

# OPINION

## Cancer: no immunity

Canadian sports and politics have been rocked over the last couple of weeks with the news that two men from two completely differed worlds may have their careers cut short because of cancer.

Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa and Pittsburgh Penguin Mario Lemieux both announced that they have cancer.

Bourassa, 59, had a cancerous lump removed from his chest wall Jan. 6. A biopsy Dec. 23 revealed the tumor to be malignant.

He was also diagnosed several years ago with melanoma — a serious skin cancer.

Mario Lemieux, who is widely considered hockey's best player, announced to teammates Wednesday he has Hodgkin's disease — a form of cancer that attacks the body's lymph nodes.

While Lemieux's cancer is likely treatable because of early detection, Bourassa's may be life threatening.

We can all learn a little something about cancer from these two men.

Bourassa reportedly found that an irregular shaped mole and while he was advised to have it removed, the Premier chose not to -- he was tied up with the Oka crisis at the time.

At a press conference this week Bourassa said that he hoped that anyone with irregular shaped moles have them examined and removed immediately.

His career -- and life -- could be cut short because of his failure to do so.

Meanwhile, the prognosis for Lemieux is likely a full recovery. That recovery is possible because of the early detection of Lemieux's cancer.

It must put things in perspective for all involved in hockey when one of the greats is struck with something as common as cancer. It makes a one-goal loss from the night before seem pretty insignificant.

Lemieux told teammates and the media: "I'll be fine, no problem."

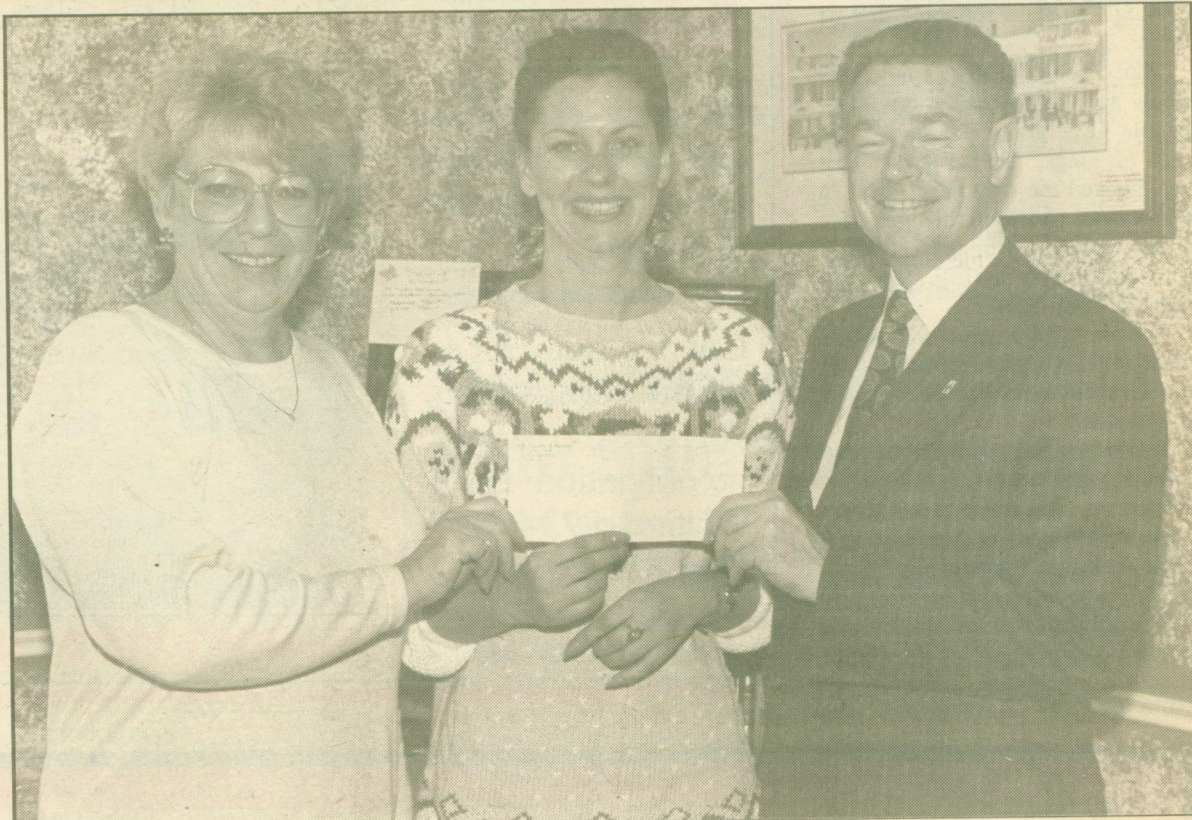
We hope he's right.

Despite their predicament both Lemieux and Bourassa have a great opportunity. They have an opportunity to become advocates for the fight against cancer -- much as Magic Johnson has become an fighter of AIDS.

As the advertising says "Cancer can be beaten." But it takes massive amounts of money to fund the research that will find a cure for this disease.

