

# Break a leg

Theatre in Georgetown is finally getting its just reward. For years, Globe Productions and Georgetown Little Theatre have been performing excellent theatre. But this year, collectively, the two groups outshone other amateur theatre entries by a large margin.

Though it may be boastful and bold, why not call us the amateur theatre capital of Ontario? Or the theatre entertainment centre of Halton?

Last week at the community theatre awards presentations, the troupes brought home five THEA awards and were nominated for an additional nine THEA's.

This is the Academy Awards of community theatre and you can bet there's a lot of people out there just wondering how Georgetown can produce all this theatre talent.

However, this isn't the first nor the second time both theatre groups have won at the annual awards event.

But this dominant showing surely shows a maturing of the talent which has been nurtured over the years. Members have stayed together and weathered the good times and the bad, always coming back for another performance the following season.

Rather than getting stale, cast and crew are always learning by their mistakes, bringing in fresh talent and, most important of all, staying creative.

Also, they've worked hard to finance and furnish full-time facilities for their sets, costumes and cast.

How lucky we are to have a committed bunch of actors and behind-the-scenes theatre types providing us with a variety of plays such as comedies, musicals and thrillers each season.

And now, more than ever, theatre people throughout Ontario are beginning to appreciate the talent that has emerged from this small community.

# Setting limits

Bravo to town councillors who decided not to pay more than \$7 million worth of liability insurance coverage.

It's absurd the prices governments and businesses are having to pay to protect themselves.

It used to be that a financial security net to cover liability claims didn't cost an arm and a leg.

But court judgements have been skyrocketing—especially in the United States. Closer to home, a Brampton claim for over \$7 million is being appealed.

More has to be done to curtail the trend. Sensible decisions like that of the town council can help to moderate insurance costs we all end up paying for.

It would be nice if insurance companies had more people and institutions saying to them that enough is enough. As well, lawyers and judges should pay close attention to the public outcry over ridiculous insurance increases. The courts are supposed to reflect our opinions and to ensure that justice is done.

Inflating liability penalties beyond what is affordable is causing a crisis for hundreds of businesses and institutions.

For example; a school which is threatened by increasing insurance costs to the point where all or part of an athletic program is scrapped; or a restaurant that can't find a low enough liability premium to stay in business.

Though it may be a small gesture, the town is sending a message to the insurance industry and to the courts that there is a limit to what we will all pay.

The panic of 1986 is giving way in 1987 to a more thoughtful evaluation of insurance claims and costs.

# A rising star



Editor's notebook

By Dave Rowney

John McDermid, the rising star of the falling comet?

The Herald set out to investigate the potential of our Brampton-Georgetown MP. Rumors have been mentioned on two separate occasions, months apart in fact, that Mr. McDermid might be a candidate for a cabinet post in the Mulroney government.

Senior reporter Ani Pederian has compiled a series of articles on the MP who has served this riding for over 10 years.

There were definitely some surprises resulting from her research. From the beginning, I think we both believed we'd find enough praise from his fellow Conservatives. But even neutral observers and critics had an array of kind words for the veteran backbencher-turned-parliamentary assistant.

We can only conclude he's a rising star worthy of a promotion.

In Ottawa, Mr. McDermid is thought of as hard-working, trustworthy, genuine and dedicated—which makes you wonder why he wasn't chosen sooner for a cabinet post.

Timing is so crucial in politics along with geography. Unfortunately for Mr. McDermid he's had to take his lumps with both.

Certainly being Joe Clark's cam-

paign strategist during the PC leadership race didn't help his chances for a cabinet seat when Brian Mulroney won. Being a member of parliament from Ontario along with so many other members did not help his chances for a quick advancement, either.

Now, time is running out for the Brampton-Georgetown MP to prove what he can do, running his own department as a cabinet minister. Sometime before September 1989 an election will have to be called. If the Prime Minister follows parliamentary tradition, we could be going to the polls in 1988 if not sooner.

In the meantime, the MP's work in the community hasn't been overlooked. Mayor Russ Miller has said on more than one occasion that Mr. McDermid has responded quickly to his phone calls and has been generally helpful. Around the community, he's attended social functions.

I particularly remember one time he dropped into the youth centre near the Georgetown high school called Open Door. He patiently answered a series of well thought out questions by students on a variety of topics. He may not have won over many supporters, but he reasoned out each decision his party had made, earning the respect of the small group who attended.

Regardless of his party stripe, Mr. McDermid has put in his time and has proven he's got the ability to be a cabinet minister. At least he deserves a chance while there's time still available before the next election.

# WRITE US A LETTER

What do you think about what is happening in Halton Hills...across the nation and around the world?

All letters must be signed and include an address: your phone number should be listed in order for us to verify the signature. Please keep your letter brief and to the point. The maximum length is 400 words.

