

Editorial

Russia's 9/11

It was virtually impossible to get through the Labour Day weekend without hearing, seeing or reading about the horror in Beslan, Russia.

As parents across Canada excitedly sent their children off to class for a new school year yesterday (Tuesday), hundreds of families from the Russian industrial town of 30,000 were burying their murdered sons and daughters—innocent pawns in a stand-off between rebel militant forces and Russian soldiers.

In what was the worst hostage incident in that nation's history, a 53-hour standoff at School No. 1 literally exploded when a bomb was detonated inside a gymnasium—killing hundreds instantly and leading to a shootout between hostage-takers and Russian commandos.

This bloodbath is just the latest attack on Russia by rebels seeking independence for the province of Chechnya. While the terrorists didn't get their wish, hundreds of civilians were sacrificed in the name of the rebels' cause.

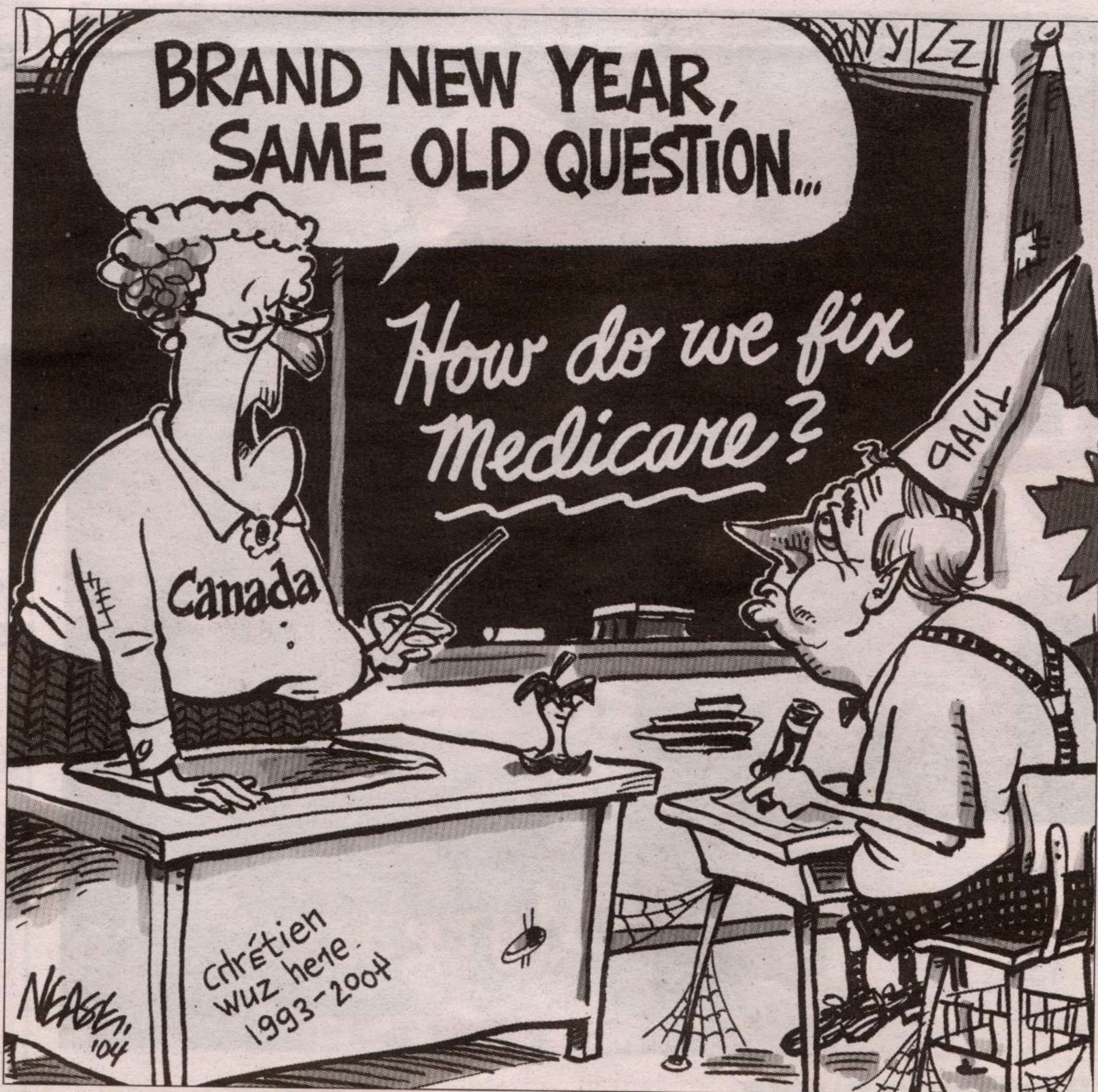
Could something similar happen closer to home? Actually, it already has.

