

People's Forum

Mulroneville residents across Canada feeling the pinch

To the Editor:

If you were to imagine a hypothetical conversation going on between a couple of delegates at the Tory convention in August, it might go something like this: "There are so many good restaurants in this city, but I'm

trying to go out only once a week to eat - it's getting so expensive for me."

"Yeah, everybody's feeling the pinch. I have a friend who's a stockbroker in Toronto, and she said the market is shaky - the commissions aren't coming in as

quickly as they usually do. She likes to go down south every year to get away from it all, but this year she can only afford a Canadian holiday."

Not an uncommon conversation, it's one that could be heard between many people across the country. But there was one place during the weekend of the convention where I am quite sure it wouldn't be heard, and that was at Mulroneville.

Mulroneville was a brand new small town right in the heart of Toronto. The people who lived there for one week are not stockbrokers, business people, lawyers or doctors. In fact, many of them have no occupation at all, and you can bet that they know what it means to "feel the pinch". For many residents of Mulroneville, and many other towns and cities across Canada, feeling the pinch does not mean forgoing buying a new vehicle for their children. It does not mean that they give up an expensive holiday for an affordable one. In fact, a holiday for many of them means a trip to the laundromat without their children.

What they forego during a recession, and sometimes during good times, is food for themselves so they can feed their children. They forego heat in the winter because they can't afford to pay the utility bills. They forego buying new clothes for

their children when school starts. They forego job searches because it is impossible for them to find care for their children which is both affordable and safe. Their children forego educational school trips because they can't afford the bus fare or the admission fee to go to the event. They forego their dignity while they line up at soup kitchens and food banks.

For these people, the pinch is a little sharper, a little deeper, and a lot more painful.

The contrast between the convention that went on at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre and the tent city which was set up right across the road from it could not be greater. Delegates to the convention were renewing acquaintances with friends, meeting new acquaintances and saying, "let me buy you lunch" quite often.

The residents of Mulroneville can't buy their friends lunch very often, nor can they often afford to buy lunches out for themselves. If they do, it might mean a walk home instead of a bus ride, or a trip to the food bank instead of having the money to buy their own groceries.

Many convention delegates paid between \$100 and \$200 a night to stay in a downtown hotel during the convention. If residents of Mulroneville spent this kind of money on a hotel

room, they would have to spend the rest of the month on the street.

For residents of Mulroneville, who have no source of income other than social assistance, there is about \$6 a day available for food, personal care items, clothing, and miscellaneous household needs. Agriculture Canada suggests that a nutritious diet costs about \$5 per person per day.

Delegates and politicians at the convention dismissed the folks at Mulroneville as a fringe group, and a crazy one at that. It's true, Mulroneville only had 24 residents, but they represent a whole nation which is frustrated with the leadership of the country. They represent the 1.5 million unemployed Canadians; the thousands of food bank users across the country; the single mothers who desperately need accessible child care; the social assistance recipients who are trying to escape the poverty cycle but who find a new obstacle at every turn; the one million Canadian children who live in poverty.

Gordon Lightfoot sings a song about "the sunny side of life." I wonder of Brian Mulrone and his ideological sisters and brothers know that there are clouds looming on the horizon.

Thank you,
Chris Axworthy,
NDP Social Policy Critic.

Car racing club appreciated support

Dear Colin:

On behalf of the Georgetown Radio Control Car Racing Club and Georgetown Hobby and Toy, we are pleased to thank the following individuals and companies for their support on our race day on August 18th at the Georgetown Fairgrounds.

We appreciate the tireless work of all the volunteers whose efforts made this event possible. Pizza Hut, Traxxas and the Georgetown Goodyear Tire Store for providing the trophies and prizes presented, not only to the winners but everyone.

On race day we were scheduled to use diamond "A". Unfortunately at the same time a ball game had been scheduled on the same ball diamond as we had set up our track on.

I am pleased to say with co-operation from everyone we negotiated a solution to the problem that was amicable to everyone.

We were able to shorten our time schedule and the baseball team involved moved their game to a later start time.

A special and much appreciated thank you to the Georgetown Baseball Association and Boyd Hoddmatt for his concern and understanding in helping us in moving the baseball game to a later time.

Mr. Tom Sheppard of the Halton Hills Recreation Dept. for his role in helping find a solution to this problem and it's fast resolve. We really appreciate your efforts, Tom.

Barb Anzer for her help in booking our racing endeavour.

Rebuttal to Turner

Dear Editor,

In reply to Garth Turner's letter to the editor I would like to make some comments.

Libertarians, and myself, have no problem with helping people to have better lives, and to help create jobs. We do have a problem with giving jobs, funded by government to a select group of people, namely people employed by government in the armed forces, to another government funded job, due to the bloat caused by the GST.

Hiring should be done on the basis of merit, not because some MP has "pull" in the GST dept., probably caused by his support of this GREAT SCREW TAX.

The fact is the GST should not be used to solve unemployment.

Never did I say, or imply that everyone in Atlantic Canada is unemployed. This is obviously rather a red herring, since this was not said or implied. You can do better than this, Mr. Turner.

As for you normally not responding to letters, Libertarians are used not to getting publicity due to government regulations, which are designed to help themselves, not minority parties.

Libertarians have no dispute with you over cutting back on government, but we do have doubts that it should be the armed forces. Better it be the GST gang, or the like.

Thank you,
J. Shadbolt,
Libertarian,
Acton.

from the rec. dept. and the cheerful and helpful manner in the way she provided us information about renting the ball diamond.

Mr. John Dunn, Halton Hills Works Dept. foreman for providing a tractor and blade to restore the field to perfect order for the ball game to proceed immediately following our event.

I think the above clearly shows that people and organizations can in a somewhat of a crisis situation work together to achieve an amicable resolution of a problem.

I guess this shows us all what living in Halton Hills is all about.

I for one am extremely proud of all the people and organizations mentioned above.

Last but not least I would like to thank the participants for without you we wouldn't have had a race day.

Yours truly,
Tom Polit, Georgetown.

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