

LETTERS

Pay raise for MPPs is unfair

Re: MPPs get 35% raise after Doug Ford lifts 16-year pay freeze, May 29
I am so disappointed that all the provincial MPPs (including the NDP) voted for pay raises for themselves and reinstated pension plans after Mike Harris took it away 30 years ago. Why? The recent budget didn't give any increases to recipients of Ontario Works and ODSP, forcing more people into homelessness. In fact, the amount of money recipients get on these programs now is *less* than in Harris's day! What a travesty! I am so ashamed of all of them.
Colleen Dawson, Hamilton

Statue needs an addition

Re: Queen's Park to 'unbox' statue, May 29
Having read this article, I suggest Queen's Park erect a statue of an Indigenous child close to the statue of Prime Minister John A. Macdonald. In doing so, Canadians will be reminded of the malicious treatment of Indigenous people as a cost to Macdonald's expansionist National Policy of 1876. Canadians must be reminded of our country's dark history, which includes the mistreatment of Indigenous peoples, the slavery of Black Canadians, the abuse of religious orders upon non-Indigenous children and the government policies which perpetuated abuse over the years of expansion.
We build a better country by remembering and challenging our personal biases and ignorance.
Patrick O'Neill, Hamilton

Strikers target wrong location

Re: Picket by striking water workers delaying Hamilton's HSR transit buses, May 29
I read that the striking water workers delayed HSR public transit service at the busy garage during the morning rush hour. Why would they do that?
The reason for HOWEA's (Hamilton Ontario Water Employees Association) strike has nothing to do with the Hamilton Street Railway or bus riders. HOWEA inconvenienced and disrupted the day of fellow city staff, HSR operators and their passengers. Surely, those on strike can find a respectful way to get their picket information out there from now on.
April A. Severin, Hamilton

Sorry to pop your bubble

To all the writers who are pro-bubble zone for protests, you must not have taken history in school. History has proven once you give up freedom, you don't get it back, and soon they'll be looking to take away another freedom.
The main purpose of a protest is to bring attention to a certain matter, like the abuse of any humans round the world. Sorry if you had to take a detour to get to the mall, but just maybe, people being killed is more important to some than your shopping.
Quoting Ben Franklin, "They that can give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."
Tony Fallucco, Hamilton

Protest rules are undemocratic

As a homeowner and a taxpayer in Hamilton, I fully support the right of every Hamiltonian to protest. I don't care whether they're Jewish, Muslim or any other background — every Canadian has the right to freedom of expression. By all means, we all have to act with decency and integrity, especially while engaging in activism. But we already have anti-riot laws and other statutes to address lawless protesting; the safeguards are already there.
Not only that, dear reader, but these municipal protest bans were drawn up specifically after lawful protests popped up outside Toronto synagogues that were auctioning off land that had been illegally seized from Palestinians in the occupied West Bank. If we can't protest that, surely "freedom of expression" only applies if you agree with the government, which, I'm sorry, is no protest at all.
Pat Antila, Hamilton

Antisemitism tolerated too long

Re: McMaster grad among thousands of Harvard students affected by Trump's ban on international enrolment, May 27
Unfortunately, a big reason for the international student ban at Harvard has a lot to do with the pervasive antisemitic behaviour that has been tolerated there for far too long. Harvard's faculty, administration and student unions have created a hostile, unsafe environment, which can be compared to the university's antisemitism in the 1930s, when many, including faculty, students and even the president at that time, not only tolerated, but endorsed Nazism. Today's radical left version of antisemitism at Harvard is also on the wrong side of history.
Chris Asimoudis, Ancaster



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What the family car looked like on the day in May 2022 when Thomas Froese's father was dying. Writing about what seems like the random nature of time, Froese recalls the accident.

What if time is on our side?



THOMAS FROESE

OPINION

Before I tell you about the car crash, today's fun fact is that 166 years ago, on May 31, 1859, Big Ben in London, the world's largest four-faced chiming clock, started its first tick-tock.
So let's talk about time.
An older friend recently told me how time speeds up as you age. You know the other expressions. Time waits for nobody. There's a time for everything. Time flies. We don't look up at some clock blazing through the clouds. We understand what it means.
Time is seen as a commodity. And it's neutral. Like the ocean. It's up to us whether we sink or swim in it. Time, apparently, doesn't care.
But what if this is wrong? What if time is mysteriously on our side, cheering for us?
What if time, in fact, exists for no other reason than for us to grow, even slow and steady, like that tortoise who outpaced the hare? What if the entirety of life asks nothing more of us than this?
What if the world itself is designed with this, our growth, in mind?
Spring is a season to think about it, time and the beautifully chaotic

nature of things.
Stanley Jones, a writer my father would read at the kitchen table when I was a boy, would say that we're born into a world that's intentionally imperfect, a world with plenty of weeds and snakes and earthquakes and sickness.
Why? So we can work to develop pesticides and antidotes and earthquake-proof buildings and medicines and you get the idea.
This is the deal. The offer. A measure of happiness, contentment really, comes through this resilience, like a seed that harnesses everything it can — sunshine, water and nutrients — to become the tree it's meant to be. In this there's paradox as we learn, before our inevitable death, if nothing else, how to be dependant.
Speaking of, last May we buried my wife's father. The previous May we buried my wife's mother. The May before that we buried my father. His death especially comes to mind as a reminder of how life can be like a game of inches and seconds.
"Dad's dying," I said to my wife that day. "The hospital called. There's no time." She said she'd drop everything at work to meet me at the hospital parking lot, out of town 45 minutes away.
We agreed we'd then walk into the hospital together.

