

Comment

The Canadian Champion

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There could be catch

What's the catch?

Who knew all Canada needed was a new prime minister to improve its tenuous relationship with the United States?

Canadians who watched the evening news Tuesday night, or opened up a national newspaper Wednesday morning were met with a message that Paul Martin had seemingly accomplished more in a 20-minute meeting with George W. Bush than Jean Chrétien had in all his dealings with the U.S. president.

Suddenly Canada is back on a short-list of nations invited to bid on potentially billions of dollars worth of rebuilding contracts in Iraq.

Our neighbours to the south have also apparently agreed to consult our government before deporting any Canadians to other countries — hopefully preventing a repeat of the bad blood created when Canadian citizen Maher Arar was tortured after being deported from the U.S. to Syria.

Closer inspection of what Martin called a "breakthrough" meeting with Bush suggests the agreements aren't exactly a reversal of American policy.

The U.S. hasn't relinquished its right to deport Canadian residents to third-party countries — only to inform our govern-

ment of their intent to do so.

Meanwhile, Canadian businesses will actually be bidding on a secondary wave of contracts to reconstruct Iraq's decimated infrastructure.

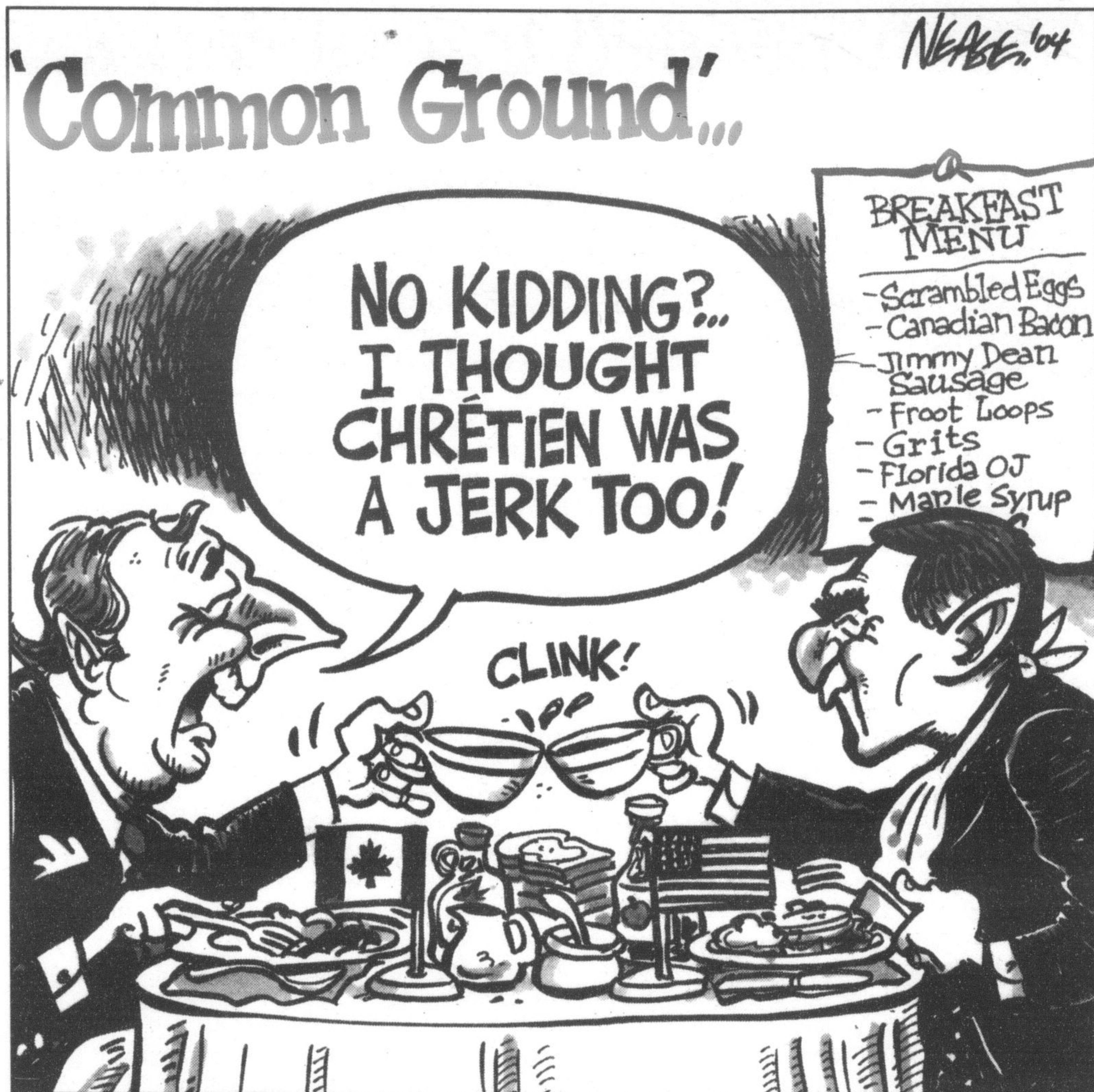
Neither of these agreements provide a guarantee that Canada or Canadians will be any better off than before the meeting between the two leaders in Monterrey, Mexico.

