

• OUR VIEW •

The sky won't fall if NAFTA tanks

Auto parts manufacturing is expected to take centre stage in the coming weeks as negotiators on both sides of the border work to retool NAFTA - but if they do fail the demise of the 23-year-old trade pact won't spell economic ruin.

As one observes what is happening at the negotiating table, it's important to remember that Canada has changed a lot since 1994.

Stephen Beatty, vice president and corporate secretary of Toyota Canada Inc., recently met with Metroland Media for an enlightening discussion regarding trade and the Canadian auto industry.

Beatty is quick to point out that if the U.S. pulls out of NAFTA, it won't be the end of the economic world.

"No tariff in the world can hold people back from their (buying) choices," Beatty surmised.

He added that in the wake of NAFTA, any tariffs slapped on Canadian goods would remain competitive, as our dollar would be discounted in world markets to reflect tariffs.

Also, unlike in 1994, economies of scale have developed in Asia and India where huge middle classes have a big appetite for consumer goods.

As such, Canada is still hammering out a trade deal with 11 nations under the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a partnership the U.S. withdrew from.

Why? Because we are a trading nation and will continue to be one, even if the Trump administration pulls the plug on NAFTA.

While he doesn't predict a financial apocalypse in Canada if NAFTA is scuttled, Beatty does say however that such a move will change our stature on the world stage, rather than creating the catalyst for a stock exchange collapse.

In a post-NAFTA world, North America would appear fractured to the titan countries of Russia, China and India.

To date, we are impressed with how the Trudeau government has conducted itself at the trade talks, and so is Beatty.

Canadian negotiators have kept their cool, stayed focused, and most importantly, haven't taken the bait when dealing with the constantly changing rhetoric from the Trump administration. It behooves us to be the voice of reason at the negotiating table.

After all, we're confident the sky won't fall in a post-NAFTA world, but let's hope common sense wins the day on both sides of the border.

It may not be perfect, but NAFTA has been pretty good to Canada.



ABOUT US



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• LETTERS & COMMENTARY •

Letter was filled with bias

I am writing in response to Kerri's Chaplin's letter of Nov. 16 regarding Premier Kathleen Wynne's visit to Acton.

She is missing many facts. The Tanner seemed to have been informed in a timely manner of the visit of our Premier Kathleen Wynne.

We Acton residents are justly proud of that program and the work of Alison Hilborn and the Acton Hub on behalf of our very young families.

Perhaps the letter writer could educate herself about local affairs. The IFP could also provide better coverage.

There appears to be a mote in the letter writer's eye. The facts remain that

this province has a balanced budget and the fastest growing economy in Canada. We are blessed to have a Kathleen Wynne government that is prepared to invest in innovative programs such as pharmacare for youth, an increase in the minimum wage and tax breaks for small businesses.

I guess what disturbed me most about your letter was its bitter tone, as well as the misinformation. You have motivated me to work for the return of the progressive, inclusive and transparent Liberal government in 2018.

Andy Spiece

Fluoride linked to lower IQ's in children

September, you ignored

a major story: higher fluoride levels in pregnant women were linked to lower IQ's in their children.

This was the finding of a major international study published in the journal Environmental Health Perspectives, funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health and led by the University of Toronto Dalla Lana School of Public Health.

The study, one of the most robust ever conducted on fluoride's risks, followed mother-child pairs for over 12 years. For every 0.5 part per million increase in prenatal exposure, children lost two-and-a-half to three IQ points.

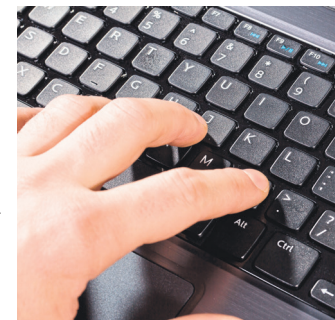
The fluoride levels in this study were well within the range of North American women drinking fluoridated water.

The best way to protect

the future is to start by protecting our children's brains from fluoride. We must stop the deliberate addition of fluoride chemicals to drinking water. There is little, if any, benefit from swallowing fluoride, but there are substantial risks.

Christine Massey

Letters to the Editor



See what our readers are saying about the issues that matter to them.

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