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# Backbench Tories have it tough

If you were to approach any backbench Tory MP and ask whether being on the government side is more enjoyable than being in opposition, you would probably hear a resounding "Yes".

After all, you could hardly expect a Conservative MP to suggest otherwise. Anything else would be, effectively, campaigning for defeat.

Conversely, you won't find any Liberal MPs saying they get much satisfaction occupying the opposition benches. That, too, would be tantamount to campaigning for the status quo.

But for the average backbench MP, life on the opposition side is, by a long shot, more satisfying, more fun and certainly easier, than on the government side.

In the last two days, I've spent a long period with two Conservative MPs - neither of whom seems destined for cabinet - and they say that, compared with their years in opposition, this is the pits.

"It might be okay for those here for the first time," said one of the members. "But once you've had a few years in opposition, this isn't much fun - particularly not when the

government is basically unpopular."

He said he was frustrated because, despite representing a riding with relatively few problems, "it's a bitch, bitch, bitch about the government."

**DRASTIC CHANGE**

The other MP talked of his "great days" when the Trudeau Liberals were in power. Everyone in his riding seemed to dislike the government; all he had to do was "agree with them and pledge to get rid of the prime minister."

His colleague added that "Whenever constituents become very concerned about a particular issue, I made sure I railed about it in Parliament and mailed our copies of Hansard."

"But you can't keep railing about your own government. And neither can you go home on weekends and agree with the criticism. Besides, you have to be well informed on what's going on and why."

Said the other: "Days in my constituency office used to be fun. Sure there were problems but no one expected me to do more than bring it to the attention of a government that was usually a perceived enemy in the first place. And if I didn't get action, it was simply proving my point that the Liberals had to go."

Either the questioners appear as patsies, or else you run the risk of being a rebel.

"What most people don't realise is that the questions themselves are not important. What counts is the shot you take at the government in the preface to the question, and you can't do much of that from where I sit."

Another fact of political life is that it's usually easier to get the ear of a cabinet minister or a deputy minister when in opposition. "I guess it's human nature to bend over backwards to prove you're fair," said one. "Also, there are just so damned many of us in the Tory caucus..."

With the government's current unpopularity, not to mention the scandals, both agreed this is a particularly difficult time to be a conservative backbencher.

"And while I don't object to the difficulty," said one, "I object to constantly being an apologist."

If an election were held now, said the 15-year veteran, "I don't think I would run again."

The seven-year MP said he "probably would - but I bet you'd be surprised at the number who wouldn't."

## Ottawa Report

By Stewart MacLeod

"I could go home on weekends and not have to defend one piece of legislation, or have to think of explanations for low wheat prices, unemployment or federal-provincial fights. All I had to do was say, 'It will never get better until we get rid of

## Sharing freely

It's music to our ears to learn the Georgetown Girls Pipe Band has won the Citizen of the Year award for Georgetown.

The Lions Club selection committee made an excellent choice.

The accomplishments and talents of the Girls Pipe Band are known to many. The group made us proud to say we're part of Halton Hills when they won their award this past summer at the World Piping Championships in Scotland.

It's important the Band be recognized for all the effort they've put into their music. The training is rigorous for members - especially at the level of competition they've chosen to play in.

But beyond their own practice schedule and fundraising efforts, the band has sacrificed and been a true friend to residents in town.

The winners of the Citizen of the Year award give freely of their time for a number of community-related events. They are visible at all sorts of parades in town during the year, supporting special causes and setting a pleasant, uplifting mood with the unmistakable hum of their traditional bagpipes.

When community groups are considered for recognition, the Pipe Band is a worthy choice, anytime. They're loyal to their music and loyal to the community they represent. It's not just the excellence of their music the Lions committee is recognizing - it's the Band's willingness to share freely of their talents with others.

## Too much at stake

Are Burlington politicians just good poker players, or are they playing with a marked deck?

Charges that Burlington has been coy with neighbouring municipalities about a potential dump site in Acton were diffused last week.

Burlington councillors deflected criticism that they haven't told all. We can accept that, but we're fully aware our neighbour to the south is pulling out all stops to ensure it won't be the recipient of another landfill site.

It's not deviousness that leads Burlington to search out alternatives to solve Halton's garbage crisis.

With the top two candidate sites narrowed down to Burlington and Milton, politicians from both centres are doing all they can to protect their turf.

All of the lobbying by their political representatives is bound to be partisan. There is no "top choice" for a dump when no one wants a dump in his municipality.

That's why consultants and staff can pull out all sorts of data proving why one site is better than another and the information won't be accepted at face value.

No one is going to the environmental assessment hearings prepared to lose. Too much is at stake already. Millions of dollars have been spent on research and tests.

