

Toward a common identity

Recent violence in Europe has shown that it has not integrated newcomers as well as we have in Canada and in the U.S. Yet, for all our successes, there are some troubling developments.

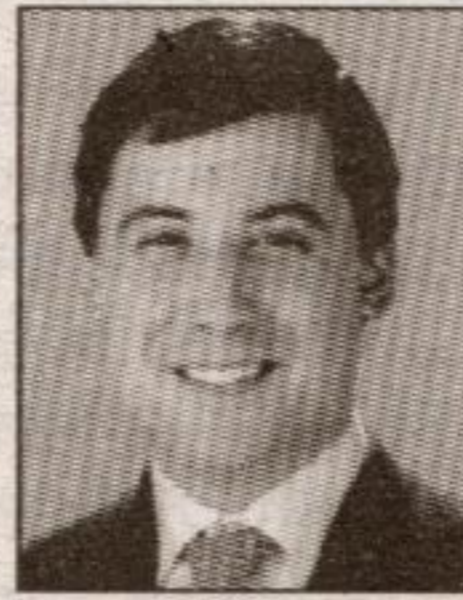
The social cohesion that we've accepted as normal between different ethnic groups is breaking down. We see increasing friction, whether on university campuses, in talk show debates, or in wider Canadian society.

These are troubling trends because they have to do with how we view ourselves and each other; they are about identity. When a common Canadian identity is under threat, then so too is Canadian unity.

Too often we talk about that which makes us different from each other, and not about what we have in common. Canada is not simply the disjunction of different groups, different peoples, and different regions. To be a Canadian is also to share in common something with every other person in this vast land.

A couple of weeks ago, John Barber lamented in *The Globe and Mail* that few MPs of Chinese descent represented ridings where a large number of Chinese-Canadians live. I couldn't disagree with his premise more. I represent the riding of Wellington-Halton Hills, a riding over 97

PARLIAMENT HILL REPORT



Mike Chong

per cent Caucasian, and it elected an MP with the last name of Chong. Markham-Unionville, a riding over 60 per cent Asian, elected an MP with the last name of McCallum. That's my idea of Canada.

My children are going to be of Chinese, Dutch, Scottish and English decent. To speak of these children in hyphenated terms is absurd. They will simply be Canadian.

We need to speak about a common Canadian identity and move beyond emphasising our differences. As Canada becomes increasingly racially mixed and diverse, we need to transcend the politics of ethnicity and start articulating our identity in pan-Canadian terms.

—Mike Chong is the MP for Wellington-Halton Hills

Council okays payment of outstanding GST

The taxman won't be coming after the Town of Halton Hills.

Council approved a staff request to pay \$28,500 in GST (Goods and Services Tax) in relation to the town purchase of Dominion Gardens parkland from the developer, Parallax

Money Corp. It was discovered that neither the Town nor the developer had paid the required GST when the Town bought the 2-hectare parcel for \$950,000. It's the Town's responsibility to pay it. The money will come from the Town's Cash-in-Lieu Parkland Reserve.

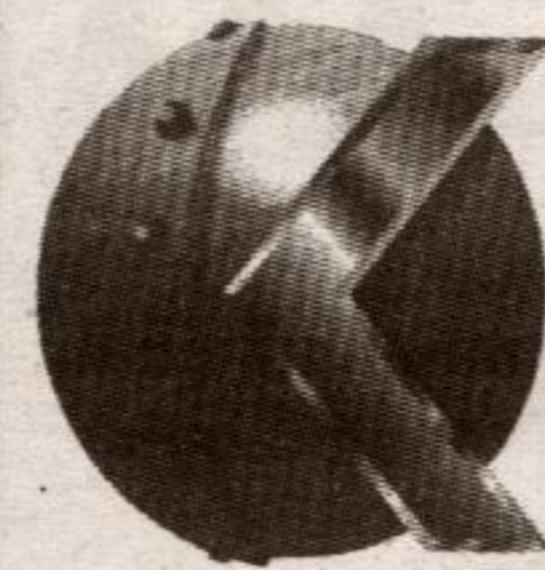
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