

EDITORIAL

Being the son of a serviceman I had a childhood of moving every year, sometimes more often. I have the dubious distinction of having attended 13 schools. This gave me exposure to about every subject taught in the English world, not in any great depth, but a goodly tasting of everything. It also exposed me as the perennial new boy to the unwelcome attentions of the school bullies. Now experts will tell you that bullies have a deep seated streak of cowardice, and I can confirm that this is true. I learned early on to aim for the bridge of the nose and found that this nipped the bullying in the bud. Now I was lucky because my bullies were front and centre and easily confronted. Today's bullies hide behind the anonymous cloak of the Internet, and the bullying has become much more insidious. My heart aches for those children being tormented online by their peers. Not only can they not square up to their tormentors, but it must be dreadful to wonder which of your acquaintances is responsible.

We as a society are now focused on stamping out cyber-bullying, emphasizing how unacceptable we find it. You would think that whenever we find instances of anonymous nastiness that we would treat it with contempt, but sadly that is not always the case. Recently an anonymous complaint was lodged with the Niagara Escarpment Commission objecting to the parking of cars over the winter months at the Country Heritage Park. My response whenever I get something anonymous is to file it in the trashcan, but rather than ignoring the complaint the NEC gave it legitimacy and ordered the Country Heritage Park to stop parking cars. Now the car parking brings in some \$60,000 a year in revenue. When you consider that the Province only gives the park \$100,000 a year in support, you can see how critical this income is.

I attended an NEC hearing last week at which the Country Heritage Park situation came up for discussion. I expected that common sense would prevail, but sadly it did not. David Baldwin, the commissioner from Dufferin, seemed to be the only one concerned that Country Heritage Park might be forced to close with the reduction in its income. He proposed that if a ban on the parking was to be effected that it should take force in the spring of 2006 thereby giving Country Heritage Park income this winter and effectively another year to make other arrangements.

His proposal was squashed and the ban implemented. The only help the commission proffered Country Heritage Park was a suggestion that CHP should ask the Province to make up the lost revenue. I was appalled at the casual indifference to the fate of Country Heritage Park.

Now in case you don't know it, the NEC was created by a draconian piece of legislation called the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act. The NEC answers to no one but the Minister of Natural Resources and effectively overrides the power and wishes of the municipalities within its geographic area.

I don't know about you but any institution that has such unchecked authority makes me nervous. I shall be enraged if the Country Heritage Park has to close its doors. I hate bullying of any kind and when the next provincial election comes I'll be voting for whichever party promises to clip the NEC'S wings.

I also have a heartfelt desire to boot the gutless, anonymous whistle blower up the wazoo.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

Re Country Heritage Park and the Niagara Escarpment Commission

I thought it would be worthwhile to put this situation into perspective. Toronto Auto Auctions is a large and growing company that has had tremendous support from the Town of Milton. Our ability to park cars at the CHP has been very helpful to our business since 1999 and we have always felt good that this annual arrangement had a great positive impact on the park. Our business will continue on despite the decisions of the NEC to disallow the parking of vehicles at the CHP. It is a significant inconvenience for us and will increase our expenses in the year to come but we will survive.

What is most disconcerting is the devastating impact the NEC's decision will have on the CHP. I was disturbed that the NEC would not take the time to come to some compromise that would allow for parking at the CHP to allow for further investigation or at least to allow Mr. Cressman, his staff and many volunteers to mod-

ify their business plan to compensate for this lost revenue. The auction will go on with or without the CHP but the park will die without the revenue from the auction. The NEC decision was heartless towards the park and the many people who understand its value to Ontario. The NEC seems so unable to make any decision that would alter the status quo for fear that it would set a precedent. As we know, precedents are set every day by experienced policy makers. It seems as if the NEC lacks the experience and is unable to deal with the subtle differences between the many appeals and requests that are presented in their meetings. Instead, they seem to say no to every request in order to avoid future requests of a similar nature which would further tax their limited decision making ability.

The NEC means well but has unwittingly caused tremendous damage to the CHP by their quick, no compromise decision.

Brad Hart
General Manager
Toronto Auto Auctions

Dear Editor,

The Gary Carr Report published in the Nov 18 Halton Compass states that 68,700 jobs were created in October, average hourly wages have increased 3.9 per cent in the past year, and the Liberal government has produced eight consecutive balanced budgets.

Given that I frequently open a newspaper to read of our tax money being shovelled into our Norman province, would Quebec be the major beneficiary of these added jobs? According to Western Canadian papers, there are foundation excavations for large buildings filling with water in Vancouver because Human Resources and Skills Development Canada is short of staff for the processing of applications from companies in the UK and Germany that are eager to supply the skilled workers necessary to enable a number of mega-projects to proceed. The Alberta oil patch is also crying for skilled foreign workers. Meanwhile, the federal government is openly recruiting in Morocco and Tunisia for immigrants to settle in Canada outside Quebec to "enhance Canada's linguistic duality." HRSDC will presumably be able to process their applications with great haste.

It is great to read of the 3.9 per cent average wage increase, which pales in comparison with the not so welcome increase in service station pump prices, steadily increasing domestic utility bills and, if media reports are true, looming

increases in the cost of groceries. Then again, the average wage increase is not as skimpy as the planned January increase of 2.2 per cent in government-administered pensions.

Finally, there is more to the story on balanced budgets than Mr. Carr chose to place on the table. On September 14, 1999, the federal (Liberal) government passed Bill C-78, allowing them to expropriate an accumulated surplus of \$30.2 billion in the public service, RCMP and Canadian Armed Forces pension funds. It is interesting in this regard that the government exempts itself from the Pension Benefits Standards Act, which limits employer access to any surplus in federally registered pension plans. No doubt the reader will also have noticed the tremendous increase in CPP premiums a few years ago. There's a basic thesis at work here: as long as a government takes enough money from its citizens, by whatever means necessary, it's easy to balance a budget.

As a postscript, I was still musing upon the Gary Carr Report when, the following morning, I fished a large, 11.25 X 15.5-inch, four-page flyer from my mailbox. It's yet another Gary Carr Report, printed on heavy weight paper with little apparent regard for Kyoto, it must have cost a hefty bucket of our tax money to produce.

Ron Bezzant
Milton

More letters on pages 16 and 20

Encouraging today's youth

Nominations are now being accepted for the Ontario Junior Citizen of the Year Awards

The strength of our community lies in solid citizens. Today's youth are tomorrow's leaders. If you know a young person, aged 6 to 17, who is involved in worthwhile community service; a special person who is contributing while living with a limitation; a youth who has performed an act of heroism; or a 'good kid' who shows a commitment to making life better for others, doing more than is normally expected of someone their age - help us recognize their contribution - nominate them today!

Nominations will be accepted until November 30.

Contact this newspaper or the Ontario Community Newspapers Association at www.ocna.org or 905.639.8720.

ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE - NOMINATE SOMEONE TODAY!



ONTARIO JUNIOR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS



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