

Jack Layton

Perhaps the saddest aspect of the passing of federal New Democratic Party leader Jack Layton is that the man who led the party to its greatest victory will not be around to enjoy the spoils of his work.

When Layton succumbed to his second battle with cancer early Monday it came as a shock to many, even though his death should not have been a surprise to anyone who witnessed his July announcement that he was taking a leave of absence. At that time it was obvious the dreaded disease was taking its toll.

While Layton's politics were not for everyone, it seems by all accounts—and the thousands of tributes that have already poured in—the man himself transcended his left-wing party.

From neighbours to colleagues to political rivals, all painted the picture of a man who at ease with whoever he would meet, always lent a sympathetic ear and was eager to lend a helping hand.

It is not a stretch to say that Layton's personable nature was the chief reason the NDP now sit in the Opposition seats on Parliament Hill nor that the party itself faces a huge crisis without its charismatic leader.

While some cynics may question whether Layton was forthcoming enough about his health during the past election campaign, the fact is it was his decision—good or bad.

The NDP will surely be a far weaker opposition voice in Parliament without Layton but it is also a loss for all Canadians.

Layton—while a politician through and through—did convey a sense of fairness and idealism that will be missed. That idealism shone through in his final letter to the public.

"My friends, love is better than anger. Hope is better than fear. Optimism is better than despair. So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic. And we'll change the world."

WEB POLL RESULTS

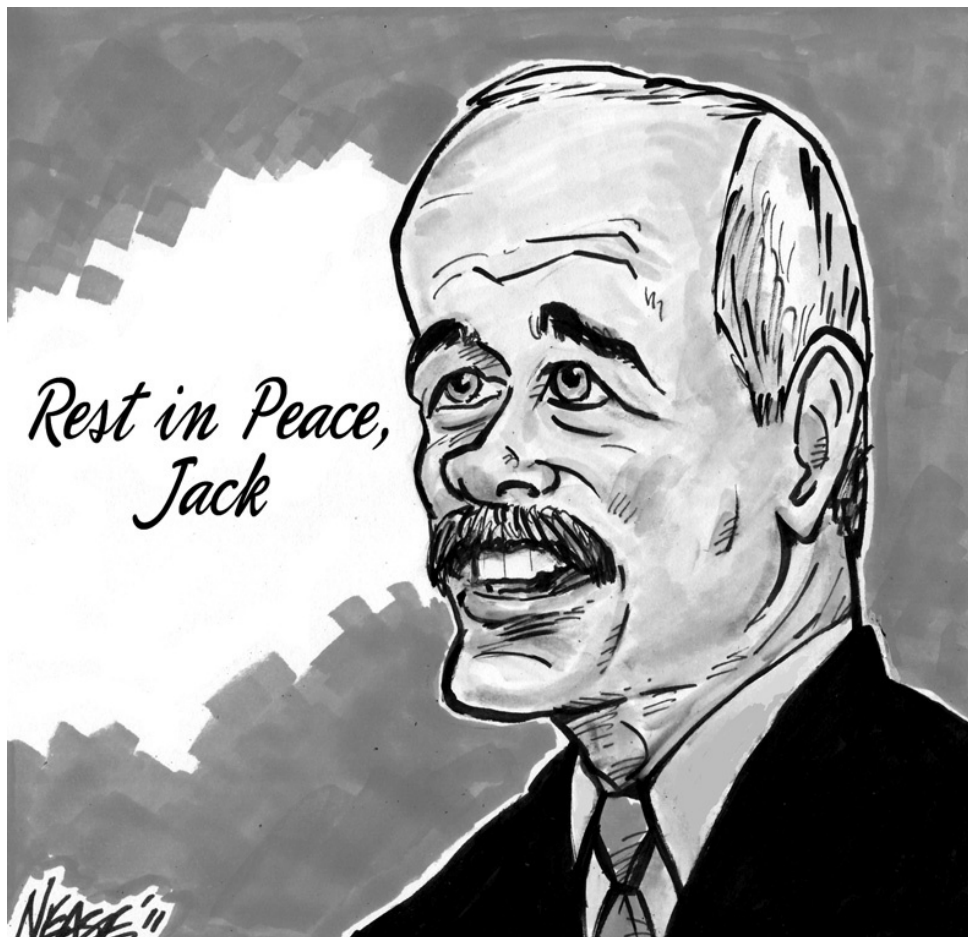
(Go to www.independentfreepress.com)

Halton Hills Farmers are frustrated by dangerous driving by impatient drivers. When you encounter a slow moving farm vehicle what do you do?

- Relax and enjoy the scenery until the farmer reaches his destination (88%)
- Rev your motor, and try to pass at any opportunity—no matter if it's illegal (12%)

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Letters to the editor

Johnson a good fit for Liberals

Dear editor,

In response to Liberal candidate Moya Johnson's comment, "I lived through the Harris years as a health care provider...the McGuinty Liberals have moved forward".

Here we go folks, she wasn't even sworn in as a candidate yet and she's already evoking "the Boogeyman".

Let's be clear, the cuts Harris made were a direct result of the cuts Paul Martin, as federal finance minister for the Liberals, made at that time. Yet Liberals try to rewrite history by remembering Paul Martin as "the Deficit Slayer" and Mike Harris as the aforementioned "Boogeyman".

The "leaps and bounds the McGuinty Liberals have made in health care"? Would that be the health tax, er...premium they implemented? One of Dalton McGuinty's promises was "he wouldn't lower taxes, but he wouldn't raise them either". He also publicly signed a pledge to the Taxpayers Federation not to raise taxes. Then shortly after being elected, the Liberals delisted a whole bunch of health services the former government provided. So now we pay more (taxes), and get

less. That's an improvement? Shortly after it was discovered the McGuinty Liberals squandered \$1 billion on eHealth.

Also I don't know if you remember the letters to this very paper in past months from frustrated residents with regards to the crowding/over-use of "outside" residents coming to the Georgetown Hospital. Here's the skinny: Brampton opened a new hospital in 2007 and Peel Memorial Hospital was closed. At that time McGuinty promised to reopen Peel, but then did an about-face and said he would not re-open it. Hmm, McGuinty breaking another promise, no surprise there. All I could find (via the Internet) is, it's under renovation?

By Mrs. Johnson's own comments she demonstrates she is either naive or disingenuous. Either way, sounds like she'll fit right in with the McGuinty Liberals.

Eric Boles, Acton

Dangerous benchmark

Dear editor,
 Derrick Williams is right on the money regarding the \$324,000 loan to the gymnastics club (Aug 16 letter 'Can I have \$324,000?').

Funding for these groups should be at the federal or provincial level, not from cash-strapped local governments.

Who will assume the liability for the loan if the club closes its doors, or cannot make the regular payments?

A very dangerous benchmark has been set when the Town loans money to private business, which could open the door for all struggling businesses to come cap in hand to seek funds for their operations.

I am all for these groups to thrive and be successful but they must pay their own way to exist and be competitive.

Ray Eckert, Georgetown

Another bike stolen

Dear editor,
 I am writing with another sad story of a boy's bike being stolen. Sometime during the night on August 10 our son's bike was stolen from our property. It was a black Schwinn with red writing. We have contacted the police but so far it's nowhere to be found.

We live on Mackenzie Drive and have scoured the neighbourhood. If you happen upon it please contact us. We went to all the major department stores in town but none have any BMX style bikes left.

Sadly, our son has learned that not all people are good but we hold out hope that it will turn up before the summer ends.

Claire Cudmore, Georgetown