, this is the way it's going to be.

Done. Thank you for allowing me to vent and for reading my rant.

Mike LoSchiavo, Hamilton