



COMMENT

Interesting days ahead in Canadian politics

The voluntary resignation of federal party leaders seems to have become a habit in the past year or so.

Now, amid internal dissent and growing voter dissatisfaction, Prime Minister Jean Chretien has announced he will formally step down in February 2004.

This should lead to some interesting times as contenders jockey for position in at least two major parties and Stephen Harper, already ensconced as leader of the opposition, does his best to make hay of the situation.

Former Finance Minister Paul Martin appears to be the run-away contender at this point but voters shouldn't let his reputation do the talking. With Chretien out of the way, Mr. Martin must put some substance behind his gladhanding to retain credibility. And anyone hoping to get rid of the stink of scandal should remember that he was a loyal soldier in the Chretien caucus until the prime minister decided he wasn't.

Faced with an embarrassment of potential leaders, Canadians have a better than average chance to choose its future government. If we don't choose wisely this time, there's really only ourselves to blame.



OUR READERS WRITE

Organizer says tournament was a success

Dear Editor:

The seventh annual Lesley Wells Slo-Pitch tournament was another big success. This year's tournament brought 28 teams to the field with gloves in their hand and smiles on their faces. The success of this year's tournament raised close to \$10,000 for the Scott Early Fund and the Milton Lions Club.

After an intense championship game on Sunday afternoon, the 'Knuckles' walked away from the tournament with the trophy.

The 'All Chicks' team comprised of 14 enthusiastic local ladies and the first-ever all-girls team was awarded the

Friendship trophy in memory of Barrie Elliot.

On behalf of the All Chicks team, we would like to recognize the incredible efforts and dedication to the annual organizers, Greg and Mark Ollerenshaw. We would also like to extend our thanks to the Milton Lions Club and the supporting friends of the Ollerenshaw brothers.

This well-organized tournament brought many community members together to share in the spirit of sport, friendship and above all else, charity.

Nicole Lee
Milton

Education Minister Elizabeth Witmer carrying on same tactics as her predecessor: reader

Dear Editor:

The Champion has suggested that it was unwise of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario to cancel an appearance by Education Minister Elizabeth Witmer.

The Champion is correct in suggesting that teachers feel frustrated and unappreciated by the government. Elementary teachers have been waiting for encouraging signs from the new minister but many have been disappointed to discover that Ms Witmer has chosen to pick up and carry on the same confrontational tactics as her predecessor.

Just last month, every teacher in

the province received a mandatory recertification notice requiring them to take the mandated courses or lose their jobs.

Ms Witmer continues to underfund school boards for their teachers' "real" wages clearly indicating her belief that their negotiations have left them grossly overpaid.

She maintains the insulting demand that every teacher in the province is required to march down to the police station and get a mandatory criminal background check, thus treating all teachers including 20 and 30-year veterans like criminal suspects.

Our new education minister has also left tens of thousands of special needs students untested, effectively hamstringing teachers' efforts to help them.

Ms Witmer began her education portfolio by choosing to continue the politics of confrontation.

Her contemptuous actions and not her soothing words have justified the beliefs of many elementary teachers that she has closed the door on their very real complaints well before the annual general meeting came along this summer.

Tom Koperwas
Windsor



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Box 248, 191 Main St. E.,
Milton, Ont. L9T 4N9

(905) 878-2341

Editorial Fax: 905-878-4943

Advertising Fax: 905-876-2364

Classified: 905-875-3300

Circulation: 905-878-5947

Ian Oliver *Publisher*

Neil Oliver *Associate Publisher*

Jill Davis *Editor-in-Chief*

Karen Smith *Editor*

Wendy McNab *Advertising Manager*

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Thanks to all who supported hockey swap: organizer

Dear Editor:

I'd like to thank The Champion for promoting our hockey swap. Hats off and a big thank you to all the generous people who donated equipment making this event a success.

We reached our goal as we outfitted many young players for a very reasonable cost. We also raised

almost enough money to pay for the registration fee for one deserving child.

In closing, I would like to thank Gino from Knuckles for his generosity, as well as Teddy Windmoller and Diane Benson for their time and help.

Tim Benson
Milton

Pud

by Steve Nease

