

Forging a common Canadian identity challenge for this country

Canada has benefitted greatly from immigration and from the accompanying diversity; no field has been unaffected, from the arts and entertainment industries, to academia, to a workforce ready and able to fill the job market. And we are becoming more diverse. In the last 20 years, there has been a threefold increase of people in Canada who identify themselves as visible minorities – up from 1.1 million in 1981 to almost 4 million in 2001.

Yet, for all our successes in Canada, there are some concerns. The social cohesion that we have accepted as normal between different ethnic groups is under pressure. Recent immigrants are finding it more difficult to start a good life here and are falling behind in our urban areas. Increasingly, the faith-based beliefs of newcomers (such as using Shariah law as the basis for “faith-based arbitration” in family and personal disputes) are challenging Western liberal norms (such as the equal treatment of men and women).

These are troubling trends because they have to do with how we view ourselves and each other. They are all a question of identity. This question of

Report from
PARLIAMENT HILL
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identity has serious implications for Canada. When a common Canadian identity is under threat, so is this nation-building project we call Canada.

We must move beyond thinking of identity in ethnic terms, and start talking of a common Canadian identity.

We have always had a complex identity. There are a myriad of ethnic groups, regions, two official languages, and the original native peoples. Each has contributed to the diverse fabric of this country. Each has been protected in the Canadian constitution through the recognition of multiculturalism, official bilingualism and the recognition of the treaty rights of aboriginal peoples. However, above all of these, there has always been one Canadian identity, fragile as it sometimes may be. An identity forged out of a common history, out of war and out of necessity. It has never been a categoric identity like that of our neighbours to the south, but nevertheless, it has been

there from the beginning.

But too often in this country we talk of those things which make us different from each other, and not those things which we have in common. Canada is not simply the disjunction of different groups, different peoples, and different regions. To be a Canadian is also to share in common something with every other person in this vast and inchoate land.

Too often we talk of hyphenated Canadians and view them primarily through the lens of their ethnicity. In doing so, we fail to see the other qualities they bring to the table. As a result we deny them the opportunities that exist for the rest of us. No doubt, this is done with the best of intentions. The irony is that visible minorities want to be approached on common ground. They want to be accepted as the rest of us are: simply as Canadian.

My children are of Chinese, Dutch, Scottish and English descent. To speak of these children in hyphenated terms is patently

absurd. They will be simply Canadian – that’s my idea of Canada.

The challenge for us is to articulate a common Canadian identity. This will allow for greater understanding between ethnic groups and one that will allow new Canadians to be seen for their potential and not simply for their ethnicity.

In the past, challenges to Canadian unity were met with a strong, central government and leadership that articulated a common Canadian identity. As Canada becomes increasingly diverse and racially mixed, our future challenge is to transcend the politics of ethnicity and start articulating our identity in pan-Canadian terms.

If we are going to ask newcomers to integrate into Canadian society and become citizens who share a common set of rights, responsibilities and beliefs with every other citizen in this land – and I believe we should – we cannot then turn around and, based on ethnicity, recognize another group of Canadians as separate from the rest.

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Wellington O.P.P. Report



DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE

On Sunday, Jan. 7, 2007 at about 9:15pm, officers attended to a home in Erin for a reported domestic disturbance. They arrived and spoke to a 32-year-old female who reported being pushed to the ground by her common-law husband. The victim did not require medical attention.

Officers arrested a 39-year-old male from Erin who was held in custody until a bail hearing in Guelph Court on January 8, facing an assault charge.

BREAK-IN

On Monday, Jan. 1, at about 1:50p.m. OPP officers responded to reported Break Enter and Theft from a home located in Hillsburgh. The victims reported being away from the home overnight and when they returned they found that someone had pried open a rear sliding door.

Officers found the home had been ransacked, and a list of exactly what was stolen was not available. Police are asking that anyone with information involving this break-in to contact Constable David O’Leary of the OPP Fergus office at 519-843-4240 or they could call the Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (1-800-222-TIPS).

R.I.D.E. RESULTS

This year’s 2006 Festive R.I.D.E. program ran from November 29, 2006 through to January 2, 2007. Drink-

ing and Driving is one of the most common crimes that police deal with in Wellington County and is responsible for many deaths each year.


Officers throughout Wellington were assigned to conduct R.I.D.E. on every shift. Members of the County of Wellington O.P.P. Traffic Management Unit as well as paid duty officers were also utilized to conduct spot-checks on a daily basis.

This year, officers stopped 55,722 motorists during the campaign. They charged 18 people with impaired driving offences (8 people were charged in the RIDE Program itself). They issued 19 12-hour suspensions and 11 90-day administrative drivers licence suspensions. They also laid an additional 117 charges against motorists.

STORE BREAK-IN


On Wednesday, January 10, at about 5:10am Wellington OPP officers responded to an alarm activated at a business in Rockwood. Officers attended to the Rockwood Convenience located on Main St., Rockwood and found the door had been forced in and suspect stole a small amount of cash from the register.

Police are asking that if any person has information regarding this incident, they could contact Constable Dan Milne of the Rockwood OPP office at 519-856-1506 or they could call the Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (1-800-222-TIPS).



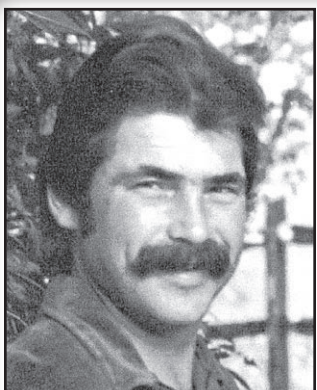
Congratulations
 on your
 engagement
Joe
 &
Amanda
 Love your
 Families

Social & Personal Events



HAPPY 90TH POP
 Love the family

HAPPY 50TH BIRTHDAY • HAPPY 50TH BIRTHDAY




Happy 50th Birthday
 with many more to come.

Love your family Nina, Candice, Tessa and Elyshia

HAPPY 50TH BIRTHDAY • HAPPY 50TH BIRTHDAY

Stag and Doe
 for
Peter Crann & Sarah Drexler
 Saturday,
 January 20th/07
 St. George’s Church
 99 Woolwich St.
 Guelph, ON
 8:00 p.m.
 Tickets at the door for \$10

Johnny Tocher
 Celebrates His
Keyboard Birthday!
88 Years Young
 Tuesday, January 16th
 7pm-10 pm
 Wellington Terrance
Elora
 Best wishes only