

LETTERS

# Reader 'naive' to believe in politicians promises

Editor's note: The following letter to Halton-Peel MP Garth Turner was filed with the Herald for publication.

Dear Garth:

Less than two years ago, just after your election as Halton-Peel's MP, you sent me a handwritten note which said: "I am luckily in the position now of being able to oppose, within the government, plans to gut the rural postal system - and I will!"

A few months later, when you were elected Chairman of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations, your assistant called me for an 'official' comment from Rural Dignity to include in the press release announcing your appointment. Of course I responded positively, since this new role would put you in an ideal position to act on your pledge.

I'm still naive enough to believe people - even you politicians! - will stand by your word.

That's why your committee's report on postal service - released in April - was so depressing for people who are fighting to keep our rural post offices public. By calling for the total privatization of Canada Post, you have effectively thrown all rural service to the wolves.

As you know, the anguish caused by Canada Post's rural privatization program - past and present - fills volumes.

Rural route driver Ron Faye from Vancouver Island knows well the desperate unfairness of privatization. Like all of Canada's rural route drivers, he's a 'private operator' who works on a contract basis for Canada Post. Ron wrote to your Standing Committee last fall, citing this example: "Early in 1988, the husband of a local rural router passed away. On both the day of his death and the day of his

funeral, that rural router was obligated to fulfill her contract by delivering the mail as though it was just another normal working day."

That's just one example of how privatization treats rural Canadians, Garth. It says nothing of the total absence of mail delivery standards to small communities, the contempt with which Canada Post managers treat their front-line employees and the public, the huge discrepancies in private contract agreements, the sell-off of public buildings ... There are scores of abuses in your hearing notes, but you chose to turn a blind eye to all of them.

Besides that, you refused to leave Ottawa to hear first-hand the opinions of rural people and other Canadians concerned about our postal service. "The cost (about \$160,000) was too great for the committee to travel across the country," you said, adding rather piously: "I can't justify that expenditure."

In my opinion, you could have easily saved the taxpayers much more money ... by simply skipping the whole exercise. Those months of endless committee hearings, the reams of English-French translations, the mountains of paper, all reduced to a report which sounds

exactly like Canada Post wrote it in the first place!

The young couple in Limehouse - who lasted just six months with a shabby Canada Post contract - told me how you'd sold them short and urged me not to put my faith in the wrong place. I said 'C'mon, give Garth a chance.'

Maybe someday - without regurgitating all that Canada Post doublespeak - you'll write a column explaining in detail how you think a privatized service will 'stop the gutting' ... and why it is preferable to the public post office system which has served rural Canadians well for so many decades.

Yours sincerely,  
Liz Armstrong  
Rural Dignity Ontario,  
Erin, Ontario.

More letters on Page 9

## Thanks from the Bulls

Dear Editor:

To all the Georgetown and area people who supported the "Harmony Bull Trust Fund," we wish to thank you. In many cases your names are unknown and we wanted very much for everyone to know just how much it meant to our family to have you care enough to make a contribution. It is a fine tribute to Sheila and daughter Mandy to help the survivors of this ordeal.

"Harm" is recovering well from her broken bones and many incisions. The doctors are pleased but they also say it is going to be a long, hard fight back to regain some semblance of what she was. With the trust funds help, we know she is being given every chance to recover to her potential.

On behalf of all the Bull family, we again say thank you.

Your prayers and support is much appreciated and felt.

All the Bull Family.

## A proud Canamerican



Ian Weir

Weir's View  
Thompson News Service

are closed. This is why I've always had a certain sympathy for Ebenezer Scrooge's philosophy on statutory holidays - which is that Bob Cratchit should stop snivelling and be grateful for his half-day off on Christmas.

I should hasten to add that this is not a dog-in-the-manger attitude on my part. Heavens, no. Perish the thought.

It's merely sour grapes.

