

2011: A look back

If 2011 was anything, it was LOUD.

'The Arab spring'—Middle East protests in Libya, Egypt, Iran, Bahrain, Yemen and Algeria that brought, or threatened to bring, governmental change—kick-started a year in which loud, angry voices stole the spotlight.

Morphing out of the Middle East mess, came the Occupy protests—a series of worldwide city sit-ins (including Toronto) in which the protesters' message seemed as muddled as the ruined park grounds they left behind.

Of course, with not one, but two elections to concern Ontario voters this year, there was plenty of name-calling, shouting and finger-pointing to be done from the various political parties.

Federally, Stephen Harper secured his much sought-after majority government for his Conservative playmates as the Liberals, under Michael Ignatieff, imploded spectacularly. The NDP, in stunning fashion, grabbed the role of the official Opposition, by garnering dozens of seats in Quebec even though some of their candidates appeared, on paper, to not have the credentials to run a lemonade stand, let alone run for Parliament.

Of course, their strong showing was largely based on the charisma of leader Jack Layton who, sadly, was unable to enjoy his victory as he succumbed to cancer weeks later, bringing a brief moment of silence to the year.

With the stock markets on a wild roller-coaster ride for much of the year, the howls from investors and traders alike were deafening.

While we will be spared an election this year our southern neighbours will head to the polls in November so lots of noise—and hot air—has been filling the airwaves.

Locally, residents raised their voices in opposition to a proposed new highway and for provincial support for the hospital expansion. Kudos to all.

Much noise was also generated about the Town's decision to go ahead with a plan to build two (and possibly three) new ice surfaces—even though the Town coffers are stretched to the breaking point.

We can only hope 2012 will be a little quieter.

WEB POLL RESULTS

(Go to www.independentfreepress.com)

Should local media outlets publish the names of everyone charged with criminal offences?

- Yes (66%)
- No (26%)
- Undecided (8%)

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Letters to the editor

Former trustee supports teacher

(This letter was sent to HDSB education director David Euale. A copy was made available for publication).

Dear Mr. Euale:

I am writing to you in support of Eleanor Wallace and the music students at Georgetown District High School.

Having been a former trustee for 15 years with the Halton District School Board and as a parent of a daughter who participated in the music program at GDHS and having chaperoned the music students, along with Ms. Wallace, on many music trips, I can attest to the very positive influence she had on her students.

Due to her dedication and hard work, both during and after school, she fostered a love of music in her students that has carried into their career choices and adult lives. The numerous awards achieved by the music department is a complete reflection of Ms. Wallace's dedication to her students and of her outstanding teaching ability. Ms. Wallace has instilled in the stu-

dents the value and benefit of hard work, the joy of working as a team and the importance of dedication to detail.

The board's action in transferring her so suddenly appears excessively punitive to her and her students.

I hope that the board reconsiders its decision and transfers Ms. Wallace back to GDHS.

Richard T. Howitt, Halton Hills

No need to know

Dear editor,

Re: Music teacher's transfer hits sour note for students (Dec. 15).

Are you kidding? Do you honestly expect any employer to reveal the reason why an employee has been transferred?

The administration at GDHS and Mrs. Wallace both know the reason(s) and the rest of us are not entitled to know. Not only is this unethical to share this info, it is also illegal.

As an employer with 33 years experience in HR, I can tell you that staff (excellent or otherwise) are not moved or removed unless there is a good reason for it. The longer term the employee, the more careful thought the decision is given. Unless we are privy to all the facts, none of

us are in a position to cry fair or foul.

The good news is that GDHS students and parents care deeply about music and about quality teaching and to that I say "Bravo!"

Lois Fraser,
Georgetown

Reverse decision

(This letter was sent to HDSB. A copy was made available for publication).

Dear administration staff,

You have an opportunity to give your students, staff and community an excellent life lesson. The ability to admit you made a mistake and then rectify it. It would be an inspiration to all to hear this.

My daughters have been taught by Eleanor Wallace for 11 years and she is guilty of nothing but being an inspiring teacher. We all know this. You have the power to return Wallace to her position at GDHS which will benefit the school, Halton and especially the students.

Acknowledging this mistake and reversing it could be the most memorable Christmas gift and lesson you can give the students.

Scott Langstaff,
Georgetown