### Micro shelters no solution

### Re: 'Micro shelters' on their way to Barton West site

Re: 'Micro shelters' on their way to Barton West site, Oct. 31

So the tiny shelters (now renamed "micro shelters") are finally on their way to Hamilton. Does anyone believe these are going to rid our city of its homeless problem? The "do-gooders" can dream, but for sure these "micro shelters" will soon be a dumping ground for all the mess that existed around the illegal tents.
And the council members who state there will be a "protocol" for use and behaviour in the area should be reminded that you currently have a protocol for the encampments you chose to ignore.

tocol for the encampments you chose to ignore tocol for the encampments you chose to ignore. Point in case, the terrible state you have allowed our Peace Park to become, by allowing it to exist illegally, as your protocol states there be no encampment within 100 metres of a school. I have been stating that to city councillors and staff for two years. And they are going to manage the "micro shelter" site? Not a chance.

There Buttle Hamilton. Terry Butlin, Hamilton

### Concert trip too stressful

I left my home in Burlington at 6:30 p.m. for a 21-minute drive to FirstOntario Concert Hall in

21-minute drive to FirstOntario Concert Hall in Hamilton Saturday night. It took me 17 minutes to get to the Main Street exit. Then it took me 30 minutes to even approach Bay Street. Being a woman on her own in downtown Hamil-ton, I had intended to park in the parking garage with all the other concert goers, as there is safety in manher I coalized that you'dly any to its price in the parking garage. numbers. I realized that would put me in jeopardy

numbers. I realized that would put me in jeopardy of missing the first 20 minutes of the concert so I turned right and parked in an exposed lot with three tents set up around the perimeter.

The entire concert I was distracted by worry about my safety when I returned to my vehicle. Between paying for the ticket, the stress of all the traffic and my safety of being alone in downtown Hamilton after dark, I will think long and hard about attending another concert in Hamilton.

about attending another concert in Hamilton. Elizabeth Lucas, Burlington

### Donate rebate where needed

So even the wealthiest Ontarians will receive a \$200 "gift" from Premier Doug Ford in the new year. Let's empower the people to do the right thing. If all who are able to donate those dollars could support affordable housing and health-care initiatives, think of the difference we could make. Connie Smith. Ancaster

### Funds needed for public good

As much as its sounds like finding lost money, bear in mind that these are your tax dollars. At the cost of \$3 billion. Doug Ford is brazenly trying to buy your vote. Funds that could be allocated to health care, provincial and municipal infrastructure, working toward providing better shelter for the marginalized population and a plethora of other

needs.

We need to step outside ourselves and become part of a cause that is much larger than oneself, one that brings a greater good to a greater community. Beware the Trojan horse.

### Use rebate to fund opposition

The best use I can think of for the \$3-billion ("vote The Desit use I can all miles of in the \$5-minn() Vote for me") gift that Premier Ford is giving Ontarians is to donate all or part of the cheque to the Liberal, New Democrat or Green party in the name of the Progressive Conservative Party.

Carl Easton, Hamilton

### Rebate funded by health cuts?

Re: Changes to home-care equipment contracts halted during crisis, Oct. 30

I am deeply disturbed by this government's inexcusable handling of the Ontario Health atHome 
supply procurement changes. Not being able to get 
timely and appropriate supplies is putting people's 
lives at risk. Before September this was not an 
issue. The changes you put in place have directly 
led to this crisis. Platitudes like saying you are 
going to fix this came only after over a month of 
problems became public in the press, and these problems became public in the press, and these serious problems still exist.

serious problems still exist.
Are the cost savings these changes will generate going toward funding the \$200 "rebate" to citizens including the highest income earners? Ontarians need and deserve an independent review of this gross mismangement.

Margaret Tremblay, Dundas

### Not a fan of leaving leaves

### Re: A reminder to leave the leaves, Oct. 23

A carpet of dead leaves becomes a sodden mat that encourages mould and disease of lawn grasses. It also provides cover for rodents to travel on their

also provides cover for rodents to travel on their trails beneath it.

