

OPINION

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Mid-winter break much appreciated

The first Family Day (ugh!) in Ontario is now just a fond memory and frankly, we think the McGuinty government deserves a pat on the back for instituting this mid-winter break.

However, we understand not everyone was happy with this newly-legislated day off.

Many retailers bemoaned the fact that another holiday would cut into their profits and/or productivity and would create other problems since it wasn't a statutory holiday and not everyone would be enjoying the bonus day off.

Some groups, such as Metro Toronto police, didn't like the fact their collective bargaining agreement didn't include the holiday (while conveniently forgetting the fact they get many "float days" other workers don't) and lobbied hard, but unsuccessfully, to get the day off.

Some businesses simply didn't want the extra day off as it meant one less day of generating revenue and, with economists estimating the holiday could cost Ontario between \$500 million and \$2 billion, there is some justification that the already-struggling economy didn't need a hit like this.

But, we're going to go out on a limb here and suggest that the majority of Ontarians were happy to have Family Day (ugh!) off, as it provided a much-needed break in what has turned out to be one dreadfully long and hard winter.

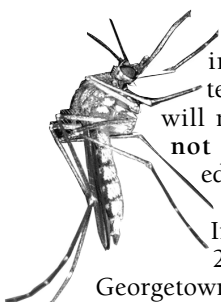
The stretch between New Year's Day and Good Friday has, for years, been the longest in the calendar year without a holiday—often more than three months. Surely a day off in mid-February—in the dead of winter—will not cripple Ontario's economy. If it does, then the province's financial footing is far more shaky than we're led to believe.

That said, by the time next year's Family Day (ugh!) rolls around it would be better to see a more across-the-board policy developed so that more Ontarians get the benefit of this holiday.

And, hopefully, by that time the government can perhaps come up with a better name.

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 Unsigned letters will not be published.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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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.

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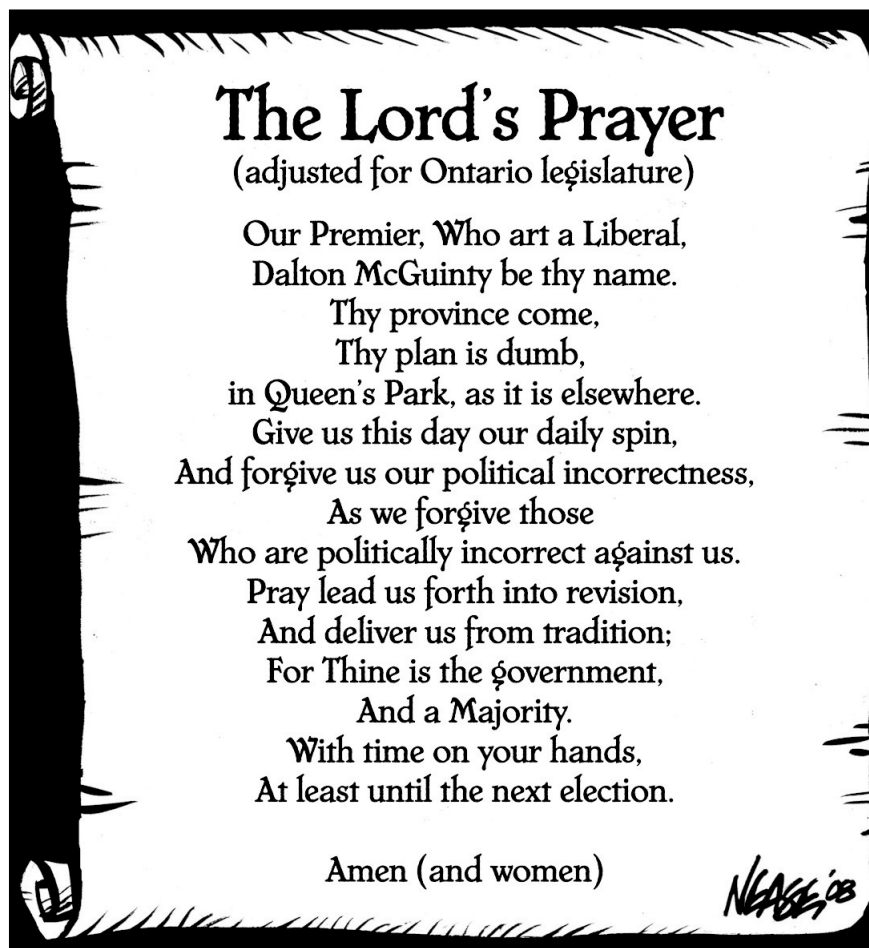
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Price: Store copies 50¢ each; Subscriptions \$26 per year by carrier; \$92.50 per year by mail in Canada; \$130 per year in all other countries. Plus G.S.T.

