

# The Independent & Free Press

**KEN NUGENT**  
Publisher

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## Top of the class

Staff at The Independent & Free Press have been wearing a lot of grins and smiles this week. But being named the top newspaper in Ontario will do that to people.

At the Ontario Community Newspapers Association 1996 Better Newspapers Competition Saturday, The Independent & Free Press was awarded first place in the Class 5 General Excellence (circulation 12,500-24,999) division.

It marked the fifth time this newspaper has won the prestigious honor and came less than a year after we opted to give the paper a new look.

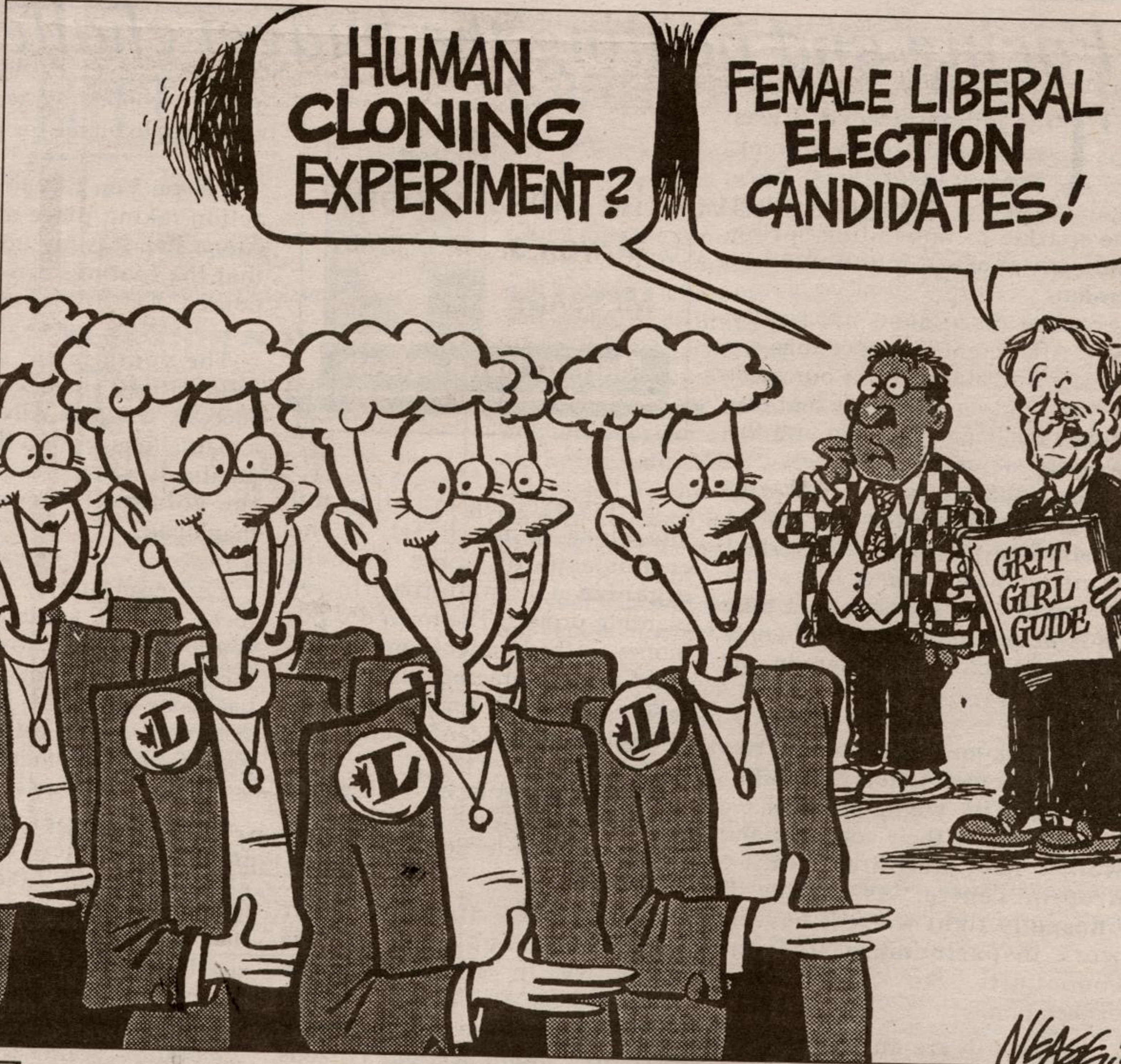
Over the past 10 months our advertising customers and readers have told us how much they like the paper and its re-design. Now, a panel of judges have said the same thing—Halton Hills' best-read newspaper is a winner.