Send your letters to: The Herald, 45 Guelph Street, Georgetown, Ont., L7G 3Z6.

# What is a political party for?

Toronto—What is a political party for?

That was the background question to a recent fascinating CBC Dateline Ontario show with the NDP's provincial secretary Brian Harling.

I wasn't really answered the way you might expect, which is that a political party is a vehicle for achieving power for implementing one's ideas.

But it probably was answered accurately.

"What is important for the New Democratic Party is that the members and supporters of the party feel that we are, in fact, talking about the issues that matter to working people," Harling said.

Leaving aside the fact that the majority of "working people" don't think those issues matter enough to actually vote for the NDP it is true that New Democrats put a much higher premium on policy than on personality.

It is an emphasis that has cost them in the past; for example, when they elected Michael Cassidy as leader. When voters contrasted him to Bill Davis in the 1981 election they deserted the NDP in droves.



Queen's Park

By Derek Nelson

But it is an emphasis that makes the NDP important in another way.

The reporters questioning Harling asked him what would happen if the Liberals stole the NDP's anti-insurance company plank for themselves?

It was one of the few big issues still remaining between the two parties (actually, all three Ontario old-line parties).

The Grits had already stolen issues like pay equity and extra-billing, with the result that the public saw no need to vote for the NDP to get NDP policy.

Harling had an answer.

"There may be a difficulty for us if the Liberals become New Democrats in public perception and implement the policies that we have been advocating, including public auto insurance."

"But I think you misunderstand what the Ontario NDP is all about and what motivates people in the party."

"This is not a party that people come to or get involved with, if you like, as a result of opportunism or an opportunity to advance in their careers."

"If we can get (government auto insurance) by electing more people or by forcing the (Liberal) government to do it, we'll take it whichever way we can get it."

In short, New Democrats care more about seeing the world evolve the way they want it to than about any short-term concern over being elected.

"What we have done as the third party has been to set the agenda and to set the course for Ontario politics and achieve very considerable improvement," Harling suggested.

Now, that isn't a new analysis by any means.

But as the boundaries between the three old-line parties blur more with every passing day, it is worthwhile being reminded that the reason for the three of them looking the same is

that the Liberals and Conservatives have essentially become New Democrats in careerist clothing.

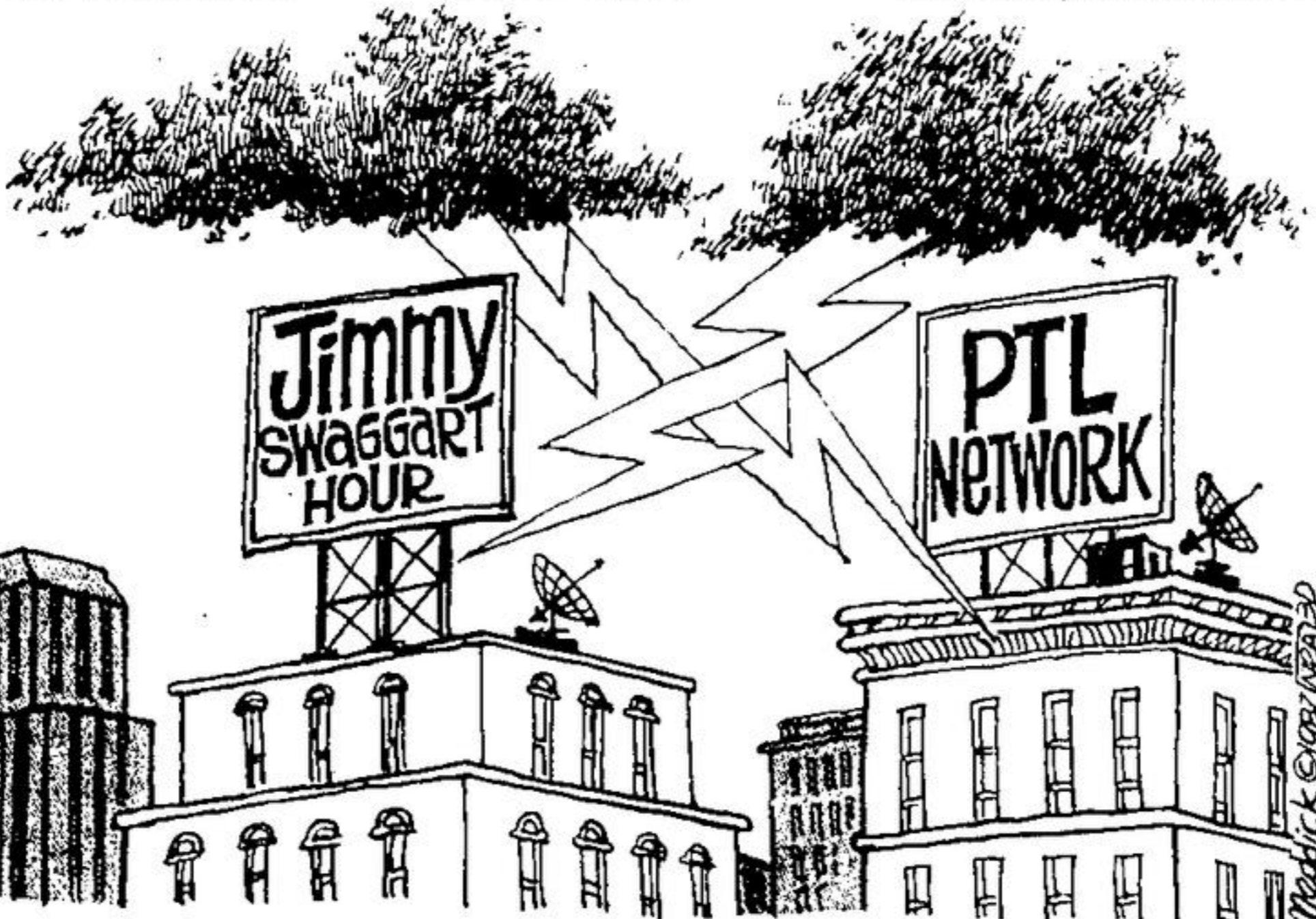
If there are any principles motivating Tories and Grits beyond the desire for power, it is difficult to know what they are.

