

Greek to us

Well, at least we're not Greece.

That appears to be about the best news gleaned from economist Don Drummond's report on provincial government spending released last Wednesday.

"Ontario faces more severe economic and fiscal challenges than Ontarians realize," said the former TD Bank chief economist. He warned the provincial deficit would balloon from \$16 billion this year to \$30.2 billion in 2017-18.

Certainly much of the blame should fall on the shoulders of Premier Dalton McGuinty and his Liberals who have, according to Drummond "failed) to keep growth in government spending in line with revenue growth."

Naturally, the Conservatives were quick to jump all over this line in Drummond's report but it should be pointed out that neither they, nor the NDP, nor the Liberals in the last election campaign talked about making the tough decisions they all knew Drummond would suggest. So, enough with the political posturing.

Drummond's recommendations—and they are simply that—call for wide-ranging changes in which every sector of society would take a hit.

Health: He suggests linking seniors' drug benefits to income, not age. Limiting health care spending increases to 2.5%. Beefing up the responsibility Local Health Integration Networks (LHIN). Folding 36 public health agencies into the LHINs. No raises for doctors.

Education: He wants an end to all-day Kindergarten, larger class sizes, raising teacher retirement age and redirecting the 30% tuition break to lower income students (or ending it).

Miscellaneous: Cancel the "clean air benefit" (10% rebate on electric bills). Slash all areas other than health, education and social services by 2.4% annually. Allow slots at places other than race-tracks. End free parking at GO stations.

His report was giant kick in the backside to the politicians—of all stripes—who have created this mess. Certainly following all his recommendations would be folly (i.e. boosting LHINs), but there are points that should be seriously considered (electricity rebate, class sizes, slots, to name a few).

But Drummond is not leading this province—that falls to the politicians and it is incumbent on them to see that we don't become Greece.

WEB POLL RESULTS

(Go to www.independentfreepress.com)

The federal government has been hinting at changing the age of eligibility for Old Age Security from 65 to 67.

Would you support such a change?

- No (75%)
- Yes (25%)

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Steve Nease

905-873-0301
 Publisher: Ken Nugent
 General manager: Steve Foreman (sforeman@theifp.ca)
 Retail advertising manager: Cindi Campbell (ccampbell@theifp.ca)
 Managing editor: John McGhie (jmcghie@theifp.ca)
 Distribution manager: Nancy Geissler (ngeissler@theifp.ca)
 Classifieds: Kristie Pells (classified@theifp.ca)
 Accounting: Rose Marie Gauthier
 Editorial: Cynthia Gamble: News editor (cgamble@theifp.ca)
 Ted Brown: Photography (tbrown@theifp.ca)
 Lisa Tallyn: Staff writer (ltallyn@theifp.ca)
 Eamonn Maher: Staff writer/sports (emaher@theifp.ca)

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Email:

jmcghie@theifp.ca

Mail or drop off:

Independent & Free Press, 280 Guelph St., Unit 29, Georgetown, ON, L7G 4B1.

Letters to the editor

Board urged to reinstate teacher

Dear editor,
 The Halton District School Board (HDSB) labels the recent transfer of Ms. Eleanor Wallace, music teacher at Georgetown District High School, an "administrative transfer... not a disciplinary action."

Reality shows this a misnomer: Transferring a teacher outside of her municipality violates her rights as an employee.

Transferring an award-winning music teacher, with a 29+ year unblemished career, away from the student body who sees her as mentor to their musical family, is neither prudent nor ethical.

Results of this punitive action: Students fend for themselves, with no music staff, prior to a major performance, semester one exams, and auditions for advanced music studies.

Replacement staff lack experience in the programs.

Additionally: GDHS gold-medal band cannot accept an invitation to compete at National Musicfest in Ottawa in May unless directed by

Ms. Wallace.

Next: HDSB will needlessly spend tax dollars, when it could just reverse the transfer.

The win-win solution to this grievous error is immediately reinstating Ms. Wallace to GDHS.

We call on the Georgetown community, and trusted representatives, for continued support.

View further details at "Return Eleanor Wallace to GDHS" on Facebook.

Penny Skinner, Georgetown

A phrase to forget

Dear editor,

Re: Words and phrases that should vanish (letter to the editor Jan. 24).

I would like to add just one more annoying catch phrase, thanks to Monica Keess.

• Ohhh puh-leazeeeee.

That one can stay in the 80's!

Tina Love, Georgetown

Night to remember Start a gym club?

Dear editor,

Thank you to everyone who came to the dinner at the Gellert Centre on January 21.

It was great to see so many friends, family and former Kinsmen Girls Softball players come out and I want to thank everybody for their cards, letters, gifts and best wishes.

Special thanks to the Kinsmen Club of Georgetown for organizing the event and to the Georgetown Hockey Heritage Council for their support. It was a night to remember.

Jim Ford, Georgetown

Dear editor,

I read with great interest the well-written letter January 10, by Mr. Chambers & Ms. Jones (*Seniors' centres are support structures*).

They hope that the mayor and council take them seriously.

If I may offer a suggestion: please start a gymnastics club for a speedier response.

Tongue in cheek of course, but a better suggestion is to have them offer one of the many empty industrial buildings that have laid vacant well over a year now.

Paul Madonia, Georgetown