

Editorial

Where's the beef?

The first of the scheduled five federal Progressive Conservative leadership debates took place last Thursday at Bassett Auditorium in Toronto.

To be fair to all five candidates for Brian Mulroney's tarnished crown, including our own Halton Peel MP Garth Turner, the so-called debate came across more as a mere exercise of the bland leading the bland, than anything else.

Or, to borrow from a popular hamburger commercial from years gone by, one could easily have asked- 'Where's the beef.'

It was reported in one major newspaper that a PC delegate stomped out midway through the proceedings muttering, "They haven't told me anything I haven't already heard."

Mr. Turner came across well - although a bit too glib at times - in comparison to purported front-runner Kim Campbell and much-heralded by the Toronto Star, candidate Patrick Boyer.

He didn't do his credibility much good, however, by suggesting a toll-free number into the prime minister's residence.

One can picture the scene. It is 3 o'clock on a Sunday morning and the telephone rings at Sussex Drive.

A sleep-foggy Turner answers the phone and a cheery voice pipes up. "Hi Garth, what's happening. Not much on the tube, so I thought I'd use your toll-free number to see how you feel about the Ottawa Senators. No Garth, I meant the hockey team."

All five candidates vowed to fight the deficit and then seemed to get into a political poker game, trying to outbid each other on how they would pull off this financial miracle bluff.

What's amazing about this - and what seems to have got lost in the political shuffle - is that surely all five must shoulder some responsibility for the country's deficit and indebtedness because they were all very much a part of the Mulroney team that got Canada into such a mess.

Did we hear any explanations for their collective lassitude in this regard? Did we hear any apologies for not having taken the high road earlier in the fight to save our crumbling economy, instead of the low road of political party subservience? Are years of fiscal mismanagement just supposed to vanish in thin air, as did so many Canadian jobs?

Obviously! The only candidate who came close to touching this subject was Edmonton MP Jim Edwards, who received a hearty round of applause when he declared, "I would lead by example, I would live a frugal life as prime minister of Canada."

This was as close a reference to now lame-duck prime minister Brian Mulroney as any candidate tip-toed.

By inference, however, the remark spoke volumes.

It suggests that Mr. Mulroney's less than frugal regal reign of Canada, set the tone for all government departments and that this should not be allowed to happen again.

Right, Jim. And don't forget to close the barn door.

The Canadian electorate is frustrated not only by the state of our economy, but by the hemming and hawing of the politicians - our so-called leaders - who led us down this garden path which seems to be leading to an abyss.

Mr. Turner claims he has a plan with "about three dozen specific actions contained in it," then loses credibility by attempting to backtrack immediately in continuing, "But those are the broad themes."

How in the name of a dictionary can a specific action be tied in with a broad theme?

Unless the current PC leadership candidates, including Mr. Turner, get more specific on issues, the door could be left open for others to sneak in and claim the prize.

As Dalton Camp, former advisor to Brian Mulroney and now a Toronto Star columnist pointed out when this possibility was suggested to him, "We certainly haven't exhausted the supply of idiots in the Conservative Party."

Yes indeed, 'Where's the beef?'

Canada not threatened by refugees

To the Editor:

I would like to respond to Mr. Rod Pinkney's letter (April 10) in which he blames refugees for being a burden on Canadian society.

First, his "us versus 'these people'" position seems to underline a notion that pops up here and there that the mostly European white immigrants arriving in Canada before the 1960s were desirable, whereas those arriving in the last few decades from developing countries need "keeping" and cause "policing problems." Instead of blaming genuine refugees, we Canadians would do well to examine our own biases and prejudices to determine whether our attitudes to people of different races may be intolerant.

Mr. Pinkney's point that we "are still allowing as many refugees into the country as ever" is simply not true. The Minister of Immigration

Bernard Valcourt, reduced the number of refugees Canada landed in 1992 from 58,000 to 50,000. As well, government sponsored refugee levels set at 13,000 a year for 1990 and 1991 were translated into actual figures of 12,000 and 7,000 respectively. Out of 16.7 million refugees world-wide, Canada's contribution to alleviating this global crisis is insignificant, really - in 1991 we received only .18% of the total refugee population in need of protection and assistance.

Put in human terms, this is a frequent reality of a refugee child as articulated by an 11 year old Guatemalan boy: "They came into our village and separated out the men from the women and children.

Then they put the men together and shot them." Canada is a signatory to numerous United Nations Conventions and Protocols which are designed to protect refugees and grant asylum. And "we should stop all immigration unless the people are not going to be a burden on the country," Mr. Pinkney? Let's not blame our failures to deal with economic problems on the relatively few refugees we've received.

I hope that Canadians will continue to struggle with compassion and humanity to provide refuge for genuine refugees.

Henriette Thompson,
on behalf of the
Halton Hills Inter-church
Refugee Committee

Half the facts are wrong

To the Editor:

Wow! No wonder Peter Carter is concerned about P.O.W.E.R.'s activities, half of his facts are wrong.