The newspaper business is a unique business. A newspaper has to inform, educate and entertain. We must be all things to all people—not an easy feat. Some readers want sports, others want news, some want information on the local real estate market and others prefer feature stories.

Not only must we provide this information, but we must also package it in such a way that it is easy to read and attractive to you, our readers. We're not naive enough to think that every edition we publish is going to meet the needs of every reader, but the staff at this paper genuinely try to strike a balance in each edition so that there is something for everyone each time you pick up a copy of The Independent & Free Press.

Along with being an award-winning newspaper, we are also a business. That, of course, means we rely on the support of the community we serve and we're happy to say that we have a solid, two-way relationship with Halton Hills residents and businesses. It is this support which helped us win this award and also allows us to produce quality newspapers.

From our publisher to our composing room staff to the delivery boys and girls, we thank you for making us No. 1 in Ontario.



## Escarpment 'threatened'

*(This letter was sent to Premier Mike Harris and a copy was made available to this newspaper for publication.)*

Dear Mr. Harris:

I am deeply concerned about recent changes which pose serious threats to the preservation of the Niagara Escarpment.

- Why would you consider moving the Niagara Escarpment Commission from the Ministry of the Environment and Energy to the Ministry of Natural Resources whose mandate includes resource development and which has favored aggregate extraction in the Niagara Escarpment Plan area?

- Actions (and inactions) such as not appointing new members to fill the vacancies on the NEC indicate to me that the role of the NEC will be weakened to the point where it is totally ineffective. I sincerely hope this is not your objective!

- There are serious problems with giving municipalities control over the administration of the Niagara Escarpment Plan. The municipalities are more readily swayed by the influence of powerful corporations. Municipal boundaries are not applicable in dealing with an ecosystem.

- "Piecemeal preservation" doesn't work. Scattering a park here and there, in between residential and industrial developers does not work for an ecosystem that can only survive if we take a unified approach to its preservation.

Mr. Premier, can you please give me your word that you will ensure that no actions will be taken by your government to weaken the unified protection that the Escarpment has enjoyed under all provincial governments since 1973?

Read Whatmough,  
Georgetown

## Letter of the day

### Bennett Centre is a residence

Dear editor,

I am writing in reference to the paid parking issue at the Georgetown hospital and in particular to the effect it will have on the Bennett Centre.

The Bennett Centre is not a hospital, it is a "residence" for people in need of nursing assistance on a long-term basis, these residents call the Bennett Centre home.

Most residents are unable to take trips into the community or visits to family, they rely on family and friends visiting them to keep them in touch with life outside. The residents look forward to seeing visitors, it is a ray of sunshine in their otherwise dull routine. By making visitors pay a \$2 parking fee per visit, you effectively eliminate friends that will drop in for a few minutes because they were at that end of town, on a lunch break or killing time between appointments. Surely they will think twice about paying \$2 for such a short visit.

Families who visit on a regular basis, be it daily or several times a week, will pay \$20 per month. Family members are welcomed warmly at the Bennett Centre, the nursing staff will tell you of the valuable contribution they make by providing emotional support for their loved one, as well as practical help such as feeding and assisting with other tasks.

The Bennett Centre is also blessed with wonderful volunteers who come in to assist residents with feeding, activities, and friendly visiting. However, under the hospital parking scheme, volunteers will not pay to park, which I agree with wholeheartedly. I question though, the difference between a volunteer, family member or friend all of whom are basically providing the same support to a resident. The only difference I can see is that one gets free parking and the other doesn't.

The board of the hospital has not thoroughly thought the parking issue over and is making too hasty a decision. There are many other ways to make up a \$75,000 shortfall, many residents, families and friends have ideas if only the board would listen.

Paula Baker, Georgetown

## Our Readers Write

The Independent & Free Press welcomes letters to the editor from our readers. All letters must be signed and include an address and a daytime telephone number. Letters can be mailed, delivered to our office address at 211 Armstrong Ave., Georgetown, Ont., L7G 4X5, faxed to us at (905) 873-0398 or e-mailed to: independent.freepress@aztec-net.com