

# Turner takes bite out of ill-informed critics

I spend a lot of time biting my tongue. Being a politician, I've learned, means taking a lot of hits. My first inclination is to defend myself, and try to tell my side of the story.

But, usually, I don't. I figure anybody who writes an angry letter to the editor dumping on the feds, or me, or both, won't have their mind changed easily. And I hardly have enough time to do my job without devoting resources to self-defence.

Sometimes, however, I will respond.

Today is one of those times.

A week or two ago an "open letter" appeared in a bunch of papers, addressed to me and written by Liz Armstrong - a member of the lobby group Rural Dignity, and a non-resident of this riding.

In that letter she accused me of aiding in the destruction of rural Canadian postal service. Suggesting I had lied to her in the past, Armstrong said by my writing a committee report in Ottawa, suggesting Canada Post eventually be privatized, "you have effectively thrown all rural service to the wolves." And she criticized me for refusing to spend \$160,000 in taxpayers' money to have my committee tour rural communities.

Shortly after that letter a column appeared in the Toronto Star, penned by Michele Landsberg, which was about the government of Canada "picking apart the fabric of Canada."

The feds goal, she added, "is to erode the idea of a central government by whittling away at public institutions that give us a sense of Canadian identity." The headline sort of said it all, "Tories put their stamp on rural life."

Well, Landsberg found the proof of this vicious plot in Cheltenham.

Yes, Cheltenham. No, she doesn't live there. She lives in downtown Toronto, but got in her car one day and drove all the way out to visit the Cheltenham General Store - after talking to Rural Dignity, which is Armstrong's outfit (financed in part by one of the postal unions.)

And there Landsberg found that the postmistress was soon to retire, and the owners of the store would take over operation of the post office located within it.

Said an outraged Landsberg: "The dismantling of rural postal services is an insidious process, they may learn its true nature later on."

Neither of these women let much of the truth get in their way. I guess that would have spoiled the anti-government argument they were trying to build.

First, a reply to Liz Armstrong: I am not a supporter of reduction in postal services. The report the all-party Consumer and Corporate Affairs committee wrote and presented to the government said no existing post office should be shut down unless a replacement one opens.

Clear enough?

The report also recommended that shares in Canada Post be sold to employees and taxpayers and that service levels be guaranteed by the creation of a monitoring agency with full powers.

How does that throw rural service "to the wolves". Armstrong sounds to me a lot like Jean-Claude Parrot, the postal union leader who told my committee his workers did

**Garth Turner**  
MP

Halton-Peel  
PROGRESSIVE  
CONSERVATIVE



not want profit-sharing schemes at Canada Post. Maybe he should try asking them.

An efficient Canada Post

benefits everybody. The corporation used to suck \$600 million a year from the veins of taxpayers. Now - this year - it will be paying the country a \$300 million dividend.

And this is bad news? This is something we should be ashamed of?

Give me a break. Go back and enjoy the 19th Century.

As for big-city newspaper columnist Michele Landsberg, maybe she should screw up the courage to venture back to Cheltenham.

The postmistress did retire at the end of June. Andy and Candis Roussos did take over operation of the postal outlet. And has there

been a change?

You bet there has. The post office is now open longer.

The postmistress used to shut it down over the lunch period for an hour or two, and now there's always someone around to sell you stamps or take your letters - from eight in the morning until six at night and on Saturday until noon.

If this is an "insidious process," then maybe we should have more of it.

If opening the Cheltenham post office two extra hours a day is "picking apart the fabric of Canada" then this country is in more trouble than even I thought it

was.

