

The Independent

Weekend Edition & Free Press

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The Independent & Free Press is published every Wednesday and Friday at 211 Armstrong Ave. Georgetown Ont., L7G 4X5. It is one of the newspapers published by Metroland Printing, Publishing & Distributing Ltd., which includes: Ajax/Pickering News Advertiser, Alliston Herald/Courier, Bancroft This Week, Barm's Bay This Week, Barrie Advance, Bolton Enterprise, Brampton Guardian, Burlington Shopping News, Burlington Post, City Parent, Collingwood/Wasaga Connection, East York Mirror, Erin Advocate/Country Routes, Etobicoke Guardian, Flamborough Post, Georgetown Independent/Acton Free Press, Huronia Business Times, Kingston This Week, Lindsay This Week, Markham Economist & Sun, Midland/Penetanguishene Mirror, Milton Canadian Champion, Milton Shopping News, Mississauga News, Mississauga Business Times, Napanee Guide, Newmarket/Aurora Era-Banner, Northumberland News, North York Mirror, Oakville Beaver, Oakville Shopping News, Oldtimers Hockey News, Orillia Today, Oshawa/Whitby/Clarington Port Perry This Week, Owen Sound Tribune, Peterborough This Week, Picton County Guide, Richmond Hill/Thornhill/Vaughan Liberal, Scarborough Mirror, Stouffville/Uxbridge Tribune, Forever Young, City of York Guardian.

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Price: Store copies 50¢ each; Subscriptions \$26.00 per year by carrier, \$92.50 per year by mail in Canada; \$130.00 per year in all other countries. Plus G.S.T.

Second Class Mail Registration Number 6869. The Independent & Free Press is a member of The Canadian Community Newspaper Association and The Ontario Community Newspaper Association.

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Our choice

When Ontarians head to the polls next Thursday they will be choosing which party should be given the responsibility of leading Canada's economic engine into the next century.

It is an awesome responsibility to be sure.

As we mentioned Wednesday, voters have seen a little of everything during this provincial election campaign, despite its shortened span.

In our view, local voters should look at three critical factors before casting their vote.

Party policy: The three parties have three distinct philosophies on how best to run this province. The Tories have indicated that through tax cuts and restructuring money can be saved. Few can argue that during the past four years under Tory leadership Ontario's economy has boomed. Tory critics argue that Ontario is simply riding on the coattails of a strong U.S. economy although we believe that is not totally the case. The Liberals in this campaign have indicated that more than \$1 billion in spending on health care and education is available, although when asked where the money will come from the silence has been deafening. The NDP has staunchly argued tax cuts are not part of their platform which leads us to believe they haven't learned from error of their ways in the early '90s when they spent money— your money— like drunken sailors on shore leave. While we like much of the NDP's environment platform there is too much in their basic philosophy to concern us. We believe the Tories have the best

economic plan for this province.

Leadership: Love him or hate him there is little doubt Mike Harris has shown he is capable of rising to a challenge. He has demonstrated his government will not be dictated to by special interest groups, particularly the teachers' unions who have waged war with every provincial government in the past 15 years. Dalton McGuinty, who had a public perception of being wishy-washy heading into this campaign, has done little to dispel that notion. On the other hand, Howard Hampton has been impressive during the past four weeks and should, after this campaign, have little trouble in getting Ontarians to remember his name. Harris, however, is the easy winner when it comes to leadership.

Local representation: Incumbent Tory MPP Ted Chudleigh has been a steady, if unspectacular, representative for this riding. Liberal Mohan Anand, a political newcomer, has done nothing to convince us that he should replace Chudleigh. NDP candidate Jay Jackson is making another stab at politics and while we find him a likable fellow, that is not enough to earn him a seat at Queen's Park. Bill Champ of the Green Party and Giuseppe Gori, of the Family Coalition Party, are fringe candidates at best. Our choice is Chudleigh.

While we have made our choice known, we urge all voters to make up their own minds. Four weeks ago we asked local residents to learn about the issues, the candidates and the leaders and to make an informed choice when voting June 3. We reiterate that thought again today.

Letter of the day

Tories have misled the public

Dear editor,

I am not surprised to see that four out of five of your respondents (Independent May 12) tell us that they will be voting Tory in the coming election. Just goes to show you what \$100 million of taxpayers' money (used for TV advertising) will accomplish when used with little regard for the truth. You've certainly got to give Mike Harris and Ted Chudleigh credit; they surely do know how to spread propaganda at our expense!

However, let's consider what they have actually done during the past four years.

Ontario is now one of only two provinces which have not managed a balanced budget and in fact we are now over \$20 billion more in debt than we were when Mike and Ted took office.

With the help of John Snobelen these fellows managed to create a crisis in education where none existed.

With the help of Elizabeth Witmer they have caused chaos in the health system to the extent that we now have to send cancer patients south of the border for very expensive treatment.

Mike even managed to draw Ontario to the unwelcome attention of the United Nations when he blatantly ignored calls (and continues to do so) for an inquiry into the shooting, apparently by the OPP, of an unarmed man at Camp Ipperwash.

Let me suggest that Mike Harris and Ted Chudleigh would be nowhere to be seen in the polls if they had not been allowed to use over \$100 million of your money and mine deliberately to mislead the public by means of their TV advertising campaign. If he gets away with it come June 3 I predict we will have an awful mess to clean up four years from now! And you don't need me to tell you who will be paying for the costs of the clean-up.

Eric Balkind, Acton

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 may be edited for content and length and 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