

Comment

Heated, divisive issue

Gay marriage. Rarely have two words caused so much divisiveness, so much outrage and so much anger among Canadians. Indeed, staff members at this newspaper are as emotionally divided on this issue as the country.

While this is the opinion of the newspaper, it doesn't represent the moral views of all of our staff — nor should it.

Not since the Supreme Court struck down Canada's abortion law in 1988 has an issue divided our country in such an emotional way. The debate over same-sex marriage legislation has created a polarization of public opinion. This is a good thing.

Public debate and the freedom to defend an opinion — popular or otherwise — is the fundamental democratic right generations of Canadians have fought and died for during wartime.

While we appreciate this opinion won't be popular with many residents, we feel compelled to offer our two cents worth on such an important national issue.

We fail to see any reason why two people in love — whatever their gender — should be denied the right to legally commit to spending the rest of their lives together.

It would be blatantly hypocritical to, on one hand, place Canada on a humanitarian pedestal as a nation that embraces diversity and places the highest value on equal rights for all of its citizens — and then exclude same-sex couples from the right to be married.

We completely understand why many churches in Canada want to retain the right to deny same-sex marriage ceremonies within their places of worship. And we vigorously support their wish to defend that right.

We are, however, not buying the argument put forth by some that a vote for same-sex marriage is a vote for polygamy. That's a completely separate issue to be debated if, and when, it's brought forward through Parliament or our court system.

Today's reality is that we live in a society that has evolved to a point where being homosexual is no longer a criminal offence.

If we're to call ourselves a tolerant society, we must be prepared to peacefully co-exist with our neighbours in spite of any misgivings we might have for their life choices.



Our Readers Write

Introduction of Canada's Maple Leaf flag wasn't seen by everyone as positive thing

Dear Editor:

Last Tuesday's Champion editorial entitled 'Maple Leaf forever' is rather effusive over the symbolism it accords the Canadian flag.

Forty years ago today, after Lester B. Pearson had invoked closure to pass the bill to introduce the new flag, I had served in the Royal Canadian Navy for close to 12 years.

I can assure you that not many of my comrades in arms were pleased to see the Red Ensign flag — with all its meaningful history and tradition — tossed into

the fireplace. Adoption of the 'Pearson flag', as it was widely known at the time, also upset the Royal Canadian Legion, its membership then heavy with veterans who fought in two world wars and Korea under the Red Ensign flag.

I'm assuming the editorial writer has given due consideration to the fact that neither Australia nor New Zealand saw any need to replace their national flag with a red kangaroo or kiwi situated between two red bars.

Ron Bezant
Harrison Road

Same-sex marriage will weaken institution

Dear Editor:

I was surprised to see that Canadian Minister of Health Ujjal Dosanjh felt it necessary to publicize his views on same-sex marriage, essentially reducing the issue of the definition of marriage to a matter of "protecting minority rights."

The federal government claims the Supreme Court of Canada essentially forced them to introduce this legislation, and both Liberal and NDP parties insist it's all about rights.

With all due respect, I'd beg to differ on both counts.

Marriage is a timeless institution wherein "a man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife." Fundamental to this heterosexual union is a family, the procreation of children — ideally in a secure, sta-

ble and loving environment.

Marriage and family are foundational components of our nation, and essential to our health and well-being. Without these institutions, I believe we have no future.

Ultimately, marriage isn't just about a relationship, it's about the next generation.

I resent being labeled homophobic or hateful simply because I cherish traditional family values. I'm not against gay people, but I'm opposed to action by our government that threatens to further weaken an institution so essential to our life and future.

Mr. Dosanjh claims that invoking the notwithstanding clause would "cut a key thread in our social fabric," but to rush this legislation through in the name of minority rights and fundamentally change

the essence of what marriage is really about in the process will, in my opinion, irreparably tear that fabric.

It wasn't too long ago that the government took exactly the opposite view on this matter to the one they now champion. What happened?

We need time to carefully consider this issue. We need public debate, and hopefully in something other than an adversarial context.

Here's some wisdom from the God our founding fathers desired would have dominion from sea to sea: "Stand at the crossroads and look. Ask for the ancient paths where the good way is and you will find rest for your souls."

David Cummings
Campbellville

Make sure to include your name, address and telephone number when submitting a letter to the editor for publication.

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Classified: 905-875-3300

Circulation: 905-878-5947

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The Canadian Champion, published every Tuesday and Friday at 191 Main St. E., Milton, Ont., L9T 4N9 (Box 248), is one of The Metroland Printing, Publishing & Distributing Ltd. group of suburban companies which includes: Ajax/Pickering News Advertiser, Alliston Herald/Courier, Barrie Advance, Bolton Enterprise, Brampton Guardian, Burlington Post, Burlington Shopping News, City Parent, City of York Guardian, Collingwood/Wasaga Connection, East York Mirror, Erin Advocate/Country Routes, Etobicoke Guardian, Flamborough Review, Forever Young, Georgetown Independent/Acton Free Press, Halton Business Times, Huronia Business Times, Lindsay This Week, Markham Economist & Sun, Midland/Penetang-uishene Mirror, Milton Shopping News, Mississauga Business Times, Mississauga News, Napanee Guide, Nassagaweya News, Newmarket/Aurora Era-Banner, Northumberland News, North York Mirror, Oakville Beaver, Oakville Shopping News, Oldtimers Hockey News, Orangeville Banner, Orillia Today, Oshawa/Whitby/Clarington/Port Perry This Week, Peterborough This Week, Picton County Guide, Richmond Hill/Thornhill/Vaughan Liberal, Scarborough Mirror, Stouffville/Uxbridge Tribune.

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by Steve Nease