Burlington will turn a blind eye to the fact that it could save \$2.1 million by having a garbage dump on its own land rather than if it was in Milton over a 20 year period. Nor does it matter to Burlington that it produces 42 per cent of the Region's garbage, by far the largest consumer of waste in Halton.

We don't blame the politicians who are rightly supporting the wishes of their constituents in this landfill battle. In the end, however, partisan considerations will have to make way for the clear, cold, hard facts of the matter.

## Attitudes changing



**Staff comment**

By SANDY CAMPBELL  
Herald Staff

Joining the police no longer means saying goodbye to friends and neighbors until the date of retirement from the force. Police seem to be gaining more public approval every year.

Calling the men in blue "pigs" is becoming less and less common. Perhaps because not there are also women in blue.

The image of the police officer has changed. Men who look like they could hold up a car as easy as jack one up are not what to expect on today's police forces.

The odd musclemen will certainly be on the force, but they will be sharing their cruiser with someone more likely to use a lock. The constitution and equal rights groups are fighting the battles for the little guys who know they can do the job just as well.

Police forces are leading the crusade to change their image. They have an emphasis on educated police officer. Applicants with a sociology, psychology or other training have greater opportunity on the force. Crime is being fought more often with a different muscle - the brain.

Police are using preventative measures rather than spending time in cop and robber chases. Statistics and computers are proving to be more effective crime fighters than fast cars, legs or bullets.

The trend toward preventative crime fighting is bringing the police further into the community, where they are able to mingle and teach. Barriers between the public and police are crumbling.

The Toronto police department's motto, To Serve and Protect, could apply to any police force. An updated version of that motto might be To Serve and Work With.

More and more, those responsible for catching criminals are those not on a police force but those who may have been trained by a policeman. Community organizations such as Neighborhood Watch, Block Parents are an indication of how much the police and public rely on one another.

Having the entire community work with police is an ideal which will never be reached. After all, someone has to be the criminal. But it is an ideal police forces seem to be working on, and one which everyone except the criminal benefits from.

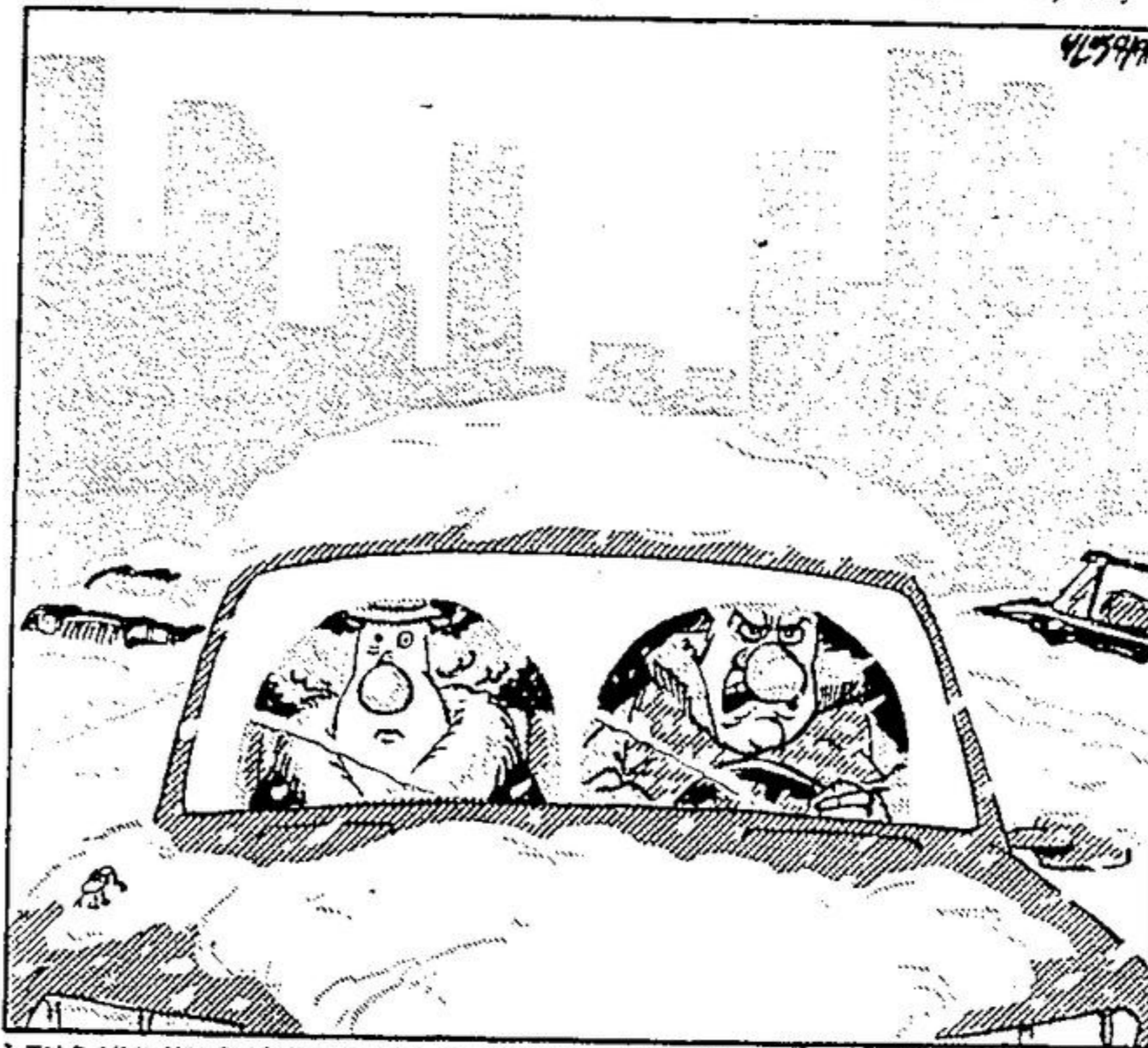
This is definitely a time when the trustworthiness of all types of government officials is in question. Civil servants have been caught stealing tax records and almost every week some politician is having his or her character questioned.

