

LETTERS

Ford's interference unwelcome

Re: Trump terminates trade talks with Canada over Ontario government ad blasting tariffs, Oct. 23
Somebody should remind Doug Ford that being a team player is not about cheering rah, rah, rah for my position. His ill-considered attacks on Donald Trump and bombastic self-appointment as Captain Canada have now put Team Canada's entire game with the U.S. on a timeout. I cannot imagine what Mark Carney and Dominic LeBlanc, who seemed to be on the verge of a breakthrough, are thinking today as the U.S. cuts off trade talks with Canada. Let's hope other partners are paying attention to the results of self-interest over national unity.

Jim Young, Burlington

Pull negotiators out of D.C.

I am no fan of Doug Ford, but he sure knows how to get under Donald Trump's skin. Ford's TV ad campaign in the U.S. featuring the venerable Ronald Reagan warning about the perils and, indeed, unpatriotism, of tariffs hit just the right nerve. Donald Trump has called off all trade negotiations with Canada. I have no problem with that whatsoever. We've had enough of Trump yanking our chain for the past month. Let's pull our seasoned trade negotiators out of Washington and have them head overseas to other markets to negotiate fair and reasonable trade deals with those countries.

Ralph D'Angelo, Hamilton

Thankful for an act of kindness

I recently fell with my walker near Queenston and Nash on Thursday afternoon. Both the walker and myself fell onto the road into traffic. Luckily for me, no car was near me. A young man and young woman came to help me up. The young man spoke calmly all of the time. Having had knee surgery made getting up more difficult. I neglected to get their names. I really appreciate them stopping to help and would like to say, there are still some young people out there willing to help those in need. My best wishes to you both for your act of kindness.

Bonnie Tryon, Hamilton

Affordable housing is crucial

Hamilton's housing crisis isn't just about rising rents - it's about affordable rentals disappearing. Between 2016 and 2021, nearly 5,000 rental units priced below \$750 a month were lost. For every one affordable unit built, 23 were lost. People aren't moving because they want to, they're being pushed out by a market that no longer works for them. City hall must act to convert vacant offices to rentals, allowing more duplexes and triplexes, and taxing empty units would help protect what little affordability remains. A city without affordable housing is a city without room for the people who keep it running. Hamilton deserves better.

Shruthi Sivakumar, Hamilton

Put your phones away

I am super excited to go to the Paul McCartney show in November. What I am not excited about is having to watch Paul through the 60 or so people around me with their phones held in the air, the whole concert. I wish artists/venues would not allow recording of their concerts. Also, can people not enjoy an evening out without getting wasted?

Tracy Fox, Little Britain, Ont.

Kudos to 'Coach' Clarke

Three cheers to local golf icon Ian Clarke on his induction into the Ontario Professional Golf Association's Hall of Fame. He was the longtime head professional at Glendale Golf & CC in east-end Hamilton. Ian's stellar resume includes an impressive playing career both in Canada and abroad and many executive roles in Ontario golf.

Familiarly known as 'Coach' by so many former and current club members, he was also mentor to dozens of young assistant pros, with many moving on to impressive roles as head professionals around the Golden Horseshoe and as far afield as Vietnam and Thailand. Ian now not only shoots his age regularly on the course, but also volunteers his time to a local food bank and Cancer Assist Program. Congratulations to Ian, a real Hamilton gem.

Mike Davy, Hamilton

A tenant of the worst sort

Re: White House East Wing demolished as Trump moves forward with ballroom construction, Oct. 23
If I had rented a house with a four-year lease and decided that I wanted to knock down a portion of it without the consent of the people who own it, do you think I would have gotten away with it? I think not. Wake up America, he's coming for you!

Catherine Brady, Burlington

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



Noting that Saturday, Haldimand Treaty Day, is a good day to reflect on the resilience of Indigenous people, Thomas Froese shares a story that involved the custody of two part-Indigenous children.

We're born into a time and place without a choice



THOMAS FROESE OPINION

I recently sat in a coffee shop across from a man I'll call Adam. Adam, as in the beginning when that voice, that said let there be something beautiful and grand like light and Earth and then Adam, that name meaning "Of the Earth." Then let there be Smith and al-Masri and Rodriguez and Froese and you and many others.

It was 31 years ago in October when I stood in an Ontario court and a judge told me about names. "Write what you want, but no names," he told me. Of course. So I did. I wrote without names. I wrote about Adam and his sister and their unpromising start to life. Their white mother and Indigenous father had abused and neglected them. Their white maternal grandparents then fostered them, but when they wanted to adopt, the Oneida, the Onyotacka First Nation, petitioned to raise the half-Indigenous children.

Children's Aid, with the Ontario government's support, demanded the grandparents hand over the children. Instead, the couple went to the local press in St. Thomas. The story fell to me.

The grandparents were allowed to keep them in the interim, then, two years on, their two grandchildren

were legally given to them. The resolution came after, incredibly, elders from the family's church-school met and found the way forward, bypassing lawyers and the impending court fight.

