

Another hit for democracy

Seemingly gone are the days of the public and media having quite open access to party leaders on the campaign trail.

The era of whistle-stop campaigning and milling with the public at local stumping sessions or holding court with local and national reporters seems more and more something that belongs to yesteryear.

With new and legitimate security issues, different campaign travel and scheduling than in the past, as well as new tech-based ways to connect with voters and the public, this change was going to come to a certain degree.

However, a huge part of this is also strategic. It's a tactic to control the message and to reduce political risk.

As Wilfrid Laurier University professor of digital media and journalism, Simon Kiss, suggested days ago, many candidates—right down to the local level—are opting to avoid mainstream media and even inquisitive voters by using tools such as emailing and website bulletins “simply because it's safer.”

The tactic that involves being less available for open public events and for open-ended or even single-subject media interviews reduces risk for these vote-seekers of being off their party message or somehow being or appearing unready for work as a member of Parliament.

There's likely no reversing this trend because information-control politics is the new norm. And, that's too bad. These changes may make campaigning safer, more efficient and less politically risky for parties and candidates. But it's lousy for democracy.

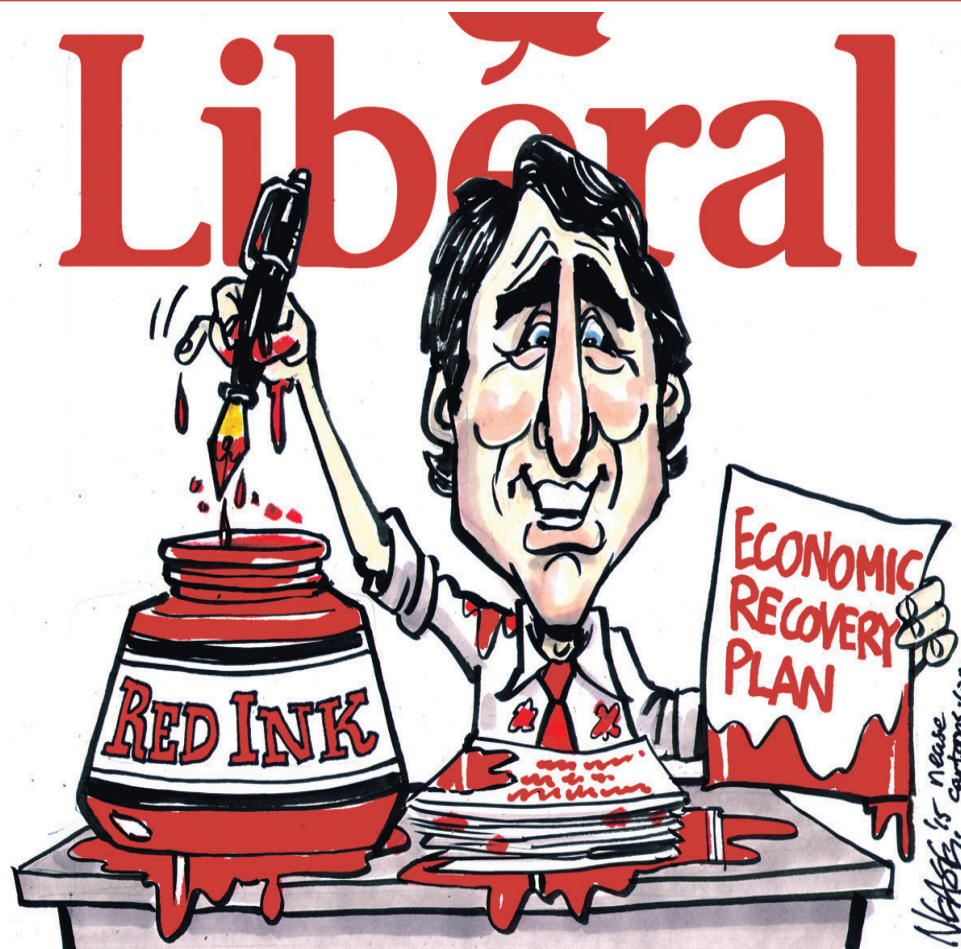
It reduces the chance of voters to get to know candidates and parties more richly and to see vote-seekers try to connect with the public and comment on the spot about varied matters of potential voter interest.

Being an elected democratic official should come with an obligation to serve and to engage with a range of constituents — very much including those with varying political views. It should also come with a belief of support for, or at least tolerance of, engaging with the fourth estate, so journalists might work to richly explore policy and political stories of importance and help keep government transparent and responsible.

Those seeking to become a democratically elected leader should reveal an openness to accept these things as well. Democratic campaigns should be about meeting people, discussing issues openly and trying to win respect and electoral support.

The Independent & Free Press

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Letters to the editor

Monster homes ruin town

Beware of monster homes going up throughout our community, most recently on Churchill Cres.

What is concerning is that they are allowed to be built without the feedback from the neighbourhood or community in general.

These monstrosities are an eye sore and I have to ask the question why are they allowed to be built?

These houses do not meet the esthetics of the street or neighbourhood that defines our beautiful town.

Never mind aspects like taking away sunshine from their next door neighbours.

They appear so close to the property line that the over hang from the roof can impede on the property bordering them.

Where is the rationale from a planning prospective and how is this allowed?

Is it that a monster home garners more property tax and thus the town would look at this from a financial standpoint? I would like to think not, but it brings to mind the Vision Georgetown workshops I have had the plea-

sure in attending.

The Vision Georgetown workshops addresses the planning for a new community which will be an extension to Georgetown.

The workshops are well organized and informative and they encourage feedback and dialogue along the way. The Halton Hills councillors are very visible in these workshops as is our exceptional Mayor Rick Bonnette.

The workshop's main objective is (and I quote) "The Vision Georgetown community is an inspiring new urban community; distinctive in the way it looks and functions, fostering healthy lifestyles, neighbourliness, economic prosperity, and local pride.

It is a resilient, sustainable, complete, and compact community, with a thriving natural heritage system. It feels like a small Town and is physically connected to the broader community of Georgetown and the Town of Halton Hills.

It honours the rich heritage of the Town, emphasizes people, and provides choices for day-to-day living.

Overall, the Vision Georgetown community is an exceptional, forward thinking and innovative model for new community development."

Now are these monster homes not the

antithesis to the Vision Georgetown community? Or we can just demolish our beautiful bungalows and build monster homes and we can call our beautiful small town Vancouver.

Let's walk the talk on our vision town councillors as it pertains to our entire community.

Mr. Mayor we need you to weigh in on this to ensure we continue to be the beautiful community we have grown accustomed to.

Harry Wicken,
Georgetown

Wrong email address

Due to incorrect information supplied to The IFP, a wrong email address was printed in the letter, 'Kindness and generosity outweigh low-life behaviour', Aug. 20. The correct email address is stolenbmxbike@yahoo.ca

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