

OPINION

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

Our choice

Question: What do the 2007 New York Mets and John Tory have in common?

Answer: They both turned a potential win into a loss.

We won't know for sure until late next Wednesday, but all indications are that Progressive Conservative leader John Tory will likely be remembered the same way as this year's Mets—sure-winners who became losers.

While Tory didn't hold the commanding lead the Mets did in racing for first place, the PC leader held all the cards months before the election campaign began. Polls indicated voters weren't sold on Dalton McGuinty as premier and a minority government looked to be his best outcome.

Tory had the opportunity to convince Ontario voters the Liberals did not deserve a second term and the ammunition for such an argument was provided by the Liberals themselves.

There was Caledonia, unchecked government grants, the school funding formula, the health care tax, broken promises—a myriad of issues that Tory could have successfully criticized McGuinty for, while at the same time offering his own party's alternatives.

Instead, Tory opted to raise the issue of faith-based funding for schools months before the election started—an idea that few were discussing and even fewer were interested in adopting. However, Tory made it a hot-button issue and then only nine days before the election, backed away from the controversial plan, calling for a free vote on the matter. Hardly a sign of the good leadership he tried to trumpet as the focal point of this campaign.

While Tory may very well have been a good alternative to McGuinty, his fumbling with this issue hardly deserves our unconditional support.

Which leaves us to look at the new provincial riding of Wellington-Halton Hills.

Simply put, it is a two-person race between Conservative Ted Arnott and Liberal Marg Bentley as Martin Lavictoire (Green), Noel Duignan (NDP) and Giuseppe Gori (Family Coalition Party) offer the same unappealing ideas we have heard before from their parties.

Arnott's strength is that he is a seasoned politician but that is also his greatest weakness. For well over a year, he attended numerous Halton Hills events, ingratiating himself into this community. Some would consider it opportunism, with an election on the horizon, while others would call it sound planning in getting to know the community he wanted to represent.

Like a veteran politician, he talked around the faith-based funding issue, referring to "John Tory's commitment" rather than offering his own view when asked. However, when rumours of Tory's about-face surfaced on Monday, at that point Arnott issued a call for public meetings and vowed to listen to "the public".

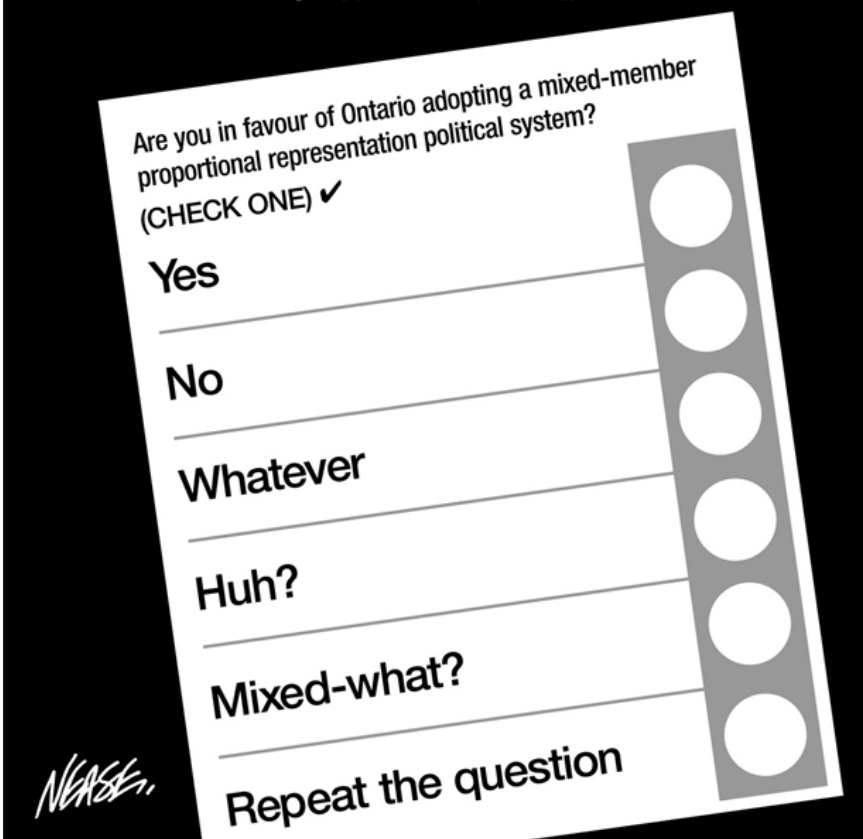
His main rival, former high school teacher Marg Bentley is a political rookie who has shown passion for the job during the campaign. However, some of her concerns (special needs kids, hospital wait times) are problems her own party has failed to get under control.

