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Editorial

What a line

Federal minister of state for small business Tom Hockin gave us a great line Saturday when he said an Acton woman is "one of the heroes of this country" for working hard to stay off the welfare system.

Eliane Snels said she applied for a dental plan but she was told the government would put her on the full welfare package instead.

Ms. Snels, a single mother, said she worked hard to get off welfare and she is worried about being "pulled... back into it."

We agree with Mr. Hockin. People who work hard to actually get less government assistance are contributing to the well-being of the rest of us.

But we wonder if Mr. Hockin will put Ms. Snels out of his mind when he's back in his comfortable Ottawa office.

Most concerned Canadians, we suspect, would be on the telephone the next day to Health and Welfare Minister Perrin Beatty if they were in Mr. Hockin's position.

Somehow though, we suspect that won't happen.

Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce General Manager Doug Penrice said welfare administrators have "lost touch with the real world."

But the administrators follow policies set by the politicians.

It's up to the people at the top to get their house in order and to see to it that more cases like that of Ms. Snels doesn't happen.

But after countless examples of excess spending by the federal government appearing recently in the daily press, we're not holding our breath.

On a footnote to Mr. Hockin's comments are comments made by Halton-Peel MP Garth Turner at that same public meeting.

Mr. Turner said the proposed nine per cent Goods and Services Tax could be lowered to seven per cent by cancelling proposed tax rebates to lower and middle income earners and by taxing groceries.

Such a move would go to great lengths to make sure people like Ms. Snels end up at the front of the welfare line.

We hope the government isn't seriously considering taxing food.

With a tax on items they may be able to do without, low income earners may be able to gauge their spending.

Perhaps we should give the government a gentle reminder that we all need to eat. Regardless of income.

Who needs deadlines?



Brian MacLeod
Editor's Notebook

Deadlines.

In journalism we live and die by them.

And our weekend Outlook paper was a case in point.

We've been following the Sunday shopping issue in Halton Hills very closely and so far we've had several stories on major food stores that have been charged with opening on Sunday and on how many of the small grocers in

town feel about the issue.

Last Saturday we ran a story on the front page under the headline "Three supermarkets will be open this Sunday."

Well, if you packed the kids into the car for the week's shopping on Sunday you met locked doors in Halton Hills' major supermarkets.

What happened is simple, but a bit frustrating for reporters.

Our deadline for our weekend paper came up before the headquarters for the major supermarkets decided to call a temporary truce in the Sunday shopping war on Friday.

Being a weekly newspaper, we don't have the advantages of daily deadlines to keep you informed on issues as quickly as we'd like.

But we've kept you well informed about Sunday shopping so far and we'll endeavor to keep you just as well informed in the future.

Ontario PC leadership race is inventing a whole new game

Derek Nelson

Queen's Park
Thomson News Service



Politically, the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party's one-man, one-vote leadership race might be called the Great Experiment.

No one has ever tried to conduct a leadership vote the way the Tories will be attempting.

Every member of the party who wants to cast a ballot for the next leader will be able to do so. And each will do so in person as opposed to by mail.

Last week, the Tories finally pinned down an actual voting date: May 12 next year. The campaign will officially get under way Jan. 22, and new party members can be registered until March.

Each of Ontario's 130 ridings will have 100 votes or points to cast on polling day. That obviously means there will be 13,000 votes total, with 6,501 needed to win.

If there are 150 members in a riding association, they will have their votes apportioned proportionately; that is, if 75 people vote for Candidate A, he'll get 50 of the 100 ballots from that riding; if there are only 50 members signed up and

Candidate A gets 25 of them, then that riding would still cast 50 ballots for him.

This 100-vote-per-riding electoral college system was picked in preference to counting every party member's vote as one ballot to prevent densely populated, wealthy urban ridings from having an overwhelming advantage on May 12.

The Parti Quebecois in Quebec has held leadership races where every member can vote, but it did it by mail.

The Ontario Tories will have a central location (or locations) in each riding where people can cast their ballots, the results then being transmitted to Toronto for totalling.