True, an occasional fight like the one Conservatives waged against the ban on extra-billing does indicate a few residual beliefs that haven't yet been compromised, but there aren't many.

It all comes back to that question which Harling implicitly answered. What is a political party for?

The NDP answer is that its job is to change the world. And in the context of Canada it has certainly achieved its aim (thanks, partly, to a media which elevates NDP ideas, if not the party, to the status of mainstream thinking and common wisdom).

It is both sad and illustrative that you would never find a Conservative or Liberal backroom equivalent of Harling who would discuss their party's achievements in the way the New Democrat did his.



# Time may be right for car air bags

VINCENT EGAN



On Business

Even thinking about a head-on car crash is a nightmare — your car coming to an abrupt stop against another car, a tree, a bridge abutment, while its momentum drives your body forward against the steering column and then the windshield.

A reliable and effective device for minimizing the risk of death, or serious injury and facial disfigurement, has been in existence for many years: The airbag.

It's a small, plastic bag that, in a head-on collision, instantly becomes a big, air-filled pillow, helping to keep the driver safely in position.

The federal transport department last week held an auto-safety seminar in Ottawa, highlighting the role that the airbag could play.

And the following day, Ford Motor Co. of Canada called a news conference to demonstrate the airbag system that it is offering as an option on its 1987 Ford Tempo and Mercury Topaz compacts — the two biggest-selling marques in Canada.

Nobody, apparently, disputes the value of airbags in head-on collisions. The U.S. transport department has estimated that, if all cars were equipped with them, 8,500 lives would be saved annually, and tens of thousands of injuries (largely to the head and face) would be avoided.

What, then, has been holding back the use of airbags, throughout the nearly 20 years that they have been a practical reality?

— You haven't been able to buy them, except on inordinately expensive imported cars and, between 1974 and 1976, on some Buicks, Oldsmobiles and Cadillacs.

(An Eastern Ontario driver bought a used Oldsmobile, not knowing it was airbag-equipped — until he subsequently survived a head-on highway collision.)

— Too much has been made of airbags' supposed shortcomings. Granted, they are useless in other than head-on collisions — but that's an irrelevant criticism. Despite conjecture that they might be activated inadvertently, that has never been known to happen.

— It seems to go against human nature to protect oneself against a possibility as remote and as unpleasant as a head-on collision. (Similarly, human nature impels many people to avoid making a will. Airbags aren't bought; they have to be sold — and dealers' interest in selling them seems to be slight.)

Safety, it seems, isn't sexy. In vain, Ford heavily advertised such safety innovations as "deep-dish" steering wheels (to yield a little on impact) and padded instrument panels, in the mid-1950s.

Here's a possible solution to the impasse. Require that new cars be designed and built with two cavities for airbags — one in front of the driver, the other on the passenger side. That would make it feasible for safety-conscious car-owners to buy and install airbag modules in the aftermarket, probably at a much reduced price.

# Citizens' forum

## Disbelief in board's Action

Dear Sir: I have recently been informed that my obstetrician-gynaecologist, Doctor Jack Ford has been stripped of his hospital privileges following a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Georgetown Hospital on April 7, 1987. It is my understanding that this decision was related to Doctor Ford by Mr. Marc Hochon, Executive Director of Georgetown Hospital and Dr. Boyd Hoddinott, Chief of Staff.

