

The Independent & Free Press

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A flood of relief

The eyes of Halton Hills and the rest of Canada have been upon Manitoba these past couple of weeks, as our western neighbors struggle against the worst flood in their living history.

The tragedy has propelled many local citizens to action, calling upon fellow residents to respond with food, clothing and supplies for Manitoba.

In the weekend paper, we reported on Anne Klassen, a former Winnipeg native, who is co-ordinating a Georgetown effort with drop-off locations at the Georgetown fire hall, Wastewise and the Halton Community Credit Union. This week, Park Lincoln Mercury has announced it will act as a drop-off location for flood relief supplies and the local company will ensure that they arrive in Manitoba to the people who need it most. In Glen Williams, a group has begun the Red River Relief—a special Thursday food drive for the thousands of the people evacuated by the wall of water rushing towards their homes.

The water-ravaged province, however, fell victim to more than the strong will of Mother Nature this past month—politics also rode roughshod.

A week and half ago, with flood waters already invading the border towns of the Red River valley and with impending doom over the capital city of Winnipeg being desperately fought by courageous volunteers building dikes and sandbagging homes, the Liberal government called a national election.

The ill-conceived timing by Chretien to call this election in the midst of one of Canada's most horrible natural disasters is evidence once more that his government has lost touch with Canadians and their priorities.

It's obvious what Chretien's priority is—to get re-elected. The polls told him the time was ripe for an election guaranteeing a Liberal victory, but had Chretien really cared about his citizens, he should have postponed the call. He didn't.

Then when he could have stopped the flood of anger from Manitobans—and the disbelief from the rest of Canada—Chretien refused to decide whether to delay the election in Manitoba. Instead he found a scapegoat in Canada's chief electoral officer Jean-Pierre Kingsley, who on Sunday announced the federal election in Manitoba will go ahead as scheduled—despite Manitoba officials' expectation that thousands will still be homeless come voting day.

Perhaps on June 3, it'll be Jean Chretien's turn to be homeless.

Too many taxes for a pay raise

Dear editor,

I read the Letter of the Day published in your Sunday, April 13th issue, and am compelled to respond. In this letter, authored by Maggie Laidlaw of Guelph, she advocates a property tax increase of \$100 a year per household to provide teachers with a pay raise.

I am the mother of a Grade 10 student and almost obsessed that she receive the best education we as a province can afford. However, I will do all in my power to strengthen my province politically and economically so that my daughter's generation and future generations can afford a reasonable standard of living which includes universal health care and education and a safety net for the underprivileged.

In recent years, the province has spent far in excess of its revenue so that not only is there an enormous debt, but also insufficient funds to service that debt. Surely, most taxpayers recognize the simple fact that this performance cannot continue if we expect to enjoy universal health care and education.

Canadians are very heavily taxed and cannot afford additional taxes. It is important, without augmenting the rate of taxation at any level of government, that all essential public services be continued.

Many households are experiencing financial constraints. I have two middle-aged relatives who are unemployed and suspect that most families have relatives or friends who suffer similarly. The teachers have well paid positions and at this time should not be seeking more, more, and still more. Soon the debt will be under control; more funds will be available; and then even the taxpayers may be more beneficent.

Zita Lee

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

Acton Red Cross says thanks

Dear editor,

On behalf of the Halton Hills branch of the Canadian Red Cross, we would like to say "thank you" to all of the people who took part in the recent Acton Blood Donor Clinic. There were 95 units of blood collected at the March 20 clinic. Special thanks to the Independent & Free Press,

who advertised the clinic in this paper. Of course the clinic could not be such a success without the many volunteers who helped run it and the continued support of the Acton Legion.

Joe Graf, chairman
Julia Roehrig, asst. chairman
Acton Red Cross Blood Donor Committee

Letter of the day

Respect is earned, not legislated

Dear editor,

In reply to Mr. Tim Foley, "We must understand Quebec" Most Canadians do understand Quebec. They understand that for 52 of the 97 years of this 20th century we have been governed by a Prime Minister from Quebec. That's recognition. We understand that Quebec accounts for 23 per cent of the Canadian population, yet they receive 31 per cent of the transfer payments given out by the federal government. That's recognition big time. We understand that the Governor General, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the Speaker of the House, the President of the Privy Council, the Clerk of the Privy Council and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court are French. That sure sounds like recognition to me. We also understand that the association of Quebec with the rest of Canada is an economic one not a patriotic one.

The politicians seem to think that everything can be solved with legislation. There is one thing you cannot legislate and that is respect. Respect is earned and I don't think that the people in the other nine provinces feel that Quebec has earned that respect.

Frank Jamieson