

The new  London 1993

Westminster citizens voice their opinions

WESTMINSTER — Ratepayers got a chance to speak their mind Monday on the impending demise of their town following annexation by London, effective Jan. 1. The views expressed at a council meeting exposed a deep rift in the community:

"The (annexation) decision is an imposition on our lifestyle. It effectively destroys the way of life we have and will have. As someone said at a previous hearing, farming is a lifetime occupation, not a 10-year occupation. I want to see my council tell the government to put this report where the sun don't shine." — Vic Mitrow.

"I would welcome just getting on with things, to move on to positive things . . . Let's stop the sandbox mentality that's been going on around here. Let's communicate and get something done. Let's get on with it, let's turn the other cheek." — Don Bilyea.

"There's been 11 years of . . . and I'll call it arguing . . . Now we've got one more chance to get things right. We've got to seize the opportunity now and make sure we get the best deal we can. If we keep our heads in the sand, we won't get a good deal, we'll get more arbitration." — Ken Romanuk.

"I love this town like it was family and if a member of my family was raped, I wouldn't lay down and say 'turn the other cheek.' I think I'd be damned mad and I think I'd fight it. People here have been short-changed in the arbitration process. This council should do whatever it can to get back what it is the people of Westminster were trying to build here." — Dave Burtwistle.

"The 'arbi-traitor's' decision, as I call it, was a shock to everyone. I'm sad to see our mayor trying to be positive about something so sad . . . the town is about to cease to exist. We have a right to self-determination and should be able to do what we want and not be dictated to by a large, urban centre." — Murray Ferguson.

"They might as well stop their arguing. I'm fed up. It's time to carry on with things. You're not going to stop progress. People think they're gonna have sidewalks and gutters running up and down their concessions, but things aren't going to change . . . it'll just be someone else governing. Our taxes are dear enough now, we might as well get some city service." — Cliff Carrothers Jr. said after the meeting.

— Compiled by Steven Heipel

OFFICIAL FLOWER DEBATE

Readers pick daisy over peony by 44-27 margin

But a few chose something entirely different and a couple wondered why they should choose anything.

By Sandra Coulson
The London Free Press

To paraphrase the late comedian W. C. Fields, "Good daisy, London."

Yes, it was the Shasta daisy by more than a head in a tally of the 78 flower fans who phoned or faxed The London Free Press with their choice for official flower of London — post-annexation.

They registered their votes on a flowery choice.

Should it be the Shasta daisy, already the favorite of Westminster, a town soon to be over-taken by annexation?

Or should it be the peony, the less-than-official flower of London, but one some city residents have taken to their heart?

The matter came to the attention of London board of control this week, courtesy of a suggestion from Shasta supporter Rita Veel, wife of the Westminster mayor, and the battle for the ultimate flower was on.

The final Free Press tally: 44 for the Shasta daisy, 27 for the peony, five who had other suggestions and three who were appalled anyone was wasting time on this.

Two humbugs actually suggested the skunk cabbage as an appropriate choice.

Oh yeah, answered the anti-daisy faction, have you ever smelled a Shasta daisy?

"Peonies have a fragrance that's lovely. The Shasta daisy smells funny when you pick it," said Nellie Blain.

And Louise Weekes said, "My vote is definitely for the peony as the Shasta daisy is a weed."

"Try wearing a peony in your lapel," said Gene Ennis.

But the comments weren't all negative. The factions could be just as florid for their own choice of flower.

The peony, we were told, is: "a much more stately flower."

"prettier and it has a color."

"a more old-fashioned, regal-type flower."

One city councillor sent in a cryptic vote too late to be counted in the poll. But it gets marks for subliminal messages. It said: Paul Edward O'Neil Yorke.

But the daisy crowd told us their

favorite:

"is brighter, perkier, lovelier and London could use a little bit of that."

"has some class."

"is a very fresh and long-lasting flower."

"stands straight and proud."

"is hardy, upright, fresh and sprightly."

"so pure and white and it lasts a long time."

Some voters mentioned politics as a reason to favor the Shasta daisy. "I think it's also a nice gesture to Westminster," said Marcia Barss.

Added Pauline Nanni: "It grows beautifully by the thousands in the soon-to-be-new fields of London and it would be a source of pride for all of us."

There's always the compromise suggested by Rosemary Norris: "I'm against annexation, so I think Westminster should keep the Shasta and London should keep the peony."



The Shasta daisy has been called a weed, but it's also been called clean, pure-looking, hardy and upright.