

About-face

It was great to see Canadian speed skater Clara Hughes last week embrace the honour of being named flag bearer for Canada at the Feb. 12 opening ceremonies of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games.

Rewind four short years ago and Hughes and some fellow high-profile members of Canada's Winter Olympic team were being roundly criticized for declining the opportunity to lead Canada's contingent into the opening ceremonies in Turin, Italy.

Some Olympians choose not to take part in the opening ceremonies because of the potential negative mental and/or physical impact they feel it could have on their performance at the Games.

In a recent interview, Hughes admitted the public berating she and fellow athletes took back in 2006 from public figures such as Don Cherry bothered her.

She defended her patriotism and the decision not to make herself available to carry Canada's flag four years ago — noting that she had been suffering significant health problems just two months before the Turin Games.

This time Hughes is arguably the best choice to carry Canada's flag — having captured multiple Olympic medals at both the Summer (cycling) and Winter (speed skating) Olympics.

She has also demonstrated strong off-ice leadership traits as an active spokesperson for Right to Play, an international organization that aids disadvantaged children through the pursuit of physical activity.

Fresh off her gold- and silver-medal-winning performances at the last Winter Games, Hughes put her money where her mouth was by drafting a personal cheque for \$10,000 to the Right to Play organization.

Hopefully, this smooth start to the opening of Vancouver 2010 will be a good omen of things to come for Hughes and the more than 200 fellow Olympians who will represent the Canadian flag for 17 days this month.

Letters to the editor policy

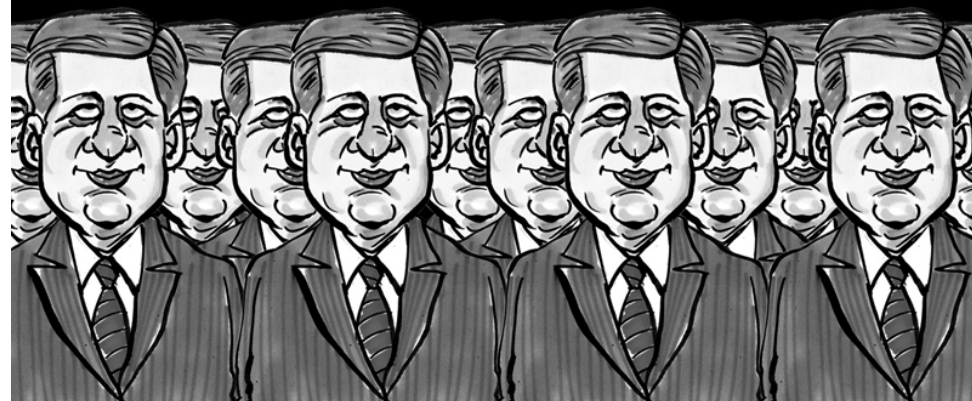
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The Conservative cabinet before the shuffle...



The Conservative cabinet after the shuffle...



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WEB POLL RESULTS

Does the fact Stephen Harper and the Conservative government prorogued Parliament bother you?

- Yes (45%)
- No (55%)

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Letters to the editor

Halton Hydro costs 'out of control'

Dear editor,
 Russell Foster's letter regarding utilities costs (January 8) caused me to check my own utilities records.

I track my usage quite carefully, and found that my hydro usage for July and October of 2009 (the months Mr. Foster mentioned) were quite consistent with the usage for 2008. July 2009 was a little lower than 2008 and October 2009 was a little higher. The total cost per kilowatt hour was also similar at about 10.3 cents, as it has been for the last four or five years.

I also found that my water consumption has been consistent from year to year (allowing for weather variations), but as we know, the cost per cubic metre of water has been increasing significantly over the past several years, I believe due to supposed supply and waste treatment costs. My water usage (two people in the house) has been steady at around 0.5 cubic metres per day except when there has been an unusually high amount of outdoor watering. However, in the

last few years, the cost per cubic metre has risen from about \$2.50 to about \$3.50.

In the face of this, Mr. Foster's numbers do seem strange, and it is disturbing that HH Hydro would not be more co-operative with a "captive customer" of their monopoly. I also am annoyed at the debt retirement charge which I see as the direct result of a utility that let its costs, particularly its labour costs, get out of control in past years.

Allan Ewing, Acton

Honesty appreciated

Dear editor,
 In mid-December I left my bank card in the BMO bank machine in the Georgetown Market Place.

At the end of the transaction I left my card in the bank machine, leaving my account open for anyone who used the machine next to withdraw funds from my account. A Good Samaritan used the machine after and indeed saw that my account was open and, inadvertently, \$300 was dispensed from my account.

The bank was closed at the time so he called into telephone banking that evening to let them know

what happened and then returned my card and the money to the bank the next day. He would not give the bank his name.

I received a call from the bank the next day. I want to thank you, whoever you are. I know you went out of your way to make the phone calls to the online banking centre and to visit the bank again the next day. You should be proud of your honesty, people like you make Georgetown a wonderful place to live and I truly appreciate your integrity.

*Katrina Fegan-Keeler,
 Georgetown*

Prorogue math was off

Dear editor,
 I read Barry Peters' letter to the editor in your January 28 issue.

In the very first sentence he says "Stephen Harper's recent 63-day prorogation of Parliament...". In fact prorogation started on January 25 and Parliament resumes on March 4.

That would make it a 38-day prorogation. Barry, playing fast and loose with the facts is not a great start to your candidacy.

*Tom Bradshaw,
 Georgetown*