There is some worry about what will happen if several ballots are required and no winner is known by the end of the day. How credible would the result be if most people stayed home on the second day?

NEW GAME

Still, it is question marks like this that make this leadership contest such a fascinating event. The Conservatives aren't just playing in a different league. They've invented a whole new game for picking the leader.

And that is why media pundits are in somewhat of a quandary.

With the old-style leadership convention, there was a finite number of known delegates (1,000 to 2,000 depending on the convention), many of them from riding or provincial executives, as well as sitting MPPs and other party establishment folk. It wasn't that difficult to gain a sense of who was ahead and who behind in a leader-

ship race.

But in this case, where we could have anywhere from 1,000 to 100,000 people who'll rouse themselves to come out next May, that's an impossible situation to predict. One suspects the key to this particular game is organization, and, at the moment, it is unclear who among the four probable candidates is best off in that regard.

(This is also why Tom Long, who probably had the best starting organization, and Dennis Timbrell, who might have ended up with the best organization, were widely considered the frontrunners before both decided to drop out.)

If an old-style convention were being held, London newcomer Dianne Cunningham would likely have the edge, simply on the grounds that she is dynamic, ambitious and a woman - the last of which the media, in the current age, always marks up as a political plus.

But the other MPPs who are expected to enter the race, North Bay's Mike Harris, Burlington's Cam Jackson and Brockville's Bob Runciman, aren't exactly slouches. With 13,000 votes to be counted, no one can yet be ruled out as a contender.

There is also the question of whether Toronto backroom organizer John Tory, who could pull in a lot of IOUs organization-wise if he wanted, will join the race.

Starting Jan. 22 (when the candidates can officially begin spending money), the Great Experiment will really take off.



LETTERS Special needs bazaar raises \$1,000

Dear Sir,

On behalf of all the members of the Special Needs Drop In program we would sincerely like to thank everyone who donated their time, goods and energies both before and on the day of our First Annual Christmas Bazaar and Bake Sale on Saturday, Oct. 21 at the Acton Arena. Dozens of volunteers and supporters donated countless hours of their time baking, sewing, designing, gluing, knitting and assembling goods for our sale and we just couldn't have done it without all their help.

Being our first attempt, we had modest hopes for success. We were, however, overwhelmed with the support we received and are proud to announce we raised over \$1,000 to help support our weekly drop-in for disabled adults. It would be impossible to thank everyone who helped with our event but we do wish to acknowledge the dedicated efforts of some of the key volunteers: Christine Czabnicki, Eve Dexter and the staff of Village Manor. We

would also like to thank our friends at the local paper office for their continued support of our efforts.

For anyone who wishes to join our program, we run every Wednesday at the Acton Legion from 12:30 to 4 p.m. and offer an exciting mixture of games, crafts, leatherwork, bingo, ping pong, music, refreshments and socialization. Drop by and say hello or give

me a call (875-1531) if you are interested. Volunteers also welcomed.

Once again I'd like to thank everyone for all their efforts and support and look forward to seeing you out at our Drop In.

Sincerely,
Shirley Raszewski, Chairperson
Recreation Committee
for Special Needs

Poppy campaign is successful

Dear Sir,

Nineteen eighty-nine was a very successful Poppy Campaign, having exceeded our 1988 figures - and all due to a number of special people. My sincere thanks go to Bob McNeilly, Shell Lawr and Orval Paul for their positive approach to the meaning of "help" - they just come and "do."

To the many canvassers who rallied around, to the ladies who gave me a few hours of relief, to the drivers ferrying the canvassers about, to the bar stewards for their good-natured telephone answering service, to the box col-

lecting crew and to my husband John who never once complained about coming home to an empty house and no supper ready, I give my heartfelt gratitude.

To the most important group of all, without whom this campaign would be useless, the citizens of Georgetown and Glen Williams, a great big thank you for digging deeper into your pockets this year.

You see, when everyone contributes a little, how can any cause fail!

Jean Narsy,
Poppy Chairman