

LETTERS

Bring more flights to airport

Re: Passenger numbers nosedive at Hamilton's airport amid discount airline woes, Nov. 19

There's a lot of moaning and groaning about declining numbers of air travellers at John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport. Gee, go figure. Maybe if the powers that be up there would get some of the big airlines to actually fly out of the place the numbers would rise. Every time we travel somewhere, we have to drive to that nightmare of an airport in Toronto. Try offering the desired services and stop crying the blues. And it might even make Doug Ford happy by easing the gridlock on roads bound for Toronto.

Paul E. Casey, Ancaster

Families victimized once again

Re: Families of Paul Bernardo victims have been barred from attending in-person parole hearing, lawyer says, Nov. 20

I am incensed that the Parole Board of Canada initially told the families of Leslie Mahaffy and Kristen French that they were "unable to ensure safety and security of all hearing attendees."

My understanding is that prisons in Canada have both the capacity and wherewithal to ensure both the safety of the victims' families and the criminals.

It appears Leslie and Kristen's families are once again being victimized by both Canada's justice system and one of Canada's most dangerous offenders.

Mary Elizabeth Toth, Ancaster

Taxes better the community

Re: Don't spend tax dollars on golf, Nov. 21

With respect to Peter Mountford's suggestion to not spend his tax dollars on Chedoke Golf Course, the same could very well be said for public pools, pickleball/tennis courts, recreation centres, libraries, etc.

We all must get along and contribute to all these activities, even if we don't necessarily participate in them. If not, what kind of quality of life do we have? Not everyone has enough money to join a private club. Careful what you wish for.

Mary Hickey, Burlington

Altering course a slippery slope

Some people see golf courses, even municipal ones, as "elite." However, changing the status of the Chedoke land could open it to immense pressure from developers to build on it, and not affordable housing.

I just read an interesting report about how golf courses, which are quiet and dark at night, become more biodiverse than parks. Surely something to consider, if the goal is to keep the city healthy.

M.M. Bédard, Hamilton

Trudeau gets in on the action

Re: Liberals plan to give \$250 cheques to millions of Canadians, cut GST over holidays, Nov. 21

Well, it seems that our prime minister is taking a page from Premier Doug Ford's vote-buying spree. The PM's temporary GST tax break and Ford's \$200 gift to all of Ontario's residents is nothing more than buying votes for anticipated forthcoming elections.

These millions of dollars would be more appropriately directed to our underfunded health-care programs and the current homeless situation. I would like to think that most Canadians sense the objectives of these power-hungry leaders.

Allan Avery, Binbrook

Send a message with 'rebate'

Regarding Premier Doug Ford's \$250 rebate cheques: My first inclination was to support our local food bank and hospital. But this only provides this government fodder to not increase funding. Please consider these options:

Donate to one of the other political parties. You will get a tax receipt. You will "tick off" this present government. You will be sending a strong message about your disdain for this obvious veiled "bribe."

Find a Ukrainian or other refugee family. Give the funds directly to them.

Support a local charity such as Flamborough Connects or Flamborough Food Bank in their quest to provide Christmas gifts to needy seniors and children.

Inform the premier, your MPP and the health minister about your direction of funds.

We must send a strong message to this government that its wasteful spending and inadequate funding for health, education and housing will not be tolerated or ignored.

Annette Webber, Freetown

EV rebates and tariffs

I can't afford to buy an EV car, but I could if China's EV cars were allowed into Canada without a 100 per cent duty imposed on them.

This doesn't seem like a good way for Canada to fight climate change. At least the government of Canada offers a \$5,000 rebate. Ontario Premier Doug Ford and his government offer nothing.

Herbert Hyman, Oakville

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



THOMAS FROESE PHOTO

On a mountain road in Yemen, two pickups filled with travellers round a curve, a scene that Thomas Froese reflects on while writing about the importance of guardrails in our lives.

We need to understand the value of life's guardrails



THOMAS FROESE
OPINION

One day on a mountain pass in Yemen, I took a wild photo from behind two beater pickup trucks, two shabby vehicles with too few safety features moving way too many people and household items.

It was at a curve on this two-way road when one of the overloaded pickups, incredibly, passed the other.

I suppose it also wasn't the safest manoeuvre to hang out of my car — I wasn't driving, mind you — to get the photo. But in the developing world — that is, the majority world — nobody really cares.

Especially in mind, then, is the road's guardrail, a necessary and helpful stretch of curved metal that might keep the entire show from careening horribly over the edge. Yes, thank God for the world's wheels — my first set was a sporty 1979 red-and-black Ford Pinto — and thank God for the world's guardrails.

