

OPINION

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Boating tragedies can be averted

It shouldn't take a tragedy like the loss of life on Rice Lake near Peterborough on the Victoria Day holiday weekend to remind us the decision not to wear a life-jacket while boating is a choice between life and death.

When seven people went on such an excursion on the popular cottage country lake last Sunday, their vessel met the legal requirement of being equipped with at least one personal flotation device for each passenger.

Unfortunately, like seat-belts, life-jackets lose all their life-saving potential when we opt not to wear them.

In last weekend's tragic accident, only four of the doomed boat's seven passengers were wearing life-jackets before embarking in conditions described by at least one local as too choppy to be out on the water.

When the boat capsized, all seven boaters were sent into the lake and only four were able to make it safely to shore. Can you guess which four?

While it's human nature to feel empathy for the families of the three who perished in their pursuit of an enjoyable holiday weekend away from the daily grind, we should also be outraged by this preventable tragedy— especially since it will be repeated many times across our country between now and the Labour Day weekend.

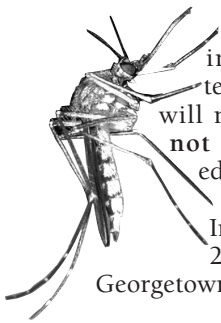
The majority of small-vessel boating deaths could be prevented very easily and inexpensively by simply legislating the wearing of life-jackets by every boater.

Unlike seat-belts, there is currently no law in Ontario that forces recreational boaters to take common sense precautions against unpredictable accidents.

Certainly the families of last weekend's accident victims would agree it is time that changed.

Something bugging you?

Send us a letter!



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 Unsigned letters will not be published.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

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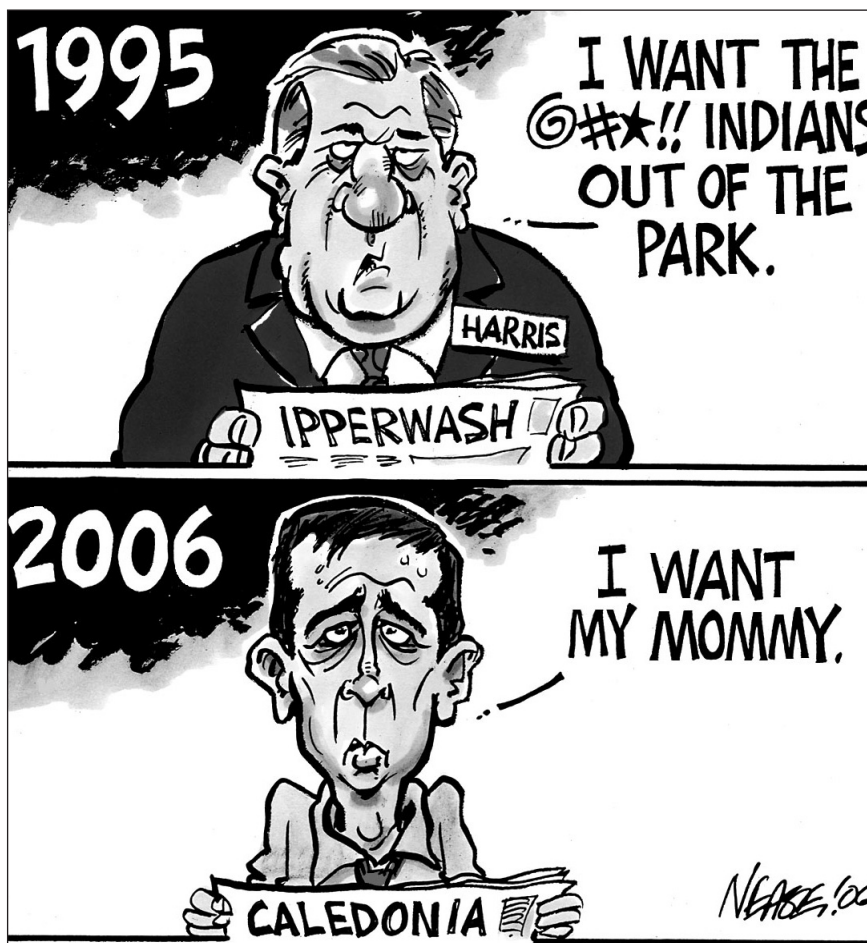
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Steve Nease



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'Qualified' candidate needed for chair

Dear editor,
It is interesting to me that most people who I talk with don't understand what the Region of Halton does and why it is so important to elect a regional chair with excellent qualifications.

The fact is that what happens at the regional level has even more impact on our quality of life than what happens at the local level.

Decisions at the regional level are forced on Halton's local municipalities— Burlington, Milton, Halton Hills and Oakville.

Right now, the only candidate is former hockey player and career politician, Gary Carr, and that is a crying shame because he is certainly not the right person.

He may be likeable enough to some but, to me, he just seems like someone who can't get a regular job.

First he was a Conservative MPP and now collects a nice, fat life-time pension.

Then he became a Liberal MP, and collected a federal salary on top of his provincial pension. After 18 months on the job he then collects a further \$140,000 in severance.

After losing his federal seat, having been part of a corrupt Liberal government, he now says that he wants to be the regional chair, and collect another \$150,000 salary, plus benefits and expenses.

Is it logical to pay another \$150,000 plus a year of the public's money to someone still living off sev-

erance, and collecting a good-for-life, indexed pension, all paid for by taxpayers?

Besides, what are his real qualifications?

Are the people of this area best served by a career politician who hasn't had any private sector experience in more than 15 years?

Is he really likely to understand our problems?

If we elect the wrong regional chair, we will pay a price. For the sake of everyone in Halton, I hope that a truly qualified candidate comes forward as soon as possible.

David Bazar,
Burlington

Reader sings praises of Princess Margaret Hospital

Dear editor,

Re: Cancer groups have common enemy (May 10 letter to the editor.)

Many thanks to Ms. MacKinnon-Ringuette for her proactive approach to fighting cancer and for contributing to the Canadian Cancer Society (CCS) where 50 cents of every dollar goes to cancer research. It is probably safe to assume the other half of her donation goes toward all of the important work the CCS does in addition to granting funds for research.

At the same time, it is important to note that for anyone who wishes for all of their charitable contribution to go directly to cancer research, it is best to support an organization that actually does cancer research, such as a research hospital with a cancer program, or a university with a medical research program. Neither the CCS nor Cancer Assistance Services of Halton Hills (CAS-hh) have their own research programs, so they must take the time and expense to redirect donations to researchers at other

organizations.

As a fundraiser for The Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation, I admit to a strong bias in favour of directly supporting research at Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH). For, while there are other research institutions carrying out cancer research, PMH is the only institution in Canada focused solely on cancer, with comprehensive teaching, patient care and world-leading research under one roof.

Again, I understand that CCS and CASHH fund other extremely important programs for people with cancer, and they deserve all the support we can give them. I personally contribute to both organizations myself. However, if your goal is to contribute to cancer research, the most efficient way to do so is to give to an organization like Princess Margaret Hospital that has been leading the world in breakthrough cancer research for decades.

K.C. Carruthers
Georgetown

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