Having been a patient of Doctor Ford for the last seven years, I must express my amazement and disbelief at this action. Doctor Ford has consistently given to me the best of medical care. He has delivered two of my children and to this day still remembers their names. They are now six and five years old respectively. At all times Doctor Ford has been totally professional, competent, thorough and caring. I have always felt fortunate to be treated by a physician with such experience and commitment to his patients.

As a patient of Doctor Ford and as a tax-paying resident of the Georgetown community I want to be advised of the reasons why such an extraordinary decision was made and acted upon. The suspension of hospital privileges directly affects Doctor Ford's ability to practice his chosen profession which is dependent on access to the Hospital facilities. It also affects Doctor Ford's professional reputation, his wife and his children, and his very livelihood.

More to the point this decision directly and adversely affects his patients some of whom were in hospital. It also affects those scheduled for surgery and those close to their due dates for delivering their babies. I am sure that alternate arrangements have been made for such patients; however, the fact remains that the patient's right to be treated by the doctor of her choice has been removed by a process into which we, the patients, have no input.

The reasons for this suspension of privileges should be made public. This decision has unnecessarily

besmirched the professional reputation of a respected man. It's divisive effects are already spreading through our community. In fairness to the Board of Directors, the medical staff, the nursing staff, Doctor Ford and his family and his patients, this matter warrants a public hearing immediately. A brief official statement is an inadequate response to so serious a matter as this.

Respectfully yours  
Mrs. Bonnie Jordan

## Need more say about hospital

Dear Sir, Concerning Hospital Board

1) The town councillors on the Hospital board - are they there to report back to the town events happening at Board Meetings - even if it has to be reported "in camera". Why was this not done?

2) If they are to report to the town and do not, then are they worthy of holding an elected position supposedly representing the taxpayers?

3) How are the Board Members nominated (16 in all)? Most of the public has no idea who they are if they want to seek information. We know who our councillors are because they are elected by us.

4) Could an election system not be used for Members of the Hospital Board in the not too distant future?

5) As taxpayers and contributors to the Ontario Health System, we should have more knowledge and say in what goes on in our Hospital.

Donna Robin  
(and 103 more signatures)

## Death penalty deters murder

The Rt. Hon. Mr. Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister of Canada, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Sir: I am a single parent and a mature student at Georgetown District High School with Grade 12 law as one of my subjects. As a concerned and voting citizen, I would like to express my views regarding the reinstatement of capital punishment.

I have discussed this matter at length with my parents, brother, sister and neighbours and we all agree that the present laws must change to protect society. Since Parliament under the Liberal government in 1976 voted against capital punishment, murders have increased across this country.

In 1976, a Dr. Philbrook, then a representative of Halton Riding, conducted a survey in this area and more than sixty-five percent of the people voted to keep capital punishment. Dr. Philbrook voted with Mr. Trudeau against capital punishment and won with a mere six votes. Dr. Philbrook did not represent the people of Halton Riding according to the survey and was not voted in for another term in office. The taxpayers will not pay a representative \$75,000 per year plus fringe benefits to dishonor their electorates wishes.

I sincerely believe that anyone convicted of premeditated murder deserves the death penalty, regardless of who they murder. The death penalty administered should be by a lethal injection and within two weeks of being sentenced. Anyone convicted of second degree murder or if there is only circumstantial evidence against them, should be imprisoned for life, not just twenty-five years. While imprisoned they should be made to earn their keep and not expect the taxpayers to feed and cloth them. Each member of parliament should go to his or her constituency and find out what the wishes of the electorate are and vote accordingly.

We firmly believe, along with more than eighty per cent of this nation, that the death penalty is a deterrent to murder. The tax money saved, approximately \$55,000 per year, per prisoner, I'm sure could be put to a much better use.

Maureen Krasznai  
Acton, Ontario.

## In your opinion

# Credit River craziness



Greg Herron: We've been doing it for the last five years so what's the difference?



Ann Drudge: Because last year I was bored standing on the shore and I said "this is exciting!"



Daisy Sawirski: Because I wanted to get wet and show off my body.



Donna Holodryzuk: Last year I speculated and this year I decided I had to do it.



Tracy Mansup: Because it's fun wwo!



Dave Kuznecon: I took the plunge to beat our buddies!

Question: What made you decide to take the plunge into the frigid waters of the Credit River for the Crazy Boat Race?

## THEY MELT

IF WISHES WERE FRIENDS I'D NEVER HAVE AN EMPTY DAY IF WISHES WERE GIFTS MY WHOLE LIFE WOULD BE ONE BIG BIRTHDAY WISHES ARE COTTON CANDY THAT MELT AND FADE AWAY

—By MARLOWE C. DICKSON  
R.R. 2 Beeton.