Police are weathering this storm whispering scandal very well lately. At a time when scandal is so common this is all the more impressive. After all, people are less frightened about yelling "Police brutality!" than they once were.

Police can actually gain points for their part in scandals. It is good to see them enforcing the law and bringing in big fish, even for little crimes. The image of police was not hurt when Solicitor General Kenneth Keyes was charged for drinking on an O.P.F. boat.

Issues such as capital punishment show that the tide is turning in favor of the police. More people would like to see capital punishment return today than ten years ago.

To see how the public feels about police one doesn't have to look farther than a television guide to our attitudes. There are more shows on police than almost anything else and almost all of those shows cast a favorable light on police.



## Citizens' forum

### Value to movie Amerika

**Dear Sir,**

In spite of its shortcomings, there were a couple of reasons to like the TV series "Amerika".

One premise of the show was that the US was taken over with no apparent resistance. Apparently, its nuclear arsenals were no deterrent and no defence. If they had been used, there would have been nothing to

take over and no one to do the taking over! Considering this movie was made by "hawks", it seems like a fine argument for scrapping these costly and useless arsenals altogether.

A second valid point the series made is that people were not involved or interested enough in their country's politics before the

takeover; they left it all to the "experts". Are we doing that now?

Let's all tell our politicians that there's only one way to survive: compromise and peaceful co-existence with the rest of the world, not hatred and an unrestricted arms race.

Yours truly,  
Janet Duval

### Save a cat

**Dear Sir,**

As soon as the cold weather arrives, cats become more susceptible to a painful death or injury; being literally "ripped to shreds" in the fun or fumes of a vehicle. During cold weather, cats tend to huddle around the engines of vehicles in a desperate attempt to keep warm. This unfortunate, albeit understandable, habit leads to the deaths or injuries for numerous cats annually in Ontario.

Cats tend to crawl under the hood of parked vehicles. Once the owner returns to the vehicle and starts the engine, the cat is unaware of the imminent danger until it is too late. These unfortunate accidents could be eliminated, or drastically reduced, if the person driving the vehicle hinged on the hood of the vehicle or honked the horn prior to starting the engine. Do not make the mistake of keeping the horn and then immediately turning on the engine. Vehicles equipped with space heaters are more likely to attract cats seeking warmth.

Alerting any cats lurking under the hood of your vehicle should be done each time you start the engine. This way you will develop a habit of alerting cats and will be

less likely to forget. While cats are less likely to crawl up under the hood of a vehicle in the warmer weather, being curious creatures they have been known to do so. So, before starting your vehicle's engine, alert those felines which might be seeking shelter under the hood of your vehicle.

Sincerely,  
N. Glenn Perret  
Humane Education Coordinator  
Ontario Humane Society

We are, indeed, lucky to have such a facility in our area. But as with most things, it is only as good as the people who work there.

My thanks to everyone at the Bennett Centre.

Yours sincerely,  
Maureen Atkinson,  
Georgetown

### PR helps us

**Dear Sir,**

The Blood Donor Committee of the Georgetown Red Cross would like to thank you for your help in the promotion of the Feb. 9 Public Choice through the full-page ad which appeared in The Herald, Feb. 4, and Outlook, Feb. 6.

Many of our donors commenting on this large ad said it gave them a strong reminder. As you know, we did reach our collection quota of 325 units for which the Toronto Blood Centre was very grateful, as collections have been "under" for the past month.