I arrived and phoned Jean. All she said was "Thom, I'm sorry. I'm sorry." Over and over. "I'm sorry." Was Dad Froese already in eternity? Was Jean inside the hospital already? Was I too late?
Instead I learned that my wife was in a grim car crash. She never got out of town, never mind to any hospital parking lot.
She escaped serious injury. The car? Totalled.
Then my wife's sister, the children's aunt, scooped Jean and then also our children, all together, and brought everyone to join others at my father's deathbed.
He held on for some time, and what followed was a more complete and gentler family goodbye, a meaningful memory that never would have unfolded without that crash.
And the licence plate on our car? It's AWFE-552. More than 20 years ago that letter-number combination was given from the licence people to us as standard issue.
Vehicle after vehicle we've since kept it as a bit of a joke, a reminder of how it seemed there were 551 contenders — that took time — before I found my wife, or she found me, or however all that works.
Now on our current family car, that plate is also a daily reminder of how life can be like that game of inches and seconds.
This is the sorry truth. We're all just a snake bite or tornado or crash away from catastrophe. If it doesn't get us, it will get our loved ones.
We wish it weren't true. It all seems so horribly random.
And yet.
THOMAS FROESE WRITES ABOUT NEWS, TRAVEL AND LIFE. FIND HIM AT THOMASFROESE.COM AND THOMASFROESE.SUBSTACK.COM.

Royal visit helped me realize just how fortunate I am

CAROL VICTOR

This past weekend, I went to Ottawa to witness the swearing-in of my MP and see the King. While I hadn't intended to go, a friend persuaded me that it would be a cool thing to do. Believe me, it was.
Born and raised in the nation's capital, I have been to the Parliament Buildings endless times. Every friend or relative who came to see us was treated to a visit to this auspicious place. Things are different now with renovations and security details, but it is nevertheless quite something to have a private tour of the House of Commons. It was fun to take a turn sitting in the chairs of the House Speaker, cabinet ministers and prime minister. While not my first time experiencing the "tour," this year was particularly special because being Canadian is more important to me this year than at any other time in my life.
The threat to our sovereignty has spawned overwhelming patriotism and the latter was evident during these few days in Ottawa. There were hordes of tourists and merchants were poised to showcase Canadian-made merchandise; everything from traditional maple syrup to handicrafts. I was amazed to see the variety of products actually made here and how many were being purchased because of their very origin.
Sunshine and warmth accompanied the arrival of King Charles and Queen Camilla as they carried out



King Charles and Queen Camilla travel in Canada's State Landau in Ottawa on Tuesday.

official duties at a local market. Throngs of people greeted the couple and the excitement grew as the day went on. Tree planting at Rideau Hall was the next chance for many to see them. Many citizens offered flowers to the royals while Union Jacks and Canadians flags were waved with great enthusiasm.
My sister and I were a few of the hundreds who lined Wellington Street en route to the Senate, where the King was to deliver the Speech from the Throne. We secured spots against a security fence to get a glimpse of the landau and its esteemed passengers.
While in line, a young woman started a conversation with us. She was a true blue royalist, had flown to the U.K. for the coronation, had attended all of the previous days events and was fully engaged. We

were shocked when she revealed that she was American and from a red state — Tennessee. She waxed poetic about royalty and how much she appreciated Canadian friendliness and warmth. A lawyer by profession, she told us that there were in fact many Americans who shared her enthusiasm.
To my dismay, this pleasant conversation was interrupted by a group of truckers wearing their black freedom outfits who started chanting "Not my king." I felt sick as I watched a veteran in a wheelchair stare at them in disbelief. But the crowd was not letting this ruin the day and it spontaneously broke out in an over-the-top version of "O Canada," drowning out the dissenters.
A few minutes later, the Mounties appeared on horseback, a sight that always gives me a thrill. And then the moment we had been waiting for, the landau with the royal entourage emerged amid wild cheers and applause. As I looked around, I saw Canadians of all origins beaming with national pride. I knew that I was witnessing something very special — a moment where I realized how fortunate I am to live in this country.
While it was over quickly the effects will be lasting. It was what was needed at this time; a time to reflect on what it means to be Canadian. Not only cool, this visit was a chance to rub shoulders with others and to embrace the very values of the true north, strong and free.
CAROL VICTOR LIVES IN BURLINGTON.