But I digress. We were discussing General Motors' generous offer to let us swap our puny little Canadian holidays for those grand American celebrations - like Kinder And Gentler Nation Day, National Handgun Day, and National Semi-Automatic Weapons Week.

On the whole, I don't think so. Still, this is not to say that Canadians are totally closed to the idea of celebrating foreign holidays. A day off is a day off.

A such, perhaps I could propose a short-list of foreign holidays which Canadians might find more interesting:

One: National Non-Efficiency Day. This is a popular festival in Germany, Switzerland and parts of Austria, and was instituted in 1966 in order to prove that citizens of these countries can be just as chaotic as anyone else, even the Italians.

Festivities begin at precisely 8:02 a.m. on Aug. 14, after months of careful planning.

Two: Boris Yeltsin Day. This is a brand-new Russian holiday, on which ethnic Russians will spend 24 hours drinking vodka and trying to remember that last time they saw meat in a butcher's shop. In the evening, people will gather along the banks of the Volga to sing folk-songs and watch the sun go

down on Mikhail Gorbachev.

Three: Comatose Day. A popular celebration in rural Scotland, commemorating the discovery of malt whiskey.

Four: Tourist Appreciation Day. A traditional Hawaiian festival, on which Hawaiians drink toasts to all their lobster-pink friends in Bermuda shorts - the ones who sprawl on the beach saying things like "If-fen it wasn't so green here, it'd be a lot like Phoenix," and "Ain't them grass skirts jes' the cutest li'l things?"

In the evening, natives gather in small groups to have a good snicker at what "Aloha" REALLY means.

Five: Maggie Thatcher Appreciation Day. This festival has been failing slightly in recent years, to the point at which it's now a fairly localized holiday, celebrated only at 10 Downing St.

To be more specific, Maggie celebrates it. Denis keeps his head down and his mouth shut.

Six: Salmon Rushdie Appreciation Day. This holiday was conceived by the Iranian Librarian's Association, although it is strongly influenced by a traditional American celebration. (See National Semi-Automatic Weapons Week, above.)

And, or course ...

Seven: International American Appreciation Day. This holiday is particularly popular in countries like Grenada and Panama, where grateful citizens set aside an entire day to mutter things like "gringo #\*x@\*%\$!@!" and "@\*%#&!! yanquis."

Recently, the urge to celebrate this holiday has spread to a number of other locations, most notably the General Motors plants in Windsor.

## Halton's History from our files

### 30 Years Ago

After the first year of operation, the Georgetown Women's Hospital Auxiliary doubled its membership and raised \$1,700, president Mrs. J. Inglis said at a monthly meeting thirty years ago.

Elections resulted in Mrs. J. Inglis being assisted by first vice-president Mrs. A. MacIntosh, second vice-president Mrs. J. Gunn and third vice-president Mrs. Bob Burns. Mrs. Thom Ferguson remained recording secretary while Mrs. J. Graham became corresponding secretary.

The next project for the group was a Gift Shop Gala, a fall exhibition and a painting sale. Mrs. Inglis pointed out the group was the first in the area to sponsor an art exhibit.

It was announced that local Brownie efforts resulted in 85 new baby nightgowns being added to the hospital's nursery.

### 20 Years Ago

Twenty years ago, 16-year-old Janie Cowtan, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Cowtan of Huttonville, was crowned Queen of the Brampton Flower Festival Ball at the Riviera.

Flower Queen Miss Cowtan, a student at Streetsville Secondary School, was presented with the Cotton Trophy by Jack Cotton, who also presented her with a silver rose bowl. She also won a \$100 scholarship, \$200 cash and a trip to New York.

Four Georgetown girls, Susan Frawley, 19, Sandy Waits, 17, and Brenda Hulme, 18, also took part in the competition. Elaine Turkington was chosen second princess while Susan Frawley was a finalist. Faye Bovaird, of Brampton, was selected as first princess. Mrs. Verna Vivian, Mrs. Dori Wimmer and Eric Eamon judged the contest. Prizes were shared by the finalists.