For my efforts - I was awarded a significant journalism honour. It was something, considering in childhood, with my sister, I was the subject of a bitter custody fight, this one in Berlin, also written up in the papers.

In the coffee shop, Adam shares that he remembers me coming into the house when he was four years old. "You'd sit in the kitchen and talk with Mom and Dad." He speaks of his love for them, his grandparents, their eventual death and, later, his tough times. I nod and listen.

Adam has lost 100 pounds in a year. Has a good factory job. Understands healthy relationships and breaking cycles. He's done the work. Then Adam tells me about his sister's death, just in her 20s, after complications from asthma. I listen more. Hers was an especially hard road. There's much to tell.

Today, by the way, Oct. 25, is Haldimand Treaty Day, the day in 1784 when Sir Frederick Haldimand, then governor of Quebec, granted significant land along the Grand River to Six Nations to recognize their support of the British during the American Revolution.

So today is a day in history and also a time to reflect on the resili-

ence of Indigenous people.

We're born into time and place without choice. Into race and culture. But there's more. As Atticus told Scout in Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird," you can't understand someone until you get into their point of view. "Until you get out in their skin and walk around in it." Like God, in a way. But in this we do have some choice, even as humans.

You're white? Imagine you're Black. You're a married father? Imagine you're a single mother. You're Jewish? Imagine you're Palestinian. Or vice versa. It will change your relationships. Maybe even the world.

Talk like this for long and people might look at you like you have three heads. That's OK. Don't let it throw you off. You're sowing seeds. Changing the spirit of our time.

Novelists, remember, do this imaginative exercise all the time when creating characters. It's why I teach story. It's both interesting and healing.

Which leads to Adam's search for someone to write something fuller than what I started 31 Octobers ago. In that coffee shop I told him I'd ask around.

So I'm asking. If you're a writer who's been touched by Adam's story and may want to help him write his book, please reach me.

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

Don't bet against a winter election



CRAIG WALLACE OPINION

The federal government led by Prime Minister Mark Carney will be introducing its first budget to Parliament on Nov. 4.

A budget is considered a "confidence motion," which means if it fails to pass in the House of Commons, the government is defeated and an election is called. Currently the government is three seats short of a majority, which means it must have the support of one of the opposition parties to pass the budget.

Most political observers that I have heard opine on the upcoming budget vote argue there is no way it will be defeated. The main reason they cite is that the New Democratic Party is a shambles.

In the April 2025 election, it was reduced to seven seats and lost party status and its leader lost his own seat. What little money the party has will be used in the leadership campaign next year. Certainly those are very compelling reasons for the NDP to avoid an election.

But it doesn't guarantee there will not be one. There is a saying that history repeats itself. Let's go back in recent history and look at a simi-

lar situation and the parallels to today.

In May 1979, a federal election was held in Canada. The Progressive Conservative party led by Joe Clark defeated the Liberals led by then prime minister Pierre Trudeau, winning 136 seats out of 282. Trudeau's Liberals won 114 seats.

It was a fairly comfortable minority government for Clark and the Tories. So much so that Clark announced he would govern as if he had a majority.

After all, the Liberals had been in power since 1963 and Trudeau prime minister since 1968. Canadians were tired of them. Add to that Pierre Trudeau announced he would step down as Liberal party leader after a leadership convention was held in 1980. Clark's government seemed very safe.

On Dec. 11, 1979, finance minister John Crosbie introduced the first Tory budget in 17 years. It was a tough one. Among other things, the budget proposed an 18-cent tax increase per gallon of gasoline, 10 per cent increase on tobacco taxes and one per cent surtax on corporate profits.

Excise taxes on alcohol and beer were also increased as Crosbie and Clark argued the federal government had to begin dealing with the large deficits from the Trudeau era. It was the right budget for the right time.

The opposition "tested blood." As Canadians howled about the tax increases the Liberals and NDP pledged to do all they could to bring down the government. Clark, still in disbelief that the Liberals would go into an election after Trudeau resigned, belatedly began talks with Fabien Roy, leader of the Social Credit Party, trying to convince Roy to have his six-member caucus support the government.

Roy refused and on Dec. 13, 1979, NDP finance critic Bob Rae introduced a non-confidence motion. It was successful and Clark's government fell. Clark called a federal election for Feb. 18, 1980. Trudeau withdrew his resignation and announced he would lead the Liberals into the election.

In this election the Liberals argued that with an upcoming Quebec referendum, "seasoned, experienced leadership" was required. Trudeau with more than 11 years as prime minister under his belt was that leader. Clark with his dreadful misreading of the mood in the House of Commons was pictured by the opposition and some media as inept and naïve.

The Liberals, led by Trudeau won a large majority government in 1980 setting the stage between Trudeau and Quebec premier René Lévesque in the 1980 referendum. Clark would eventually lose the Tory leadership to Brian Mulroney in 1983.

Just like today, nobody believed the opposition in 1979 would pull the trigger on an election. History tells us, "never say never." Carney must remain on guard.

CRAIG WALLACE IS A HAMILTON RESIDENT AND AUTHOR OF FIVE BOOKS.