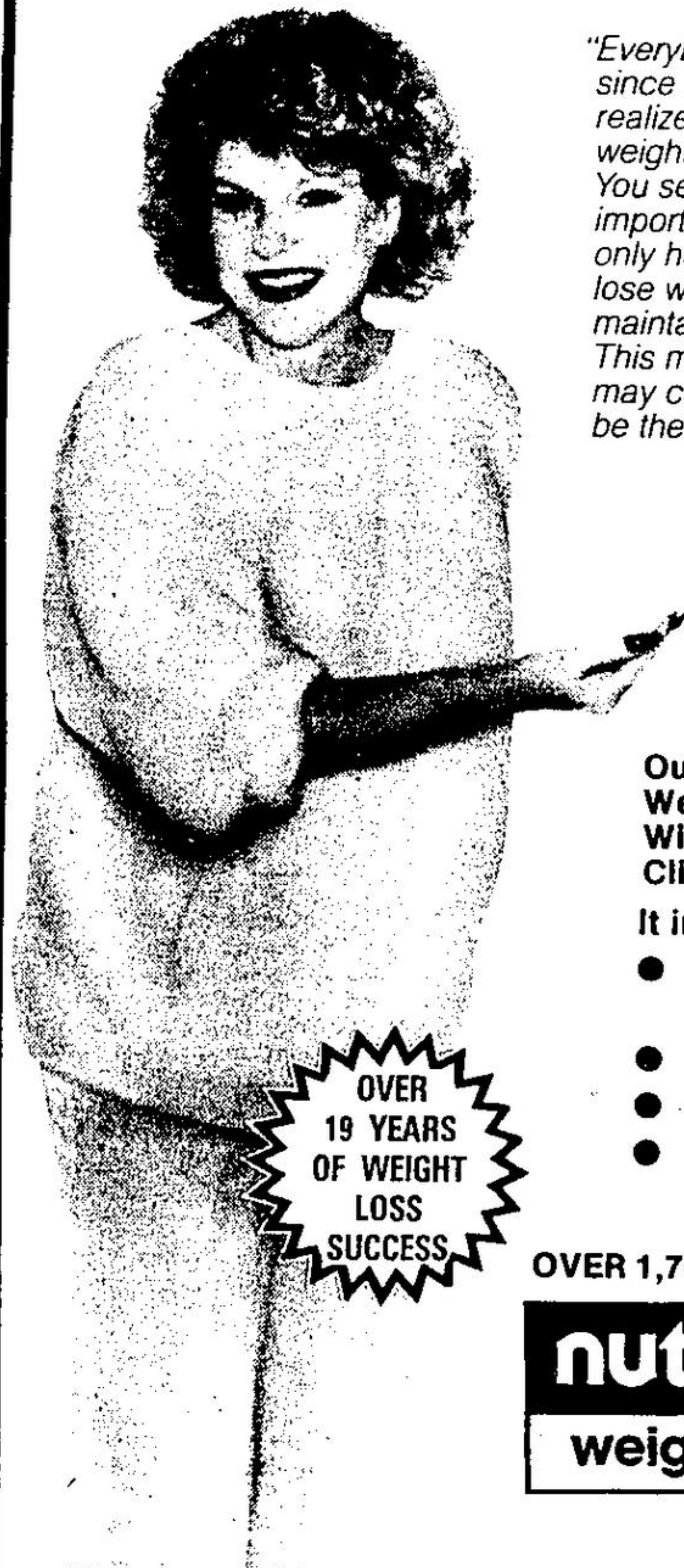
There are more places in Canada to buy stamps and mail letters than there ever were. The post office is making money, instead of losing it in buckets. Public complaint levels have gone down and service standard have gone up.

Is Canada Post perfect? Absolutely not. It can get better. It can serve better.

But nobody - me at the first of the line - is trying to gut rural postal service. Anyone who's got proof had better stop hiding in the skirts of open letters and make-believe articles.

I'm waiting.

## "With Nutri/System, I said goodbye to 50 lbs. forever."



*"Everybody tells me how great I look since I lost the weight. What they don't realize is that I've maintained my weight loss for 7 months now. You see, at Nutri/System, I learned the importance of being active. How it not only helps you burn extra calories and lose weight faster, it also helps you maintain your weight loss. This means that my tennis outfits may change, but they'll always be the same size."*

*Deborah Dawson*

**Our Comprehensive Weight Loss Program Will Help Over ONE MILLION Clients This Year!**

It includes:

- Safe, easy and permanent weight loss.
- Professional Supervision
- No calorie counting
- No gimmicks

*Our client, Deborah Dawson, lost 50 lbs.*

**OVER 19 YEARS OF WEIGHT LOSS SUCCESS**

OVER 1,700 CENTRES WORLDWIDE

**nutri/system®**  
weight loss centres

**SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER**

**3 WEEKS FOR ONLY \$49\***

Call Today For A **FREE** No-Obligation Consultation

**GEORGETOWN**

GEORGETOWN MARKET PLACE

290 GUELPH STREET

**873-1900**

**ORANGEVILLE**

47 BROADWAY

**942-3500**

\*Special offer consists of 3 weeks of Nutri/System Services. Does not include cost of exclusive Nutri/System food, diaries, maintenance and videos. Offer valid at participating centres. New clients only.