### 10 Years Ago

Traditional Halton Hills Canada Day celebrations were switched from a Tuesday to a Saturday ten years ago because so many people were planning to holiday on Monday anyway.

Early morning celebrations in Glen Williams were launched with a pancake breakfast in the ball park. A pancake eating contest was also featured in the ball park. Following the pancakes

was a Canada Day Challenge Cup Tug-of-War between two local baseball teams.

The Canada Day parade left Mullen Place at noon and wound up at town hall where MP John McDermid, MPP Julian Reed, Mayor Peter Pomeroy and councillors Russ Miller and George Maltby conducted opening ceremonies.

Pet shows, wheel barrow races, egg tossing, doughnut eating and nail driving contests were also included in the celebration schedule.

Russ Miller became Marshall for the day and Erin councillor Jo Schneider became judge for the day. The Georgetown Girls' Pipe Band headed for Burnett's Field to join the opening ceremonies.

There were also children's games, races, obstacle courses and even marathon races during the events.

### 5 Years Ago

To celebrate its 140th birthday, the scenic Heritage Farm contributed to the Canada Day holiday celebrations by inviting the public to the day-long festival, free.

The festival included antique automobiles from the Historical Automobile Society of Canada and historical artifacts provided by the Nassagawya Historical Society. Pottery and crafts, created by local professionals, were also on display.

Standardbred race horses were also scheduled for show accompanied by the training staff of Freedom Run Acres. Dog training exercises were also to run as part of the day's events courtesy of the Canadian Kennel Club.

Heritage Farm was originally granted to Ralph Daniels, a soldier of Halton for duties to the Crown.

## Shopping confusion



Ben's Banter

By Ben Dummett

only if the appeal court reversed the decision would the legislation again be valid. The result is confusion.

The province created another sort of confusion earlier when it gave municipalities authority to determine which, if any, stores could be opened on Sundays.

But the fact is if the Region of Peel allowed across the board Sunday shopping, Halton would have to follow suit. If it didn't, there would be a lot of angry store owners in Halton.

As Halton Regional Chairman Peter Pomeroy says, it's not a municipal matter, it's a provincial issue.

It's time for the province to eliminate the confusion and start taking some leadership. The first step would be to accept the Supreme Court's ruling at least until the appeal is heard. Doing otherwise gives the impression the province is just a sore loser. Doesn't it have any faith in a decision made by the province's second highest court? Enforcing the law would be like Mr. Scott saying "You think you beat us? Well, take that you grocery store chains."

Gee, the Free Trade Agreement just gets better and better, doesn't it?

It's scarcely a year old, and already we're being given the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to swap Canada Day for the Fourth of July.

Makes a feller proud to be a Canamerican.

As you may have read, this novel idea has been proposed by the good folks in the head office of General Motors. In order to trim costs at the GM plant in Windsor, the company wants its employees to take American statutory holidays rather than Canadian ones.

Precisely how this would save money isn't quite clear. But the Americans seem to think it's an excellent idea.

Of course, the Americans also seem to think George Bush is an excellent idea - which may or may not say something about the relative excellence of their ideas. Still, it's important to remain open-minded about these things.

Quite frankly, I've always had mixed feelings about statutory holidays. This is because, as a self-employed writer, I don't get them.

When you're employed, a statutory holiday is merely one more day when the liquor stores

Well, the verdict's in, or is it? The Supreme Court of Ontario struck down the Retail Business Holidays Act Friday as unconstitutional, but store owners still are unsure if they can open Sundays. It's one more example of the province leaving us in the dark.

Despite the ruling, the province's Attorney General Ian Scott said the government would appeal the decision to the Ontario Court of Appeal. And therefore the legislation is still in effect until the appeal is heard. Yet Halton's lawyer, Mark Meneray, said Monday the decision means the legislation governing Sunday shopping opening is invalid. And