The choice comes down to experience.

Arnott has represented the former riding of Waterloo-Wellington since 1990 and won the past three elections handily, indicating he has a good connection with his Wellington constituents. It is our opinion he should get the opportunity to prove himself in Halton Hills.

Steve Nease

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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

Advertising co-ordinator
Jennifer Christie (jchristie@independentfreepress.com)

Retail Sales:
Jennifer Spencer (jspencer@independentfreepress.com)
Andrew Key (akey@independentfreepress.com)
Amy Sykes (features@independentfreepress.com)

Real estate:
Sue Spizziri (realestate@independentfreepress.com)

Classifieds:
Kristie Pells (classified@independentfreepress.com)

ACCOUNTING

Rose Marie Gauthier, 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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Our electoral system must grow up

Dear editor,

Contrary to your Sept. 28 editorial (MMP sounds good, but...) we already have "minority governments".

The last time we had a true "majority" government was in 1937. Every election since has seen as low as 37 per cent of the vote get 100 per cent of the power. Even in the referendum if only 40 per cent vote for our current system; the wishes of the majority are dismissed.

Virtually every democracy in the world has at least one proportional election. Even Britain has proportional elections in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The four largest countries that use our current system for all elections are Ghana, Nigeria, Pakistan and Zimbabwe. Despots love our system because electoral boundaries can be manipulated to distort results. A party can elect 54 MPs with 1.8 million votes but another party with 2.2 million votes only gets two MPs. You can finish second in total votes yet win a "majority" government. No one elects the Premier; political parties do that. Governments are untouchable once they get a 40 per cent "majority". MPs can campaign for one party and then sit with another after they win. Voter turnout is abysmal. This has all happened in Canada.

Scottish voters heard scaremongering against MMP before they switched. They rejected it. Today they have responsive and stable governments with more voter interest because all

votes count. Voters know who is on the party list (like our party leaders). If the list is unpopular; the party wins no seats.

In 1975 we had 125 MPPs. Our population has grown since which is why the proposal recommends 129. It's time our electoral system grew up as well.

Sean Smith, Georgetown

Trails lose good friend

Dear editor,

The Bruce Trail bulletin details the passing of a good friend, Chris Walker.

As many of you know Chris was both one of the Bruce Trail's most senior organizers and also a pro cycling voice within the BT executive. We at Halton Hills Off-Road Bicycling Association (HHORBA) worked with Chris to build the three bridges on a Georgetown trails project. Two bridges are on the trail that links the Georgetown Fairgrounds with the Civic Centre back road that connects to the Bennett Village (currently under construction) and one is across Princess Anne Drive in the ravine of the radial line trail to Berton Blvd.

Chris made sure that HHORBA led the design and building of the bridges (as well as some of the trail) so that the entire system was cycling friendly, which today it remains.

Chris later supported HHORBA in its battle to overturn the ban of bicycles in the Hungry Hollow ravine. Chris strategically waited for the right moment to pitch his support to have maximum effect on the trails commit-

tee and the councillors attending.

Chris always encouraged us and gladly spoke of the day when all trail lovers (on foot and on wheels) would be on the same team and develop and maintain an even better trail system in Ontario. Chris understood that this was not about boots and wheels but about people getting together. Chris had it right. Beyond his cycling support he was just simply a great guy.

I will miss Chris and his ever-optimistic disposition. He was a good friend to us all. At this point it feels like there is a big hole in the community that Chris had filled.

Ken Kopke, HHORBA

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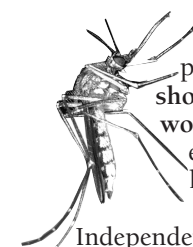
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Independent & Free Press,
280 Guelph St., Unit 29,
Georgetown, ON., L7G 4B1

E-mail:
jmcghie@independentfreepress.com



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