

The Independent & Free Press

KEN NUGENT
Publisher

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They're off!

It was somewhat ironic that Prime Minister Jean Chretien took the time to throw a sandbag on a dike in flood-ravaged Manitoba the same weekend he called a general election for June 2.

After all, the PM has sand-bagged Canadians with this election call which comes 18 months before the Liberals' mandate was to end and with the Grits riding high in the polls. Chretien's 42 months in power is the second shortest term for a majority government this century.

The PM says the country is at a crossroads and his government needs a new mandate to take us into the next century.

Really? With the economy just now getting to its feet after a horrible recession and unemployment levels soaring, is this really the best time to put government business on hold for a month and a half?

But, like it or not, we're off to the polls and it is imperative that Canadians take the time to listen to the candidates and make the right decision in determining who they want to lead them into the 21st century.

While the Grits may be feeling cocky about their lofty standings in the polls, they should remember the fate that befell former Ontario Premier David Peterson who called an election in 1990 while holding a seemingly insurmountable lead only to lose and pave the way for five years of NDP rule.

Although this election has come a year too early, it will be an interesting one for the major parties involved and will answer several key questions:

- Can the traitorous Bloc Quebecois be removed from the Opposition benches?
- Can the Tories and NDP rebound from political obscurity?
- Will the Tories and Reform split the conservative vote providing the Liberals with the chance for an end-run?
- Will the Liberals' good work on the deficit be enough to make voters ignore their disastrous efforts on national unity and unemployment, Chretien's imaginary chats with the homeless, the broken GST promise, the Airbus fiasco, the Somalia inquiry...

We'll know in 34 days.

Cancer Society says thanks for support of daffodil sale

Dear editor,

On behalf of the Acton branch of the Canadian Cancer Society, I would like to thank the community of Acton for supporting our recent daffodil sale. The weather co-operated and we were pleased to sell all 1,300 bunches!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the volunteers who went to the local businesses to take daffodil orders. Thanks also to those who packed orders and sold daffodils to the public. Without their dedication, we could not possibly have a successful sale. We are also fortunate to have wonderful people at the Royal Canadian Legion who generously allow us to use their facility to store our flowers and pack our orders.

We are grateful to the Acton IGA, the Liquor Store and Halton Credit Union for giving us the opportunity to sell our daffodils outside their businesses. The Independent & Free Press should be commended for their coverage during the month of April.

Thank you Acton. Once again, you have shown that you are a community that cares!

Cathy Gerrow
Acton branch,
Daffodil convener
Canadian Cancer Society

Letter of the day

We must understand Quebec

Dear editor,

In regards to the editorial in the April 16 edition entitled, Time for action, I must, in bewilderment, ask if the author has ever visited or spent any time in Quebec. To equate as cultural equivalents Halton Hills and Quebec City or Montreal is ludicrous.

For starters, the languages are obviously completely different, but so too are the histories and heritages. French Civil Code and English Common Law (the founding legal and societal strictures) were in no way equivalent or even similar policies. How could two cultures stemming from these systems come to resemble each other? Even today, differences are plainly evident in popular culture. Demographics prove that Quebecers have different viewing and listening habits than the rest of the country.

English Canada seems to have little trouble distinguishing itself from English America. No one would equate Toronto or Halton Hills to Boston or Albany even though these centres share a language and founding ancestry. Quebec, however, where no such similarities exist, is considered no different from the rest of Canada (?). It doesn't add up.

This failure to grasp fundamental cultural differences can be dangerous. Keep in mind that the FLQ is not long dead in the annals of Canadian history. The seeds of what has torn apart Ireland, the former Yugoslavia, etc., are sown here in Canada as well. I always thought Canadians were smarter than that, but the hardlining "millstone around our necks for too long" kind of talk seems to point to the less intelligent alternative.

I think what English Canada fails to realize is that the break-up of Canada will be due not only to Quebec separatists, but also to those unwilling to understand Quebec's distinctiveness.

Tim Foley, Limehouse

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