

Letters to the editor

Grits must be held accountable on energy, health care

With the Ontario Legislature sitting again, Members of Provincial Parliament are returning to Queen's Park in Toronto to continue debating Premier Kathleen Wynne's Liberal government agenda.

And there is much to debate.

In recent months, the Liberals have been overwhelmed by historically low approval ratings and by-election losses in seats that had once been their strongholds.

They are now more focused on political survival than any other strategic imperative.

Skyrocketing electricity bills continue to be the number one issue in Ontario. Many families and seniors are saying they can't afford to pay their hydro bills, and businesses tell us high hydro costs make us uncompetitive and cost us jobs.

Voters understand the upward pressure on hydro bills has been caused by the deliberate policy decisions of the McGuinty and Wynne Liberal governments over a period of many years. We need to hold them accountable, even if they now claim to be contrite.

Health care is also a top concern, since the government has been publicly feuding with Ontario's doctors.

Instead, we should be demonstrating our appreciation and respect for all health care providers, identifying ways to reduce overlapping and unnecessary administration, and plow those savings back into front line care.

In the spring session, I plan to continue to seek opportunities to

remind the government of some of our infrastructure needs. Working together with local partners, we have made progress towards a new Groves Memorial Community Hospital, a new university campus in Halton, the Hwy. 6 Morrison bypass, and a new Halton Courthouse.

We also need support for the Town of Halton Hills Hwy. 7 Truck Strategy, and improved, affordable high-speed Internet in rural areas.

As critic to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, I will be monitoring the Minister's public activities and statements, calling attention to their flaws and drawbacks, and seeking to propose better solutions.

The Liberals cap-and-trade scheme has increased the cost of essentials like gasoline and natural gas, has been criticized by the Auditor General and the Financial Accountability Officer, and is subject to political lobbying and manipulation.

We believe a better way to confront the challenge of climate change would be revenue-neutral carbon emission pricing. British Columbia has done it.

All of the revenue collected could and should be returned to Ontario residents and businesses through corresponding tax cuts.

And as always, I welcome your thoughts and advice.

Ted Arnott, MPP,
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It's entertaining to spend time buried in the archives

Every once in a while I do some research in the archives of Esqueving Historical Society (EHS).

Years ago, the *Independent & Free Press* donated all filed negatives to EHS, so they are properly archived and protected.

When I go to the archives, it's usually to locate a photo or info on a special event from the past, which was published in the *Independent & Free Press*. It sometimes takes a few hours to find the information.

I must admit I have a bit of a love/hate attitude when I set out to find something. It can take a long time if the item I'm searching isn't where it's supposed to be.

However, the fact that during my 30-plus years at the paper, I either shot many of the photos, or probably filed them, making it fairly straightforward for me.

Sometimes the researcher who was there before me might have inadvertently slipped them into the wrong place—adding to the challenge.

But the worst thing that happens is that I get distracted.

I see the event listed on the filing envelop, and it brings back memories of events I covered more than three decades ago.

Recently, I was asked to locate some photos from previous Georgetown Hockey Heritage dinners.

The photos will be used to dress up the event's program, and give the attendees at the dinner a quick jaunt down memory lane.

Armed with my laptop, a light table and a digital camera, I set out on my quest to locate some specific images from previous dinners, requested by one of the organizers.

It's always entertaining to spend a few hours buried in the archives.

One photo was so easy—I recall photographing that particular event. The photo in question was featured on the front page of the Hockey Heritage special edition section.

In 1996, *The Independent & Free Press* switched

over to digital photography, and negatives were phased out. I must admit, when I'm looking for images from a post 1996 event, I breathe a sigh of relief.

Most times I can pop the archived DVD into the computer and do a word search to locate the material.

It's not so simple with negatives.

The Georgetown Independent started in 1973 and the negatives for it were filed chronologically.

The Acton Free Press started in 1875, almost 100 years before the *Independent*, and the file negatives date back to the 1940s, some photographed on old Speed Graphic four-by-five film plates. They are quite interesting and incredibly fragile.

Both newspapers used separate filing procedures—one newspaper filing chronologically, the other by subject, then dated within that subject.

It's a bit confusing if one isn't aware of the procedure.

As time went on, both newspapers graduated to 35mm cameras, and eventually, the two newspapers were merged to become *The Independent & Free Press*. The negs were then all filed together.

Locating something shot on negatives is considerably more taxing on the eyes, not to mention the patience. I bring along my light table to lay the negs out to inspect them individually with a magnifying loupe.

It's impossible to not veer off the beaten track while I'm sorting negs. I can't help it.

Be it a school event, sports, an accident or fire—I have to stop and take a quick look at the images and recall that time and place.

Most times it's fun and endearing. Other times it's sad or depressing, to have a reminder of an event where people lost their homes, vehicles, or, in some cases, their lives.

But I always come away from a search feeling a bit fulfilled, and somewhat humbled, that I had a role, recording a piece of history so many years ago.



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