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.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Snow removal crews deserve thanks

Dear editor,
In response to the letters published in the Feb. 13 edition, with regards to snow removal etc., I

would like to send a heartfelt thank you to all the people involved in making our travels as safe as time and Mother Nature's blasts allow.

Snowplow operator appreciates co-workers' efforts

Dear editor,
I'm at a loss after reading all the kind words (Feb. 13 letters) from all the grateful townsfolk after all this snow we have had. The last time there was this much snow ex-Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman called in the army.

I work for the Town. I'm one of the men and women who have been working 12-hour shifts back-to-back for better than a week. I'm that guy that you throw your shovel at when we try to clear the roads. I'm the guy that you kindly salute with a special finger as we go by. I'm the guy you

yell profanities to while we try to do our job.

We have missed sleep, meals, children's bedtime stories and so much more to try and keep the roads as clear and as safe as we possibly can for you and your families. And at the end of it all we get to go home and shovel out our driveways that we filled in ourselves.

So to my brothers and sisters at the Town...THANK YOU. My family and I appreciate you and all your hard work.

Brian Magee,
Georgetown

Snow clearing here better than other municipalities

Dear editor,
Recently during the day of a bad storm, I had to go into Toronto for an appointment at 8.30 a.m.

Hwy. 401 was backed up, so I went through Mississauga, Clarkson, Port Credit and Etobicoke into Toronto. I would like to congratulate the Georgetown snow removal people. The Georgetown roads were by far the best cleared. There was no evidence of any sidewalk clearing in any of those towns.

Those who whine and complain about sidewalk snow removal seem

to think that we live in Florida, as they expect our sidewalks to be in the same condition in February as they are in July.

Last weekend I visited friends in Oakville. Their street was almost impassable and there was no sign of any sidewalk clearance at all. I lived for 10 years in Montreal and nobody cleared sidewalks on my street.

I think those who like to romp and frolic on our sidewalks in the winter should consider buying a treadmill.

Steve Melville, Georgetown

Can you imagine your entire household jolted awake any time by a ringing phone and then having to go out into a snowstorm? First you have to clear your personal vehicle and driveway before spending the next 12 hours being patient with both the task at hand and impatient people.

If the worst thing a snowplow driver does during a shift is forget to turn the salt spinner off when they are stopped, I pat them on the back for not hitting the parked cars that shouldn't be in their way, for not sliding off the steep icy hill, for not sliding through the stop sign or red light and putting people in danger etc. I am pretty sure that the plow blade was down when there was 10 cm of snow on the road.

Everyone in my neighbourhood keeps their portion of the sidewalk in exceptional condition under the circumstances. For those who want to get more exercise there are alternatives to walking on the streets.

From someone who cares what these people do for a living and understand that this is a skilled profession, I thank you for making me feel safe within a timely manner.

I thank you for doing a job many would be terrified to do. Most of all I thank you for not taking a snow day!

Keep up the great work, hang in there. We will all be complaining about the heat soon enough.

Danielle Terry,
Georgetown