Of course the dictionary people who think up their annual winning words never call me to ask, but it seems to me that "guardrail" could at least contend for 2024's Word of the Year. Like "Post-Truth," Oxford's word for 2016, given when Donald Trump was handed his first American presidency, "guardrail" is in time for Trump 2.0

Before I say more, let me note that

this rumination is not about American politics — not entirely, anyway, because our stomachs are only so strong. I get it. I also realize every so often some big orange tiger, some big, striped political cat, will get loose somewhere in the world. It's not entirely uncommon. Even so, briefly, let's look to our southern neighbours.

The most effective, yet imperfect, guardrail in any democracy are its voters. And, completely fairly, a majority of Americans have chosen the tiger, not the lady. They've chosen the pathological criminal, not the blousy prosecutor.

Main Street wanted to see the money, so to speak. And it wanted protection from certain fears. Wall Street, meanwhile, was apparently out of touch with struggles of everyday Americans. Warnings from the chattering class about the tiger were met with a shrug. Danger? Meh.

But Trump's autocracy will surely test the boundaries, America's democratic guardrails like its courts and constitution, recently already weakened. And the U.S. will devolve further as a "flawed democracy," a formal ranking that global democracy watchers gave it in 2016, that year when "Post-Truth" first became an elevated word.

Which brings me to our own personal guardrails. Because this is what this is really about. Yes, tomorrow will always bring enough worry with it, even with good governments, never mind those of tigers or bears or you name the autocrat. Government, remember,

was never meant to fill the holes we have inside us as humans.

True, bad governments can screw things up quickly. Even so, don't put too much of your life stock in any human governance, but rather in what's more lasting. Guard — there's that word again — your mind and heart above all, because this is really where life's treasures is.

So turn off the screen. And news. And influencers. No, really. Nourish yourself first on other things. It's what I tell myself. Guardrails. Then take in only reliable news. In doses. Don't get jazzed up. Augment news with other sources to make sense of our wobbly times. For one, I've recently opened Marilyn McEntyre's book, "Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies."

Because we become, for better or worse, the choices that we surround ourselves with. So let's teach the kids (I'm talking to myself again) the value of truth. With any luck they'll teach their kids. Then you'll leave behind something worthwhile. If enough people do this, an entire neighbourhood values truth. Then a city. And so on.

Then enough men and women who understand guardrails, who know authenticity, emerge to be the sort of quality politicians that can be appreciated. Because you know the old saying, "We get the government we deserve." Just saying. It's sometimes true.

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

An oil and gas pollution cap is the right move for Canadians

ALY HYDER ALI

The dust has settled and our neighbours to the south will have a new president in January. Already, Donald Trump has indicated his administration will roll back climate action.

This presents Canada with a choice: Be a leader and hold major polluters accountable for reducing their pollution or falter and risk the future and livelihoods of Canadians.

The oil and gas industry is Canada's largest source of pollution, responsible for more than 30 per cent of the nation's greenhouse gas emissions and a major driver of climate change.

Despite generating massive profits, oil and gas companies have failed to invest in emissions reductions, which leaves Canadians to pay for the increasing costs of climate disasters.

That's why a strong oil and gas pollution cap is needed. It can benefit Canadians in many ways, from reducing health risks and stabilizing costs to strengthening our economic position in the global market.

With the U.S. now moving away from climate action, Canada has an

even stronger incentive to double down on its climate ambitions. By strengthening its environmental standards, Canada can attract more investment and forge partnerships with other nations that prioritize clean energy and sustainable practices.

Climate change has devastated Canadians' wallets. Just in the summer of 2024, climate-related disasters cost Canada \$7 billion in insured costs.

These disasters impact insurance rates, grocery prices and basic household expenses and force Canadians to shoulder an increased financial burden. Home insurance has also skyrocketed in the last decade.

By reducing pollution now, Canada can help prevent escalating climate-related expenses down the road, which will trickle down to taxpayers. Fighting climate change is, at its core, an investment in affordability and puts money back in the pockets of taxpayers by building a stable, resilient economy.

Cutting pollution isn't just about the planet — it's about people too. Record-breaking heat waves in recent years have strained health systems across the country and caused a spike in heat-related illnesses and

even deaths.

These health risks aren't limited to just a few particularly hot days — they are becoming a recurring issue in Canadian summers.

Climate change also brings a whole host of health risks to Canadians and range from poor air quality to infectious diseases. These risks are much more amplified in the most vulnerable communities in Canada.

A pollution cap on oil and gas isn't just a climate win; it's Canada's ticket to a healthier, more prosperous future. However, getting it right matters. As it currently stands, the draft pollution cap's low target and multiple loopholes let industry evade responsibility. It unfairly shifts the burden of doing more to reduce pollution on other parts of the economy.

The government of Canada can be a leader on climate, bolster the economy and protect public health — but only if the pollution cap is quickly finalized and strengthened. Any more delays will only allow oil and gas companies to keep polluting freely and put all of us at further risk.

ALY HYDER ALI IS THE OIL AND GAS PROGRAM MANAGER AT ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENCE.