

# Opinion

**Halton Hills THIS WEEK**

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## Racism condemned

**To the Editor:**

The racist attitudes demonstrated at the "Meet the Candidates Meeting" last Thursday evening made me ashamed to be a resident of Georgetown.

This display of racism was a result of ignorant individuals in our community trying to point their finger in desperation to blame someone for Canada's economic and social problems.

On behalf of all non-racist individuals, we applaud Norma Peterson and Brian Patriquin for their attempts to present their convictions faced with the bigots in the audience.

These destructive racist misconceptions must be brought to light. Immigrants and refugees are not a drain on our social welfare system and Canada is not a safe haven for international terrorists. Entering claimants should be given equal opportunity as we second, third and fourth generation Canadian immigrants do (that means all of us, unless you are native Canadian).

Some in the audience were eager to point out that Canada has become a safe haven for foreign terrorists. This is a misconception.

One case which is often referred to is the 1987 Mohmoud Mohammed PLO terrorist who landed on Canadian soil and was cleared to enter.

However, accurate research indicates that it was Canada's isolated immigration security system failing which allowed this to happen, not immigration policy. Secluded incidents like this suggest minor adjustments to the application process, not a destruction or shut down of the policy.

Another deeply ignorant argument which came up Thursday was that immigrants and refugees are taking jobs from Canadians and adding to welfare costs (or as some said "they're getting a free lunch"). This economic argument against refugees and immigration is misplaced.

David Matas in his book "Closing the Doors" writes: "We do not protect refugees to make money or help the Canadian economy. We protect refugees because they need protection. How can a nation justify carrying out any humanitarian program if it must be judged by its economic benefit? The point is to help people."

In any case, refugees and immigrants do not hurt the economy. Studies have found that immigrants and refugees have positive effects in the landed country's economy. They have "higher labor force participation rates and are prepared to work long hours in order to establish themselves in their new country".

Refugees are often economically desirable. They are often educated, professional, trained and articulate. "Refugees and immigrants add to the demand for goods

and service. They arrive with few possessions, and tend to spend an inharmonious amount of their income on Canadian goods once they start work."

Immigrants and refugees also help to stimulate the international trade between Canada and their countries of origin. They tend to import goods from their home countries and send Canadian goods back home.

Canada needs immigrants and refugees. "Because of the low birth rate of native-born Canadians, combined with emigration, we need newcomers to sustain our population and economy." The growth rate of Canada has declined three per cent since the '50s and reports predict that Canadian population growth rate after the turn of the century will become negative. A much higher increase in the present influx of immigrants and refugees is needed to maintain even a zero growth population.

Despite the significant numbers of immigrants and refugees from abroad each year, in 1990 the total influx represented was about one-half of one per cent of Canada's population. For those awaiting the process, work permits are only given to a claimant if he/she would be destitute without it. For many who cannot obtain work permits, welfare is their only option (despite their desire to work). Claimants who are not eligible for either welfare or work permits are often faced with no monetary means of support.

And for those who are finally recognized after years of bureaucratic delays, government make no effort to make claimants feel comfortable here. Canada is a multicultural society, our country's richness in culture makes us what we are today, too many people are trying to paralyze this ethnic diversity.

One example of this was during the 1988 federal election. A Vancouver area candidate for the Reform Party, Douglas Collins, wanted a return to immigration policies of the '50s and '60s when quotas were imposed on non-whites.

He said Canada should have fewer Third World immigrants, (sound familiar?) going on to say "for years now, you (parliament) have been keeping white folk out and letting every S.O.B. in."

Do we as a community want to combat racism? If the answer is yes, we must be aware that if discrimination in immigration and refugee protection is condoned, eventually discrimination will permeate throughout Canada's entire value structure, legal system, judicial and political process.

**Sherilyn Kirkpatrick  
Georgetown**

\* Quotes are borrowed from: Matas, David, Closing The Doors, The Failure of Refugee Protection, Toronto (1990)

## The People's Corner

### Party system is better than the alternatives

**To the Editor:**

I feel compelled to offer a response to your editorial dated Oct. 2. I am afraid I did not have the fortitude to bear with you through this discussion, although I did make it to the bottom of the page.

The confession, nay the profession, that you have never belonged to a political party on the premise "the Canadian people, not the political parties, should decide how our country is run, both now and in the future" leaves one to question who would represent these people in a government and who makes up political parties, if not Canadian people.

Although the party sys-

tem has its imperfections should it cease to exist, I see only two alternatives.

Firstly, an individual could rise from the masses to run for public office without a platform developed by a group (party) and be sworn in as a leader who, although elected, would essentially be a dictator.

The other alternative is to abolish government and allow anarchy to reign.

In your musings on what the current political parties have to offer in this election campaign, you condemn as moose droppings their "outlines" for the future.

Perhaps in fairness an outline, if that is what is being offered, is all a party

can submit when one considers that many future decisions will be based on economic forced not within a lone government's control, i.e., the global economy.

Politicians are constantly criticized for promising what later becomes impossible to deliver. It would seem wise and most fair to the electorate, therefore, to offer a direction and remain somewhat flexible to the needs of the future.

One must be careful that criticism of current electioneering and the suggestion that all parties lack substance does not convince some disillusioned readers to forfeit their right to vote

on Oct. 25. This would certainly diminish the power of the people.

Furthermore, the stands on various issues that the parties espouse are drawn from its members, who also elect the riding representatives and leader of the party.

I humbly make a suggestion that would add one more voice on behalf of the "Canadian people" to the dialogue concerning the running of the country: join a political party.

**Rosaleen Garneau  
Georgetown**

*From the editor: This reader's questions and concerns will hopefully be answered in my column in our weekend edition.*

### Turner a Reformer in disguise

**To the Editor:**

It was interesting to see Garth Turner's attack on our Reform Party deficit reduction plan at the Candidate's debate in Georgetown last week.

Here is a person who has promoted Reform principals for virtually all of his five years as a Conservative Member of Parliament under Brian Mulroney and just a few short months ago, ran for the leadership of his party and Prime Minister of our country based upon a platform of Reform principles (remember the "Turner Plan"?). Now his is spearheading the attack on those very principles, while his party offers only hazy solutions to the pressing problems Canada faces.

Unfortunately, in Thursday night's debate, his facts were not correct. The Reform Party has no intention of increasing taxes (as the Conservative Government has done 38 times in the last nine years). Reform would re-establish U.I.C. as a genuine self-funding insurance program as it was originally conceived, not a social welfare tool. Further, we propose to transfer more responsibility for control of the plan to employees and employers.

Garth has an advantage when it comes to a critique of our deficit reduction program; The Reform Party's plan is in writing for all to examine, whereas the Conservative plan, if there is one, is hidden.

**Dick MacDuffee  
Reform Party candidate  
for Halton-Peel**

### Trick or treating Canada?

**By Pat Freestone  
Special to HHTW**

They say the first step of recovery is admitting you have a problem. Okay, here goes.

My name is Patrick Freestone. I am 25-years-old and I am a political neophyte. Yes, it's true. Like many other young Canadians, I know little or nothing about politics.

Oh sure, I've voted before, but on both of these occasions the process was somewhat tainted by outside influences.

Confession #1: In the 1988 federal election, I freely admit I voted for the Liberal Party - please, no laughing. The reasons behind my choice were simple. The bulk of my schoolmates (business students indoctrinated by the faculty) voted Progressive Conservative, so of course, I needed to be different.

Confession #2: In last year's "referendum" I voted "Yes", primarily because I had recently completed a year-long Canadian Political Science course and quite frankly, had grown tired of the whole constitutional debate.

Remember, I said I was politically naive.

Times change and with the announcement of an Oct. 25 federal election, I decided I had to change; I had to educate myself. After all, there is no doubt Oct. 25 will be a turning point in Canadian history.

My first educational step was to vow not to listen or watch any sound bite on the radio or television concerning this election. My reasoning is simple, if 47 days is too short a time to discuss the country's economic matters (according to Kim Campbell) then certainly a 15-second adver-

#### Guest column

tisement is out of the question.

My next step was to obtain a copy of each party's platform - a task easier said than done. After all, if one is to make an intelligent choice, one must know all the options.

Finally, the big day arrived. Thursday, Sept. 30. I attended my first political meeting. I joined 450 potential voters at Sacre Coeur Hall in Georgetown to "Meet the Candidates".

I arrived early in order to get a good seat. The hall was packed and hot - the people even hotter.

The evening began with each candidate making a very general statement about general matters relevant to the general election. Each was then allowed to generally rebut their opponents' generalities. Generally speaking, I thought it went well.

Next came 12 "average" voters to question the candidates on a number of issues; including the economy, the deficit, the dump and immigration policies. I watched, listened, and like a trained seal, laughed when appropriate.

However, while walking home afterwards in the cool night air, a thought entered my battered and bruised mind. How apropos it is that this election should take place during the Halloween season; a time of year when nothing is exactly as it seems.

So, imagine if you will a neighborhood, unlike any other, where all our local candidates might live. It's Halloween - let's go trick or treating.

The first house belongs to the Turners. The house itself has no doubt seen bet-

ter days. However, it is impeccably decorated with all the proper Halloween accouterments. The front lawn displays a number of perfectly crafted, ghostly figures and flawlessly carved pumpkins. It's an obstacle course to get to the front door, but as we ring the bell, hopes are high.

However, coming away from the door we can't help but feel shortchanged and disappointed. The appearance of perfection is only that - an appearance. For there is no candy. Instead, we are left with a piece of fruit. A piece of fruit that will go uneaten and spoil.

The next house on our journey belongs to the Reeds. They have recently moved back into the neighborhood and so enjoy regaling unsuspecting souls with stories of earlier days.

After an hour at the front door we walk away asking each other what has been said!

The candy we receive is a piece of toffee. The problem with toffee is it tends to stick to your teeth and is so very hard to get rid of.

The Peterson household is dark. It seems nobody's home: the candy all gone.

Our final stop is the MacDuffee house. They are new to the neighborhood and have some strange and different ways. They tend to scare the rest of the established neighbors. The MacDuffees offer us a grab bag. Sometimes you get something extraordinary, but more often than not, it is the same goodies the other houses hand out.

I know myself after feasting for years on Halloween treats, my teeth are decaying because often what looks to be a treat is in fact, a trick.

Happy Hallolection!