

OPINION

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Climate complacency?

Open a newspaper or tune in to a radio or television news program these days and you are likely to be exposed to a story about our deteriorating environment.

With last year's release of former U.S. vice-president Al Gore's film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, global warming has become the "sexy" topic pursued by news gatherers around the world.

From in-depth reports detailing the irreversible effects of climate change on glacial ice fields, to scathing reports detailing how Canada has fallen behind the rest of the world in taking action against the impact of global warming, the picture being painted by the world's scientific community and environmental organizations is bleak.

While the media's role has been to report on scientists' fears that we may be headed down a path of environmental catastrophe, there's an inherent risk that information overload may cause some people to begin tuning out the message.

Is it possible the flood of information could be having a Chicken Little effect on people who either don't want to be bombarded with so much bad news or simply don't believe the situation is as dismal as portrayed?

There's no denying evidence of dramatic climate change is there for those concerned enough to seek it out. Statistically, the number of Category 4 or 5 hurricanes has doubled in the last 30 years. In the summer of 2005 a giant ice shelf, with an area comparable to 11,000 football fields, broke free from Canada's Arctic, forever changing a part of our country's geography.

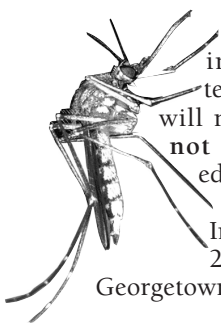
Complicating the issue is a push by a small, but extremely vocal group of oil and coal industry-financed scientists who refute the threat of global warming and deny climate change is anything to fear. In the '90s some of these same scientists were employed by the tobacco industry to dispute the link between cigarettes and cancer.

With so much information—and disinformation—out there it's easy to understand why ordinary people don't know what to believe—or do.

Perhaps the real fear should be that so much talk of impending doom for our planet may drive those who fail to see how they can impact this global problem into a state of complacency.

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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Steve Nease

NEWS ITEM: Liberal MP and car dealer Wajid Khan defects to Conservatives as an "advisor"...

CAN YOU ADVISE BAIRD HERE HOW TO SELL A LEMON?



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tories handcuffed in dealing with crises

Dear editor,
Re: Student unconvinced by MP's column, Dec. 29 letter to the editor.
I think that there is a lack of

understanding of the greater picture here. Canada is facing an energy crisis, a garbage crisis and an environmental crisis. We have a demand for

energy which is vastly higher than our capability, thus we have to import energy from the U.S., shedding a bit of our sovereignty in the process.

Long-term care residents deserve better

Dear editor,
We are the residents of the Bennett Health Care Centre and we are writing to inform the community about the lack of priority given long-term care homes in Ontario.

Why are residents in LTC homes being treated like second-class citizens compared to inmates in Ontario correctional facilities?

Why can't LTCs get more staff to care for the residents' many needs?

Why do LTC homes only get \$5.45 per resident per day for food for seniors when provincial jails get \$11.43 for those who have been found guilty of acts against society?

Why are the residents of LTCs required to pay for their own TV and phone while these are provided free

to inmates?

Why are citizens who built this country treated in such shabby fashion while those who have been knocking it down are a higher funding priority in the eyes of the government?

They say a civilized society shows it cares for its weakest members. We hope those who are concerned about these discrepancies will join us in protesting these outrageous examples of unfairness to our community's seniors.

These problems should have been addressed before MPPs voted themselves a 25 per cent raise.

Ruth Donaldson,
Bennett Health Care Centre
Residents' Council

Red Cross event organizers say thank you

Dear editor,
Re: Red Cross volunteer appreciation event.

Thank you to all of those volunteers who attended the appreciation event November 28. This event was a huge success, judging from the happy faces, the compliments on a job well done and the awards handed out to many of our wonderful volunteers.

The food, catered by EC Drury Cooking School, was excellent and very much appreciated—along with the gifts donated by many local businesses.

To our volunteers—thank you for another year's dedication, and we look forward to celebrating with you all again in the summer.

Judith, Jacqui and Allison
North Halton Red Cross Society

A garbage crisis is happening in the GTA because modern lifestyles, combined with the vast population growth in the GTA (and all of southern Ontario), means that more garbage is accumulating at faster rates than ever before. Our garbage then has to be shipped somewhere else (again the U.S.) and that again, sheds a bit of our sovereignty.

The environmental crisis is happening from a population boom, combined with modern lifestyles, as well as the increase in electrical power output from non-"green" sources.

The federal government is at odds. People want a greener life, people want more electricity, people want to maintain their current lifestyles, but few are willing/able to pay the costs that these wants are causing.

The government is trying to create the greatest benefit for the most people and doing so in a realistic way.

Two words: minority government. The Tories don't have the ability to do a lot of things because of it, therefore they have to calm it down. I am no die-hard Conservative and would be very happy to see greener policies than we currently have.

By the way, I am a university student and I speak for myself. Please do not claim to speak for our generation when you speak for yourself.

Evan Switzer, Georgetown