If possible, mow the dry leaves into small pieces and/or rake and bag them for disposal as many do.
Their value as fertilizer is vastly overrated. Lastly, don't tell others how to manage their lawn unless

Gord Baker, Carlisle

LETTERS WELCOME, 250-WORD MAXIMUM, FULL NAME REQUIRED. PREFERENCE MAY GO TO SHORTER LETTERS, AND ALL LETTERS ARE SUBJECT TO EDITING. SEND TO LETTERS@THESPEC.COM



A man enters the Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge, Mass. People want a new way. A third way. A better way. A better say. And less anxiety, Thomas Froese writes.

# Voters want a new way



FROESE OPINION

STOCKBRIDGE, MASS. I woke up this morning and realized that it's time to run for American presi-dent again. I get this urge, like a recurring rash, every four years or

I'd been at a New York wedding, then kept driving and ended up in Massachusetts. The wedding joined a Canadian and American,

joined a Canadian and American, like a bridge joining countries. Yes, there was drinking. No, I'm not hungover. But I'm creating a new political party: the Neighbour-hood Party. To join, like George Washington, just get on your borse and get jink

To join, like George Washington, just get on your horse and get into the thick of it. Knock on a door. Say, "Hey man. I'm your neighbour." Then listen. Get a pulse of things. It's what I'm doing as a Canadian here in the Divided States. As far as I can see, nobody know shat's going or may not improve after Tuesday's presidential vote. Which is where the Neighbourhood Party comes in People still

vymich is where the Neighbour-hood Party comes in. People still appreciate a good party any day of the year

the year.

The Neighbourhood Party is concerned more about how it can win, so to speak, on Wednesday, that's Nov. 6. And Dec. 6 and, naturally, Jan. 6, and so on. Besides, we can't

way. A better way. A better say. Less way. A better way. A better say. Less anxiety. More than Tweedledee or Tweedledum. More than patholog-ical lies from any dumpy convicted criminal. People want an honest national adventure, really, because isn't adventure the essence of any-

hood Party, one woman said, "I'd join!" And at the historic Red Lion John: And at the historic Red Lion Inn, with my second coffee, my server, Godfrey, said he'd appreci-ate more choice. "I mean, in a coun-try of 350 million people, this is the

The old inn, visited by several The old inn, visited by severely alarge front porch. So I sat there thinking about it all. Thinking about front porches. They're important. Why? Because you can't love your neighbour. This is why, along with food, front porches will be a key plank in the Neighbourhood Party's platform.

form.

Also, like thoughtful Mennonite pacifists, we'll beat guns into plow-shares. You know the weapons. The phones. They're killing us. Killing us inside. In our spirits. Everyone shooting at each other on social medicalite. If a group Or was Manne. dia like it's a game. Or war. Mennomake party signs by Tuesday. nites never shoot their neighbours.

People want a new way. A third

They just rebuild their neighbours'

No. really. The mirror that we as a society have always used to see our-selves as whole communities, as whole people, is somehow shatter-ing into a million pieces, fragment-

ing sharp and dangerous. For some, our entire shared reone's life?

Here, while hiking, I've heard laments from Americans named Walter and Mimi. Then something similar from another couple telling me in a restaurant that after Tuesday they'll maybe move to Canada. Ves, thanks, bring a snow shovel. Later, in a Stockbridge gif shop, when I mentioned the Neighbour-bood Party, no a warmar said "I'd" the Neighbour-bood Party, no a warmar said "I'd" the Neighbour-bood Party in feet if "I'd".

Of course, travel is also essential to the Neighbourhood Party. In fact, if the neighbours aren't home when you stop by, leave a calling card like "Gulliver's Travels.", Jonathan Swift's classic novel. It's a personal favourite about both travel and political tomicolary.

favourite about both travel and po-litical tomfoolery.