We greatly appreciate your support and initiative in setting up such an effective page. Our program can never have too much exposure!

Yours truly,  
Erica Thompson, Flo Street,  
Chairman, Blood Donor Recruitment, Georgetown Red Cross

### Caring staff

**Dear Sir,**

Over the past year we all have read many negative things about nursing homes and the care of the elderly. Unfortunately a lot of what is written is, I'm sure, true.

I feel I must write about the Bennett Health Care Centre in Georgetown. This is a bright, new, modern nursing home, but more important it is filled with a staff of loving and caring people.

My grandmother was a resident there for two years and I always left there feeling good, knowing that she was well cared for. As a nurse I noticed all the extras that are done, despite the heavy work load of caring for the elderly.

### In your opinion

## Fighting the February blahs



**F R E D SCHIMDT:** "A little bit. There hasn't been enough snow for good country skiing, and I'm not going anywhere, and I had to help my wife paint the living room last week, but it's looking up now with the nice weather."

**JIM SNOOK:** "No, not really. I don't usually get it. My wife gets it more than me. I've found that country skiing, now that we've had a bit of snow, is a nice February than January."

**SUSAN LINNARD:** "No, well, because we're doing lots of fun things, going skiing and gosh, it's a nice February than January."

**DEBRA SCOTT:** "No, not in the last week or so. It's been too nice. I usually do get them, though."

**P A U L A GRAVER:** "No, because we've been skiing every weekend. We're from Quebec and we're used to lots of snow. We've skied every weekend since January."

**JILL MAHER:** "No, I guess because I'm a student teacher and I've had a break from school. It's something different, and it's been so nice out in terms of weather."

Question: Do you have the February blahs?

## Halton's History

from our files

**30 years ago**

Harrison Public School opened its doors for the first time. The new school is staffed by nine teachers and has an enrolment of 325. Harold Henry is the principal.

John and Ethel McClure of Georgetown announced the birth of their son, William John, on Feb. 21 and weighs 7lbs 5oz. He is a brother for Mary Jane McClure.

John W. Bell of 39 Main Street South was elected for a second term as president of the North Halton Golf and Country Club. William McNally was elected vice-president.

The Georgetown Women's Institute marked their diamond anniversary with a banquet at the Fairview Inn. Mr. Rawson, the president, welcomed 37 ladies to the celebration of 60 years.

**15 years ago**

Georgetown's first full-time fire chief was hired. He is Kenneth Buikema of Burlington. Mr. Buikema has been a member of the Burlington Fire Department since 1963.

The 1972 election of officers for St. George's Anglican Church was completed. The Anglican Church Women re-elected Mrs. Grant Johnston as president. The Men's Club chose Roger Cooper as their new president.

The Georgetown Lion's Club presented a cheque for \$2,500 to Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital to help buy a heart-reading machine. Lion Ed. Wakefield presented the cheque to Dr. Frank Richards.

**10 years ago**

John Gibson of Georgetown was elected president of the Canadian Amputee Sports Association at the group's foundation meeting in Toronto. Representatives from across Canada attended the meeting.

Two Halton Hills residents were presented with the highest awards given by the Canadian Cancer Society. The Certificate of Service for outstanding commitment went to Marjorie Mackenzie and George Henderson.

Wrestling coaches Ray Smith and Bob McKay led the GDHS Rebels to a Peel-Halton championship. After qualifying 16 wrestlers, veterans Brent Collier, Steve Cropper and Frank Lenski had to default because of injuries.

Nancy Wong is the Area Regional Champion in the Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championships. She won the competition for 12 year olds in Kitchener.

**5 years ago**

The Georgetown Volunteer Ambulance Service celebrated their 25th Anniversary and elected the new executive. Daryl Giberson was elected president and Bill Moore is the new vice-president.

Dr. Gabor Madarasz had taken over as the new director of the Georgetown Chiropractic Clinic on Mill Street. The Clinic was previously operated by the late Gerry Corbett.

The Georgetown District Gigh School swim team won the junior overall, senior overall and team overall trophies at the Halton swim championships. Cheryl Thomson set two Halton records. They were in the senior girls' 100m individual medley and the 100m breaststroke.

Dave Bouffe returned to the GDHS gymnastics team to lead the Seniors to second place in the Red and White Invitational. He was the best all-round Senior.

## Poet's Corner

**COME CLEAN**

Live a life of love and trust  
It's only weakness, turns out  
Live a life your promise keep  
Let your loved ones rest in sleep  
In your life you have no shame  
A free conscience is a wonderful gain  
As your family will follow your steps  
You lead them through trouble deep.

There are times you slunk or swim  
Watch your step, and you will win  
God will help you along life's way  
He will lead you every day.

—By ALBERT ROOKS