Still, the positive "vibes" coming out of Martin and Bush's first meeting make one wonder if a recent souring of Canada/U.S. relations had more to do with a general disdain for Chrétien than Canada's refusal to join in the military attack on Iraq.

History suggests our powerful neighbours don't cut deals with countries — longtime allies or not — without expecting some level of quid pro quo.

Does this mean Martin has unwittingly set himself up for a future U.S. offer he can't refuse? What might Canada have to offer our geographically-closest allies in return for this sudden capitulation on the Iraq rebuilding front?

Should our country again refuse to back the U.S. on the international stage, mad cows could become the least of our wor-



Our Readers Write

Outlook for affordable housing situation doesn't seem too promising, says reader

Dear Editor:

I believe that I'm safe in assuming that Ward 4 Councillor Wendy Schau's letter entitled 'Milton has shortage of housing for those with low to moderate incomes' in the January 6 Champion was written to foster public support for construction of these needed accommodations.

During the 1950s and 1960s, thousands of geared-to-income houses were being constructed all

across the province. The costs were jointly shared by the federal, provincial and municipal governments.

Since the 1970s, our federal government has embarked on a series of pie-in-the-sky social engineering escapades that suck up expenditures while producing nothing but downloaded mental aggravation, higher taxes, and abominations like the Hwy. 407.

As no level of government now

has money to spare to fulfill Ms Schau's dreams, the only solution is another round of tax increases.

And one consequence of that would see people who are hanging onto their houses by the skin of their fixed incomes default on their mortgages or be forced to put them up for sale and place their names on a waiting list for one of Ms Schau's as not yet built shelter units.

Ron Bezzant
Harrison Road

You can have your say with a letter to the editor. Fax letters to (905) 878-4943, or e-mail to miltomed@haltonsearch.com.

Seniors aren't the ones most suckered by frauds

Think senior citizens are the ones who most often fall for frauds?

Not so, according to PhoneBusters — a partnership of the RCMP and OPP — which is fighting much more than telephone scams these days.

Research by PhoneBusters shows most fraud victims are between the ages of 30 and 40 years.

One of the current scams, according to a PhoneBusters press release, is being attempted through computers in Ontario. It's called the advanced fee letter fraud.

Letters are being sent out asking for your bank account information so that money can be deposited into your account, or requesting an advance fee to show your good faith.

These letters are commonly referred to as Nigerian letter scams or West African fraud letters, and we've received them here at the office

via fax and e-mail for years.

I'm sure you can guess what happens to those who comply.

And now there's a new variant of the scam that cheats people who legitimately sell goods online, warns PhoneBusters. It's called the overpayment fraud. Here's how it works.

The seller (victim) receives a cashier's cheque for goods sold. The amount of the cheque is in excess of what is owed.

The seller is then asked to deposit the cheque and wire the balance of excess funds immediately back to the "purchaser."

But the deposited cheque is subsequently returned as counterfeit and charged back to the seller's account.

Last week I received a letter on a Champion e-mail address from someone claiming to be a



From the
editor's desk

with KAREN SMITH

"legal practitioner," who holds "business portfolios for some investors."

It reads, "I have been given a mandate and a letter of authority by one of my clients to source for a viable business opportunity where he can invest these funds.

"I got your contact amongst others from a search into the Internet and was inspired to seek

your co-operation. However, I intend to make contact with a few others on the same subject to enable me (to) determine the most suitable investor.

"Should you be interested and capable to invest and manage the above funds, kindly respond at once so that I can furnish you with more information."

I have forwarded the strange e-mail to PhoneBusters.

New scams are being invented every day. If you have received a suspicious e-mail, fax or letter that asks for money, you can help bust the fraudsters by sending copies of the correspondence to PhoneBusters via fax to (888) 654-9426 or by e-mail to waf@phonebusters.com.

Fraud artists will say anything to part you from your hard-earned money. Don't fall for it.