In Lilliput, Gulliver discovered Big-Endians. They'd rebelled against the king who wanted every-one breaking their boiled eggs at the little end, like Little-Endians. Two factions. Us. Them. God help us. And God help them. No, really. I'm ahusband. A father. A writer. A fellow traveller. A Big-Endian by

I manusoand. Arather: Awriter. A fellow traveller: A Big-Endian by habit, I suppose. Imperfect in all, even as a neighbour. Here's your invitation to, among your roles, be an imperfect neighbour too. Just come as you are. Forget those col-ours of politics. Join the party. Life's too cheet to do out this plan. too short to do anything less THOMAS FROESE WRITES ABOUT

NEWS, TRAVEL AND LIFE, FIND HIM AT THOMASFROESE.COM AND THOMASFROESE.SUBSTACK.COM

### THE FUTURE WE CHOOSE

## GDP doesn't give us the full story

### JANE JENNER

I will begin by acknowledging that I am no economic specialist, merely an average person attempting to grasp the bigger forces that are shaping our world and tipping it toward disaster. While researching economic

while researching economic models and measures, I happened upon an interview with former Uruguayan president José Mujica in the New York Times. Commenting on our current economic system, Mujica said, "If your needs multiple you spend you life cover." multiply, you spend your life cover-ing those needs. The market dominates us, and it robs us of our lives The market has he said "generated The market has, he said "generated a subliminal culture that dominates our instinct. We live to buy. We work to buy. And we live to pay."

It's important to distinguish between needs and wants. But be-

cause our economies are based on a cause our economies are based on a growth paradigm, as measured by GDP (gross domestic product), they function by creating more needs to increase the consumption necessary for year over year GDP growth.

Since the Second World War, GDP which was originally used to help — which was originally used to help determine how much governments could afford to spend on the war effort — has been the key measure used by the United Nations to eval-uate countries' economies. Its ap-

peal lies in its relative simplicity. But it fails to give us the full story. It limits our understanding of where

limits our understanding of where we actually stand.

For example, GDP doesn't mea-sure the value of unpaid work (such as volunteering and unpaid care-givers of children, the sick and the elderly). But it's hard to imagine

enterry). But it's nard to imagine what the costs to society would be without this work. Its value is hidden by GDPs way of accounting.

As well, GDP fails to consider that while natural resource extraction generates economic activity and boosts GDP in the short term, it dealeds on waters leaving GDP. depletes our natural capital. GDP accounting also ignores the very re-al social and environmental costs of al social and environmental costs of pollution and greenhouse gas emis-sions caused by economic activi-ties. Acrucial flaw, given the climate

crisis.

Meanwhile, undesirable activities like wars, crime and even climatefuelled disasters can, ironically, have a positive impact on GDP. Mu-nitions production to support mil-itary conflict, businesses that laun-der crime money, and reconstruc-tion after floods or fires are all examples of economic activity that contributes to GDP.

Yet neither the immediate nor downstream societal costs of con-flict, crime and natural disasters are

actored in.
Another key limitation of GDP is

that it offers no systematic account of the distribution of income and is of the distribution of income and is therefore inadequate in giving us a picture of social progress. Yet re-cent Statistics Canada figures re-port an increasing gap between the wealthiest and poorest of our citi-zens: the wealthiest 20 per cent held more than twe-thirds 6677per held more than two-thirds (67.7 per cent) of Canada's total net worth in cent) of Canada's total net worth in the second quarter of 2024, while the least wealthy (bottom 40 per cent) accounted for just 2.8 per cent. Alarmingly, middle-income Canadians' prosperity is stagnant, and in fact their standard of living is being eroded. While GDP reporting ignores the

while GDP reporting ignores this economic reality, it pushes us, not toward a more prosperous and better world, but into one where we are enslaved by a growth-driven market to destroy our own habitat, hand over more wealth to those who don't need it and ultimately but to right but but with which we have the contraction. put at risk the thriving middle class that underpins our treasured de-

mocracies.

All this begs the question, why are we still using GDP to evaluate our prosperity? Thankfully, it is now being seriously questioned and better options are being put forward for a wide large time.

ter options are being put forward for consideration.

I'll borrow the words of Mujica once more: "What a complicated animal man is. He's both smart and stupid." So the question is, are we smart enough to adopt a healthier economic model in time so we can ruly thrive and also save our ailing planet? Or will we stupidly go on doing the same thing houng for a doing the same thing, hoping for a

different result?

Next time: Alternative economic models for a future we'd choose.

JANE JENNER LIVES IN BURLINGTON.