

Winter of discontent

As this column is being written, I am sitting at my desk watching gusts of wind push tiny snowflakes through the air.

Given that for me winter ranks right up there with root canal, I apologize for not jumping up and down excitedly, catching snowflakes on my tongue.

I don't recall always hating winter. As a matter of fact, as a kid, I seem to remember enjoying it (I was a pretty stupid kid). Back then, seeing the first cumulative snowfall was something to be cheered. It meant that we could pull out our toboggans, and race to the crest of the hill at the ravine at the end of our street. There kids would meet, even those who normally didn't

associate due to age differences. After all, what 12-year-old would lower himself to associate with six- and seven-year-olds?

Once we mastered the "baby hill", it was time to move on to a much more daunting task - "the big hill," which was on the other side of the ravine.

To get there meant having to cross a tributary of Silver Creek. This tributary, 8" deep at most, is so small it doesn't even appear on the map of Georgetown. However, crossing it was important to us because it meant we were almost there - almost to the most feared hill in the area. The big hill!

Looking back, it's a wonder that those of us who conquered "the big hill" are still around. That we are not confined to wheelchairs or debilitated by excruciating back pain either speaks to dumb luck or to the fearlessness and resiliency of childhood.

Childhood memories ...

Still with our winter theme, Karen Wetmore, editor of *The Acton Tanner*, and I were discussing how nature often takes a cruel turn this time of year.

We both recall, as kids, assembling our respective costumes weeks ahead of time, modeling them and waiting anxiously for Halloween, Oct. 31.

You can bet that, just days before the big event, the weather would take a turn for the cold.

Both Karen and I can remember the disappointment of having to cover up our carefully constructed costumes with winter jackets and snow pants. The streets were teeming with youths whose bodies were desperately out of proportion to their costumed, masked or painted heads.

The end result made it appear that, in the netherworld, even the mothers of ghouls and goblins worry that their progeny might catch a cold.

Remember fallen heroes

Next Monday we will honour those who gave all they had so that Canadians could live in peace, free from tyrannical oppression.

On the beaches of Normandy, the cliffs of Dieppe, and Victoria Peak in Hong Kong, Canadian soldiers, sailors and airmen fought bravely, ultimately winning a bloody war, though the costs were incredibly high.

I've stood on Victoria Peak where Canadian and British soldiers were shot by Japanese invaders. Not far from there is a memorial to Allied soldiers who fought for the liberation of Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Chinese hold the site as sacred.

Like the Dutch, many Chinese, have chosen to make Canada home. Why? Could it be that we showed them our values in that we were willing to fight a war defending people we had never met?

Who wouldn't want to live in a nation which holds freedom so dear that its citizens are willing to give their lives to protect it?

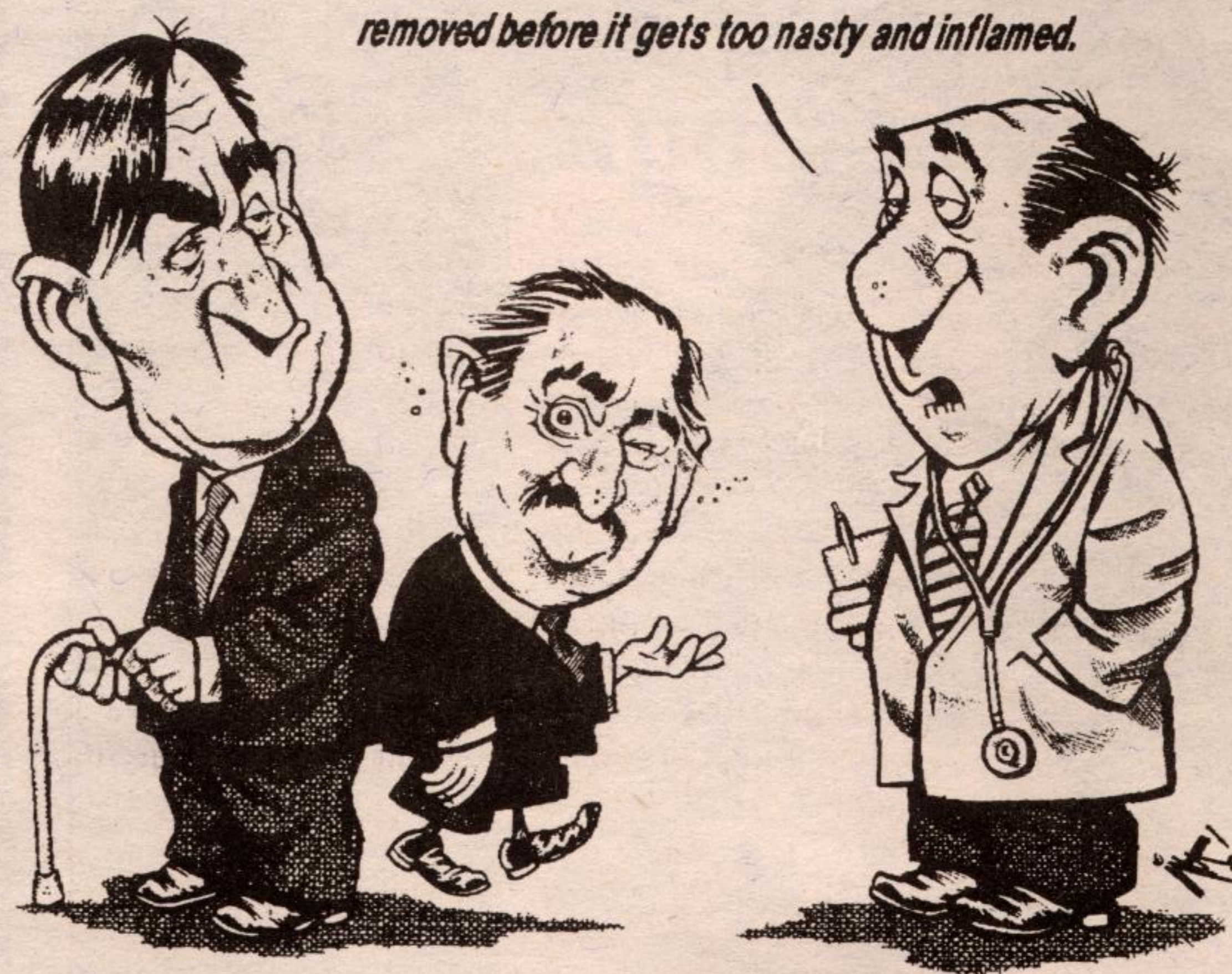
Jamie Harrison is a reporter for *The Georgetown Gemini*.

