

OPINION

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MMP sounds good, but...

Mixed member proportional.

Mention this phrase to the average Ontarian and watch their eyes glaze over. Yet, voters are being asked to know exactly what this new electoral alternative is when they go to vote Oct. 10.

Sadly, most public opinion polls to date indicate that nearly half of Ontario voters are unaware there is even a referendum which will ask voters to choose between our existing voting system and its alternative—mixed member proportional or MMP. One poll even indicated 88 per cent of voters have little or no knowledge of the proposed new system.

One hundred and three citizens, selected at random from each of Ontario's ridings were asked by the province to come up with an alternative to the current "first past the post" system in which the candidate in each riding receiving the most votes wins.

Under MMP, 90 MPPs will be elected as they are now while 39 others—called list members—will be elected province-wide by voters casting a second vote on the party side of the ballot.

The MMP system is to ensure the seats a party wins is roughly equal to its share of the party vote.

However, while the idea sounds good on paper, there are potential flaws.

Under MMP there would be more politicians at Queen's Park and 39 of them would be there to represent their parties as "list members"—these individuals would not have been duly elected by the public.

We find that aspect disconcerting.

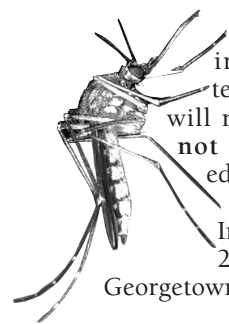
Critics of MMP also say such a system would lead to more minority governments and even more back-room deal-making—surely that cannot lead to good government.

As well, MMP could conceivably give more of a voice to so-called "fringe" parties.

Sixty per cent of Ontarians must vote in favour of MMP for it to be adopted. While we believe this system would not result in better government, we urge every voter to learn about MMP and make an informed decision for themselves on Oct. 10.

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 Unsigned letters will not be published.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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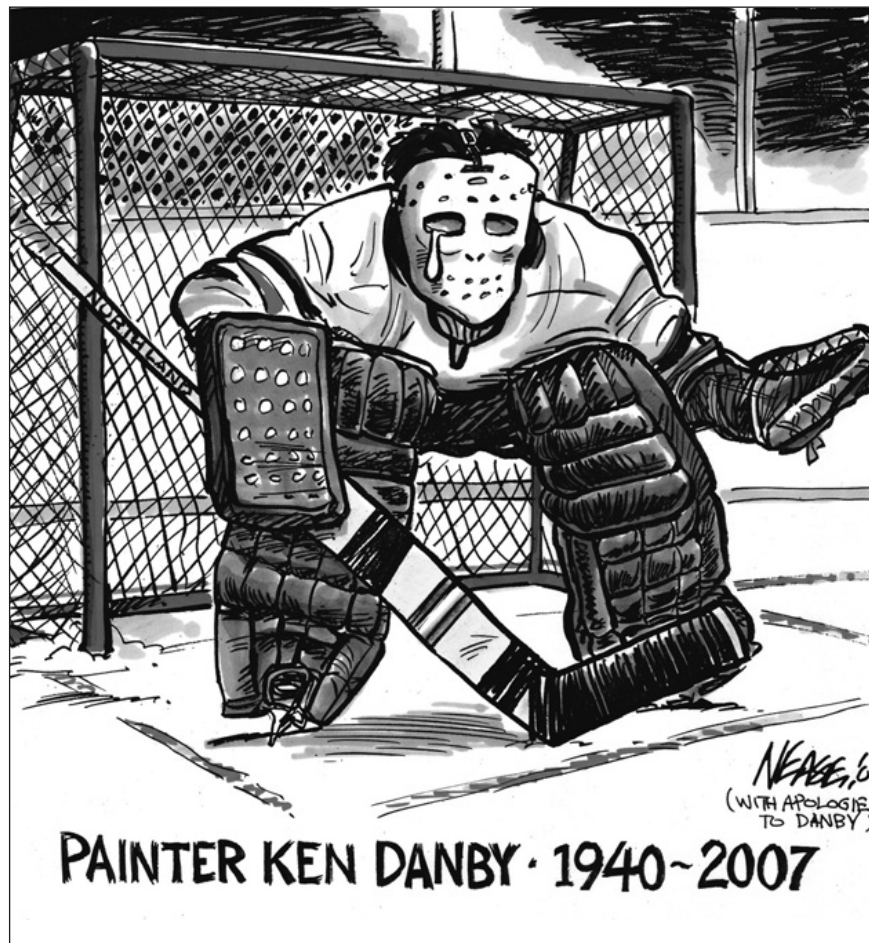
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Cyclists not learning the rules of the road

Dear editor,

I am writing to express my disgust with the generally bad, unsafe and illegal habits of Georgetown cyclists. Here are a few of the observations I have made as I watch cyclists of all ages in this town:

Parents teach their kids to ride on the sidewalk, which is fine if the kids are quite young and unsteady on their wheels. But they forget to tell them that when they are as big as the pedestrian adults they pass on the sidewalks and when they tower over the little walkers, they should be using the road, going in the same direction as the cars do. If they must be on the sidewalk, the pedestrians have the right of way.

Next, parents teach their kids that it is OK to ride right across the road between those nice neat white lines

which indicate a pedestrian crossing. But these kids are not pedestrians going at a normal walking pace which might give the drivers of this town enough time to avoid the little darlings before they venture out into the traffic.

Worse, they are now teaching the kids to ride against the traffic the way we were taught to walk in the country where there are no sidewalks.

Apparently some parents think this will mitigate the danger for their child who is learning to leave the training wheels behind. Imagine a little pink two-wheeler wobbling its way south toward your northbound car as you are about to pass a southbound vehicle just where there is a parked car. Scary, to say the least.

But today was the last straw. An

adult female cyclist was riding southbound on the sidewalk (natch!) on the east side of Mountainview Road and speedily crossed Argyll Road riding across at the pedestrian crossing. Since the light was green, she was sure she was good to go and didn't even slow down to check traffic.

My husband, in the southbound lane with his left signal flashing, was waiting to turn east on to Argyll. He saw her speeding down the street and into the road and stopped just in time to avoid an accident. Either our car would have hit her, or she would have run into the side of our vehicle. She had the gall to flash us a dirty look, as if to say that, as a cyclist, she has the same rights and obligations as a pedestrian but none of the responsibilities of a driver.

Folks, if you are on wheels, you are not a pedestrian. If you do not wish to travel like a regular rolling vehicle, go ahead, use the sidewalks, but remember to give way to pedestrian traffic on the sidewalk and always get off your bike and WALK across the road so that drivers have the time to see you and react appropriately.

And to those parents I saw last week teaching their kids the right way to cycle, thank you for restoring my faith. I had begun to think that, in Georgetown at least, all cyclists suffered from a serious brain deficiency.

Lynette Winter Owoc,
Georgetown

Splash pad can't replace Licata pool

Dear editor,

The Dick Licata Pool cannot be replaced by a splash pad or an indoor swimming pool.

I'm disappointed that council has opted to close the only outdoor municipal swimming pool in Georgetown. Investing money that would go towards repairing or replacing this very important municipal service in a splash pad is not good enough. We already have a splash pad at the Gellert.

Splash pads are for young chil-

dren; where will people over the age of 11 in the older part of town go? While there are other municipal pools available, all are indoor facilities.

Council would do better to invest this money and give us our outdoor swimming pool back.

Nelia Raposo,
Georgetown

More letters
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