Domestic terrorism is far from being foreign to North America as witnessed by the April 19, 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City which killed 168 people.

While Canadians generally feel far removed from such senseless bloodshed, we can't be so naive to think such acts of home-grown terrorism could never happen here.

As our nation's FLQ crisis of 1969-70 demonstrated, the anger and frustration of a small group of politically-disgruntled citizens provides all the catalyst needed to fuel domestic terror.

The horror in Beslan is another chilling reminder the world will always have fanatics who will stop at nothing to get their way—even if it means the murder of innocent children.



Letters to the editor...

Taxpayer to town: Enough is enough!

(This letter was originally sent to Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette. A copy was made available for publication.)

Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor must be signed and include an address and daytime telephone number. Unsigned letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 200 words and may be edited.

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Dear Mayor Bonnette,

It is with great concern that I read in *The Independent & Free Press*, that this council is asking the town staff to restrict their spending to 6.7 per cent for next year.

Is there no end to the spending of residents' hard-earned money? Every penny that goes to property taxes means that much less disposable income for many residents, which can have a dire effect on businesses in this community. There are a large number of workers and seniors who are trying to live on incomes under \$30,000 a year. Many seniors earn \$20,000 or less. This means that as homeowners or renters, they are forced to spend more than half their incomes just on their shelter needs. Many have to decide to limit what they spend on food and health care needs, often to their detriment.

Living costs have escalated with energy increases and now even more tax dollars go to the town and region, let alone what we pay the

province and Canada in income taxes and sales taxes. Already we have seen businesses leave or close down, leaving empty buildings. Rents keep going up for stores as landowners have to pay more property taxes.

I am also concerned when I read about (Town CAO) Bob Austin reporting how many town staffers earn in excess of \$100,000 a year. In the private sector, jobs like these do not pay at that level and in many instances, workers have been asked to take pay cuts. Many companies don't even have pension plans for their workers anymore.

I like living in Halton Hills but what is in store for us if council keeps increasing property taxes as it has done since Mayor Russ Miller retired from office? Now, I am the first to admit that I appreciate the services we get but at what price? Surely it is time to show restraint and give residents a break they richly deserve.

Robin Matthysen, Georgetown

Reader's letter 'insulting'

Dear editor,

This is a reaction to a letter from Mr. Xanthios, Noisy child a nuisance.

Either you don't have any children of your own, or they are long grown up. Or, you never took them to the library.

I have a 19-month-old daughter who is too small to know how to behave properly and who screams basically all the time, either with an excitement or anger. And yes, she is noisy when we are at the library. Perhaps, as you suggest, I can "simply remove her rather than try to reason with the unreasonable", it's just that I have this crazy idea to introduce her to books and get her used to being in the library. I could take her out, but doesn't it then defeat the purpose of our visit?

What I would suggest to you is to choose some other time to come to the library; maybe when it's not very probable that there will be too many kids, or to ask the librarians to find a new spot for the microfiche.

But please don't give us, parents, any suggestions about how to deal with our children when you have no idea what's the story behind all that screaming. I personally found your letter very selfish and insulting to parents and children.

Andrea Dubravsky, Georgetown

The Independent & Free Press

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