

# OPINION

www.independentfreepress.com

Phone: 905-873-0301  
Fax: 905-873-0398

## Winter whines

Some thoughts on current events from the past week:

**Where's winter?:** While the unusually mild winter has many "environmentalists" predicting the beginning of the end of civilization as we know it, we're more inclined to agree with Environment Canada senior climatologist David Phillips who suggests it's wrong to look at one year and scream "climate change". Yes, it's been balmy and snow has been nearly non-existent. Our suggestion: Quit whining and enjoy it while it lasts.

**GO your own way:** CN, which supplies crews for GO, cuts 34 engineering jobs on Dec. 29 and on Jan. 2—the first business day of 2007—there are delays and cancellations galore. Coincidence? We think not. Union officials representing the engineers deny any work-to-rule protest and say they would never condone such action. Riiiiiiiiight!

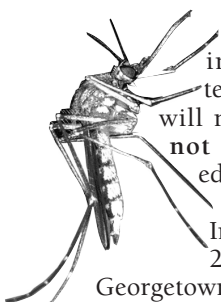
**Ford farewell:** Say what you want about our cousins below the 49th parallel but when it comes to honouring their fallen—especially their presidents—they know how to do things up right. The funeral ceremonies for ex-president Gerald Ford were classy with a capital C.

**Gun play:** Only hours into the new year one woman was dead, another seriously hurt and two men were wounded in three separate shootings in Toronto. Gun statistics released this week also reveal that few of the 5,000 firearms reported missing each year in Canada are found by Toronto police. Explain to us again why the average Canadian needs to be packing a weapon?

**Don't spend it all in one place:** Ontario's minimum wage rises Feb. 1 to \$8 an hour. Says Ontario Labour Minister Steve Peters: "It is to Ontario's economic advantage to see that our workers are paid a fair wage." Exactly. How MPPs, like Peters, who voted themselves a 25 PER CENT raise last month can sleep at night after coughing up a lousy 25 CENTS an hour to minimum wagers is beyond us.

## 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 Unsigned letters will not be published.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.

Mail or drop off:

Independent & Free Press,  
280 Guelph St., Unit 29,  
Georgetown, ON., L7G 4B1

E-mail:

jmcghie@independentfreepress.com

## THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS

The Independent & Free Press is published every Wednesday and Friday at 280 Guelph St., Unit 29, Georgetown Ont., L7G 4B1. It is one of several newspapers published by Metroland Media Group Ltd.

Advertising is accepted on the condition that, in the event of a typographical error, that portion of the advertising space occupied by the erroneous item, together with reasonable allowance for signature will not be charged for, but the balance of the advertisement will be paid for at the acceptable rate. In the event of typographical error advertising goods or services at wrong price, goods or services may not be sold. Advertising is merely an offer to sell which may be withdrawn at any time.

Editorial and advertising content of The Independent & Free Press is protected by copyright. Unauthorized use is prohibited.

Price: Store copies 50¢ each; Subscriptions \$26 per year by carrier; \$92.50 per year by mail in Canada; \$130 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.



Steve Nease



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Changes needed to the way we vote

Dear editor,  
I would like to respond to Eileen Hutcheson's letter, "Politicians to blame for low voter turnout" in the Dec 15, edition of *The Independent & Free Press*.

Politicians do, at times, make decisions that are stupid and undemocratic. However, there comes a point where the electorate is responsible for who is in office and how they got there. Voters must take responsibility for their apathy and ignorance or suffer the consequences.

Recently, there was a meeting in town to look at the way we vote and the electoral system we use. Our voters need to take the opportunity through the Ontario Citizens'

Assembly on Electoral Reform (see Internet) to evaluate the way we vote, with consideration given to legitimacy, fairness of representation, voter choice, stronger voter participation, accountability and other principles.

I was enlightened to find out that the way we vote in Canada is not the same way people vote in other democracies. The one we use is much the same as the one in the U.S. where parties are secured and perpetuated in the electoral system. Most people who do vote tend to vote for an incumbent or mainstay party, or the status quo. It may be time for a change here.

I wonder if some of our new immigrants don't bother voting

because they see our present electoral system as very dysfunctional. Maybe even those who have lived here a long time are finding our electoral system antiquated and dysfunctional.

Maybe I suggest that in the present system, even before we think about changing or keeping our electoral system that we be allowed to have on the ballot "none of the above"—that we be given the right to protest, not by a spoiled ballot, not by voting for another candidate that we know nothing about, or by staying away from the voting box. Even those who are acclaimed in municipal elections should have to face the "none of the above" vote and stand the test of the electorate and if "none of the above" vote should garner the most votes then a by-election would be held six months later and none of the candidates or parties that were disapproved of could run in that by-election.

I agree with Ms. Hutcheson when she says, "The present system worked well when people believed that their votes counted for something. That was when politicians were still trustworthy and responsible to deserve a vote." However, that may be reason enough to investigate a new electoral system, to get rid of, or enlighten, our present political parties and politicians and encourage new parties and Canadian citizens to represent us so that we can have a stronger and more viable country.

### Reader wrong to call Harper a 'traitor'

Dear editor,  
Edward Cachia in his letter published Dec. 13 should at least get some facts right.

Just because you do not agree with Prime Minister Stephen Harper's stance on Quebec hardly gives you the right to call him a "traitor". Obviously you feel the need to show your ignorance.

As I understand it nearly ALL members of parliament voted for this resolution, so in your book it must make nearly all MPs traitors. This includes Liberals and NDP members who are NOT controlled by the

Conservatives.

As far as I am concerned if this keeps Quebec happy then it's a good thing.

Michael Chong is a great MP and is entitled to his own opinion. As for resigning his cabinet seat, I doubt that does him any good, but he will learn that even some things you do not like have to be weighed against the good things that can be accomplished in power.

Sorry, Mr. Cachia for your outburst—only in a democratic country can you be so ignorant.

John Shadbolt, Acton

## STAFF DIRECTORY

**Publisher**  
Ken Nugent

**Advertising director**  
Steve Foreman  
(sforeman@independentfreepress.com)  
**Retail advertising manager**  
Cindi Campbell  
(ccampbell@independentfreepress.com)  
**Managing editor**  
John McGhie  
(jmcghie@independentfreepress.com)  
**Distribution manager**  
Nancy Geissler  
(distribution@independentfreepress.com)

### ADVERTISING

**Retail Sales:**  
Jennifer Spencer (jspencer@independentfreepress.com)  
Adam Spinney (aspinney@independentfreepress.com)  
Andrew Key (akey@independentfreepress.com)  
Michelle Wan (features@independentfreepress.com)

### Real estate:

Sue Spizziri (realestate@independentfreepress.com)

### Classifieds:

Kristie Pells (classified@independentfreepress.com)

### ACCOUNTING

Rose Marie Gauthier, Jennifer Christie, Michelle Wimmer

### EDITORIAL

Cynthia Gamble: News editor  
(cgamble@independentfreepress.com)  
Ted Brown: Photography  
(tbrown@independentfreepress.com)  
Lisa Tallyn: Staff writer  
(ltallyn@independentfreepress.com)  
Eamonn Maher: Staff writer/sports  
(emaher@independentfreepress.com)

### PRODUCTION:

Mary Lou Foreman, Kevin Powell,  
Shelli Harrison, Dolores Black, Debbie MacDougall