First: P.O.W.E.R. never jostled, pushed or assaulted Ruth Grier, nor would we ever, ever do such a thing! Other groups, from areas that had been targeted by the provincial, Interim Waste Authority for Greater Toronto Area garbage, came to Georgetown and engaged in that disgraceful behavior.

P.O.W.E.R. members were involved in starting Wastewise and Ruth Grier came to honor their excellent efforts. Ruth Grier knows me on a first name basis and respects P.O.W.E.R. as a group.

Second: P.O.W.E.R. did not pay for a bus to visit David Peterson's riding before the last election. While some people from Halton Hills did go to London, it was my understanding that they hoped to encourage then Premier Peterson to promise to Stop the Dump. Many politicians leading up to an election make promises. It would have been great if the citizens could have pushed him to do that.

Protesting: Why do it? I had never been part of a protest for anything in my life until the Acton Dump question came along. Lois Gibbs won for the people at Love Canada when all the usual channels failed, by protesting. She has advised us to protest and we have done that in a peaceful way. In fact, a number of our councillors joined P.O.W.E.R. in a protest at Queen's

Park.

The premier has thousands of issues to deal with. To give our issue prominence, we have to protest. The squeaky wheel gets the grease. Was I uncomfortable going to protest? You bet I was. But I think our community is worth standing up for.

Bob Rae at Mold Masters: I am certainly very proud of Mold Masters as one of the most successful businesses in Georgetown. Why would we go there to protest? According to some lawyers, Bob Rae and the Minister of the Environment have the power to stop this very expensive dump exercise immediately. If Premier Rae was impressed by the size of our protest, he might go back and review the file. It is always worth a try.

Finally, I would urge your newspaper to aim to print factual information. While it is easy to say that an individual is expressing an opinion, surely that opinion must be based on fact. I feel the newspaper must bear some responsibility for printing only those things that are true. If I wrote a letter to the Editor accusing a prominent person in the community to assault, surely it would be the responsibility of the paper to check out the facts before printing my letter.

And if any other citizens have questions about P.O.W.E.R. strategy, please call 873-0344.

Barbara Halsall
President of P.O.W.E.R.
Georgetown

Park School applauded

To the Editor:

Congratulations, Park School, on your wonderful presentations of "We're the Clowns".

Your auditorium was transformed into a huge circus tent with lots of balloons, laughter, singing and gaiety. It was a wonderful present to give to all of us to share.

Canada is a better place because of you and can be very proud of you (I know Mr. Dodwell is).

The fact that every student in the school took part in this presentation and every student dressed as a clown, singing some very special messages made this a great afternoon.

Thank you, Park School and Staff and I am sure many parents do too.

On your program is the Clown's Prayer, the content of all that you sang to us, leaving us much to think about.

Dr. Esme Ball
Georgetown

Good Samaritan

To the Editor:

On Easter Thursday you found my purse on a main Street bench and turned it over to two workmen for safekeeping. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

This loss would be very upsetting to anyone but to me, a senior on fixed pension, even more so.

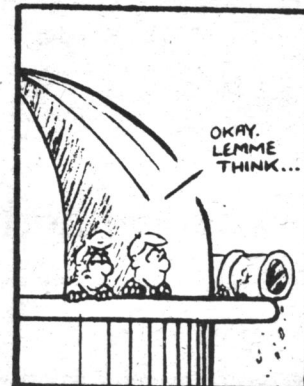
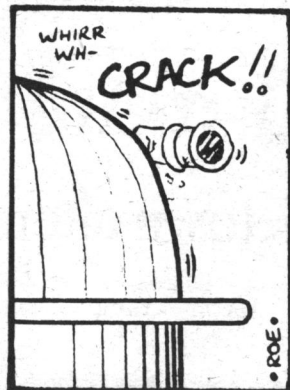
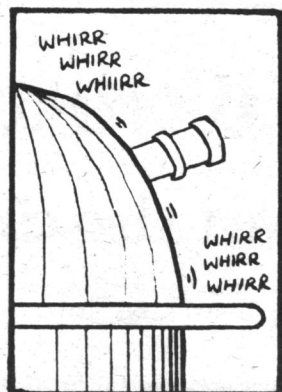
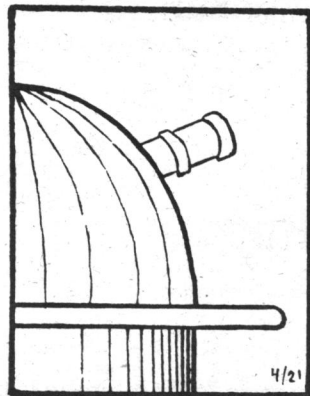
Your kindness made the significance of Easter even more meaningful.

Marie Grant,
Georgetown

Got a beef or a comment?

Halton Hills This Week wants to hear from you.
Drop us a line at: Letters to the Editor, 232 Guelph St., Unit #9,
Georgetown L7G 4B1 or fax your letter to (416) 873-3918

For Pete's Sake



by Roe

Halton Hills THIS WEEK

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