The View From Here

With
Jamie Harrison



As your Doctor, Monsieur Bouchard... I recommend that you have the growth on your buttock removed before it gets too nasty and inflamed.



Your LETTERS

Cut now, pay later

Editor's Note: The following open letter was filed with The Gemini for publication. It was addressed to MPP Janet Ecker, Minister of Community and Social Services, and to Halton North MPP Ted Chudleigh.

To the Editor,
This letter is regarding Ontario's Child Care Review. We are very worried about the proposed reduction in grants for staff wages. Parents paying full fees for child care services cannot be asked to pay even more to cover the loss. Fees are very high as they are now.

Wage enhancements were implemented to avoid qualified staff from leaving a very poorly paid job. Before those grants existed, day care teachers were the ones subsidizing the system.

However, that is not the only problem we see with the Review. The fact that fewer parents will

qualify for subsidies will put more parents on welfare.

Also, if recreational and YMCA/YWCA programs obtain subsidies for summer programs there will be fewer children coming to our centres. And to have more school-aged children looked after at home child cares will have a direct effect on centres like ours, offering a before- and after-school program at two local schools.

While this seems to benefit the taxpayers (we are all taxpayers one way or another), the fact is there will be fewer dollars going to the economy of Georgetown, as several day care teachers will have no jobs. We already saw this when the Region had to freeze subsidized spaces to compensate for the loss of 20 per cent of JobsOntario dollars.

We have a 30 per cent vacancies rate now.

We hope the Crombie Report will bring good news for all of us, at the local, regional and provincial levels, to help raise healthy children who won't require more expensive correctional services later on in their lives.

Lucy Quaglia and staff at
Moore Place Day Care,
Main Street, North

Keep promises: NHADH

Editor's note: The following open letter to Halton North MPP Ted Chudleigh from the North Halton Association for the Developmentally Handicapped was filed with The Gemini for publication.

To the Editor,
At our Annual General Members meeting, our Association unanimously passed the following motion:

Whereas most developmentally handicapped adults' sole incomes are from Provincial GAINS allowances;

And whereas the Province is responsible for providing basic medical and dental services and prescription drugs for such persons;

And whereas the government has publicly made a commitment not to reduce benefits to the disabled in carrying out its objective of reducing public expenditures;

And whereas the government has violated its commitment to the disabled by requiring the disabled pay a portion of their prescription fees from their current basic GAINS allowances;

And whereas this severely undermines the quality of life of those with disabilities who need regular prescription drugs;

Therefore, we demand that the Ontario government honour its promise to the disabled by restoring full payment for prescription fees incurred by the disabled.

We believe that you should be advocating for the best interests of the most disadvantaged person in society. We request that you bring this concern to the attention of the caucus and government, and advocate the full restoration of benefits for such persons as was promised.

Bob McTavish
President, NHADH

THE GEMINI

Publisher & Editor
Paul Nolan

Office Manager
Linda Hayes

Editorial Staff
Kyle Goodlet
Jamie Harrison
Frances Niblock
Joanne Stevenson

Advertising Staff
Lynne Buscher
Trish Henry

Production Staff
Kim Konarzycki

Distribution Manager
Marie Shadbolt

Regular Contributors
Bill Ellis
Eve Martin
Steve Martin
Mike O'Leary
Alex Tough

THE GEORGETOWN GEMINI is published weekly on Wednesdays by Wicklow Hills Publishing Co. Inc. Mailing address: P.O. Box 145, Georgetown, Ont., L7G 4T1. Phone: (905) 877-1113. Fax: (519) 853-5040. Georgetown administrative office: Personal Secretarial Services, Unit 47, 360 Guelph St., L7G 4B5. Reproduction without permission is prohibited. Ideas expressed herein are those of the author only.

AD SALES: Publisher is responsible for errors in advertisements to extent of cost of that portion of the space occupied by erroneous item.

PHONE THE GEM:
(905)877-1113
FAX THE GEM:
(519)853-5040