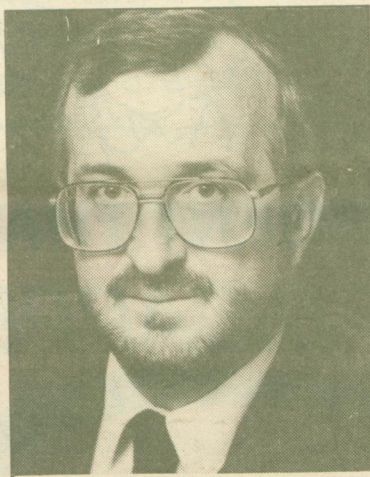
What we can learn from these two men suffering from cancer is that no one is immune to the disease.

No matter how popular you may become, how much money you may have, ultimately, we are all human.



Theresa Rodobolski of Pictures and Presents hands a \$3500 cheque to Cancer Society president (Georgetown unit) Paul Armstrong and fundraising chairman Elaine Chatten. Rodobolski raised the funds through a silent auction in her store in December. It was the first fundraising event for the Cancer Society this year. Photo by Wendy Long

## Queen's Park Report



Noel Duignan MPP Halton North

Several months ago I talked about some modest improvements to service delivery at the Worker's Compensation Board. Although many more changes are needed to make this system better — for both workers and employers — a number of serious attempts have been made to sort out the problems.

A letter I received just before Christmas from Odoardo di Santo refers to the situation he discovered when he took on the position of Chair in April 1991. He found that the impact of change over the previous few years had generated significant problems. WCB staff were still reeling from the impact of Bill 162 — a story in itself — and from technological change and internal reorganization.

Workers and employers were complaining that service was poor and rehabilitation efforts inadequate. At the same time, costs were rising. Di Santo wanted to develop better ties between WCB and the people they served. The Board took a long, hard look at itself and the new administration identified key goals that were required to improve things. These goals included:

- listening to what clients were saying
- improving service to clients based on what they want
- developing a new culture with a more caring, responsive Board

WCB talked to injured workers, union people, health care providers, business owners and managers, and its own staff. Di Santo initiated a Task Force on Service Delivery and Vocational Rehabilitation. The Chair's Task Force, made up equally of labour and employer representatives, studied the Board and recommended a series of steps to improve both the organization and service to clients.

Highlighted in the group's report was a new approach to improve claims management and greatly enhance rehabilitation services. The Board of Directors has since approved a plan to implement these recommendations.

A variety of service delivery actions are now underway at WCB. Here are some examples:

- a new classification system,

identifying how much various companies are expected to pay for compensation, was developed with a lot of help from clients;

- more than 200 new adjudicators have been added to allow more time for individual clients;

- all staff at the Board are being trained and empowered to do their jobs better and concrete steps are being taken to democratize the workplace;

- all staff are expected to treat disabled workers with the dignity and respect they deserve;

- occupational diseases such as lung cancer and asbestosis are being recognized and other workplace illnesses are being studied.

Di Santo recognizes that the full effects of these changes will take time to be felt by injured workers and employers but he believes they do point the way to an improved workers' compensation system for our province.

Office hours in Acton this month, by the way, have been changed to the morning of January 29. If you want to meet with me there, please call my Milton office at 878-1729 to schedule an appointment.

The Halton Board of Education has asked me to help advertise their budget process. Public delegations have been invited to share their views with the Finance Committee. The second meeting will be held on January 18 in Burlington. For more information, please call Helen McLeod at 878-8451 (extension 3261).

## Letters Welcomed

Halton Hills This Week welcomes your letters. Letters must be signed and include your full name and address. Names will be withheld on request.

Halton Hills This Week reserves the right to edit, revise, or reject any letters on the basis of factual

errors, punctuation, spelling errors or as a result of space limitations.

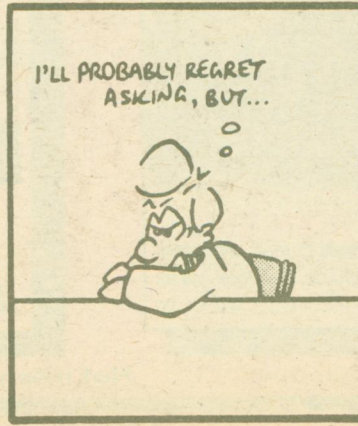
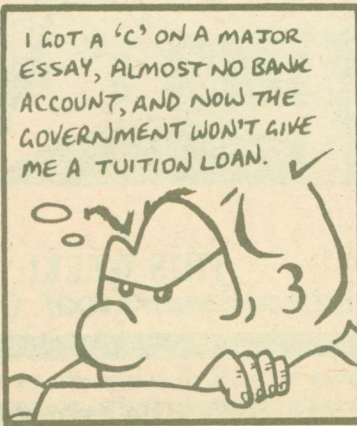
Send your letter to:

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## For Pete's Sake



by Roe