



The parties state their positions on education

Progressive Conservative Party

1. We are increasing annual education funding by an additional \$2 billion to \$16.2 billion, the highest in Ontario's history.
2. We will speed up and legislate the schedule for providing the Equity in Education tax credit to help parents who choose to send their children to independent schools. When fully implemented, it will save those parents up to \$3,500 per year in taxes.
3. Under an Ernie Eves government, high school students who cannot read and write will not graduate. We introduced the high school literacy test to make sure no graduate lacks these basic skills.
4. We will support Ontario's teachers by creating an award for teacher excellence to recognize the top teacher in each school district, as nominated by students and parents.
5. We will pass legislation making it illegal for teachers (and other school employees) to strike or stage work-to-rule campaigns, and for school boards to lock out their employees, during the school year.

Liberal Party

1. Our Excellence for All Plan guarantees that within our first mandate 75 per cent of our students meet or exceed the provincial standard on province wide tests.
2. We will put in place a real cap of 20 students per class in the all-important early grades.
3. We will create a meaningful high school diploma program that combines academic achievement and work preparation for students in danger of dropping out. We will make learning mandatory at age 18.
4. We will offer public school choice so that parents can decide which public school is right for their children.
5. We will not let schools fail because of a flawed funding formula. We will create a fair model to reflect the local needs of diverse communities.

New Democratic Party

1. We will immediately restore \$2 billion to our schools and classrooms and fully implement the recommendations of the Education Equality Task Force.
2. We will ensure public accountability by quickly passing a Charter of Rights for Education, making excellent public education a legal right for every student.
3. We will invest early to ensure every child the best start by offering full junior and senior kindergarten.
4. We will replace the expensive Conservative testing bureaucracy with student testing that will identify student strengths and areas where help is needed. Invest the savings to help students improve.
5. We will scrap the private school tax credit and put the money back into making every public school an excellent school. No public funds for private schools.

**Land Sake's
Alive
Look who's
Fifty-Five!**



**Happy Birthday,
Joanne MASSE
from Lawrence,
Adam, Angie
& Nick.**

**EMPLOYMENT
WANTED**

Certified Health Care Aide available for personal care, 9 years experience. Bondable. Please call 613-475-9512. 36v

In defence of eulogies

NORTHUMBERLAND WEEKLY SEPT 10, 2003

Following the recent funeral service of a volleyball player who collapsed and died at a tournament held at Victoria Beach in Cobourg, his coffin was brought to the beach. Surrounded by hundreds of relatives and friends in what must have been a moving and affecting part of the service, eulogies were given, remembering the very brief 22 years of life.

THE PASSING SCENE



Grahame Woods

It brought to mind a flurry of newspaper reports earlier this year following a pastoral letter sent by the Roman Catholic bishop of Calgary reminding priests and parishioners that eulogies are banned during the funeral mass (unless the deceased is Pierre Trudeau.) My morning paper has given me to understand eulogies

are not encouraged at funeral services in the Anglican Church — unless the deceased is Princess Diana — for fear of distracting from the liturgical message. Surely there is room for both.

Like most people, I have attended several funerals in my lifetime — held in funeral homes and different churches of the Christian faith — and, frankly, I have found most of them to be clinical in the extreme, emotionally distant and, worst of all, the deceased was almost an afterthought, lost in a morass of words delivered by rote by a minister or priest you just *knew* couldn't wait for it to be over so he could get on with the rest of his day. One funeral was over in 23 minutes. The deceased was 44 years old. Thirty seconds for each year of his life, give or take.

A funeral is the last opportunity to say goodbye — and, given the stressful speed of the funeral process, who of the bereaved has had the time, the moments of clarity, to prepare for that final farewell? So, eulogies, remembrances, gestures are cobbled together, *spontaneously* creating that which is lacking in so many funerals, held back by the historic demands of the liturgical message. And therein, perhaps, lies the problem: the inability, in the case of the Anglican Church, certainly, to accommodate societal change. Even though the Book of Common Prayer has been revised several times since 1549, it has not provided the opportunity, the space, for spontaneously expressed grief which, in part, could be one of the reasons attendance in the Anglican Church is steadily eroding. Nothing changes, moves with the times, instead remaining bogged down in historic *tradition*.

However, in parts of the Anglican

Church, free and spontaneous dancing and singing within the service is the norm. In this country, the word *obey* has been removed from the marriage ceremony, so change can be done. Apparently, the fear of some the orthodox churches is that, apart from distracting from the liturgical message, there is a risk eulogies will get out of hand, that inappropriate things could be said (and they have been), or could be ponderous and long-winded. Life is risk. Control is suffocating.

Grief and how we express it is a very personal thing. Through television we get a glimpse of how other cultures, other religions, freely display their grief. But, within our own emotionally retrained society, there

should be room within the funeral service for the expression, the outpouring if necessary, of that grief without fear of appearing *unseemly*. So, occasionally eulogies might get out of hand and inappropriate things said but that comes with the freedom of spontaneity — and if ever there was a man who would understand that, who was the personification of spontaneity (think turning over the tables in the temple, the loaves and fishes), it was Jesus Christ. He, I'm sure, would not only approve the bereaved being able to express themselves at a funeral, I would venture to suggest He might find the rigid pomp and ceremony of some services offensive; somewhat crass, overdone. When it comes to showing instinctive grief through eulogies at a funeral, as the Prayer Book (1662) says, "... let him come to me ... and open his grief."

This summer I attended the funeral of a neighbour, Jim Puddy, at Calvary Baptist Church in Cobourg. It was perhaps the most affecting funeral I've been to. The service was designed around and for Jim, led by a minister who cared, who spoke from the heart and made Jim the constant focus. It was *his* funeral and the congregation never lost sight of that.

There were several eulogies, the liturgical message was not lost and the mourners left the church having been *part* of the celebration of his life, having been embraced and moved by the experience that could truly be described as meaningful. It doesn't happen very often.

We should all take a lead from the Baptist book, cast off centuries-old cultural restraints. It is, after all, 2003.

Grahame Woods is a Cobourg-based writer.