

OPINION

Agency in need of new blood

Summer is traditionally a slow period for blood donations, but a report last week indicated the Canadian Blood Services (CBS) is facing problems more serious than a typical summer slowdown.

According to CBS polling, while a vast number of Canadians believe donating blood is a good thing (71 per cent) and many say they intend to donate (22 per cent), only a small percentage actually give the gift of life.

"The technical number is 3.7 per cent of eligible Canadians actually donate," said Andrew Laycock of the CBS.

That's embarrassing.

Compared to other countries, such as Australia and the United Kingdom in which 5-6.5 per cent of those eligible donate, Canada's numbers are shockingly poor.

The best Canadians have ever done was five per cent — during the Second World War! While the number of those donating has actually climbed by .2 per cent in the past three years, it's obvious more people are needed to roll up their sleeves.

What's even more distressing is that, when the numbers are broken down by province, Ontarians are even less likely to give than most other provinces.

In Ontario, where the province is divided into regions, Toronto, which encompasses the GTA area, has the lowest donation rate in Canada at 2.6 per cent.

But the news gets even more ominous.

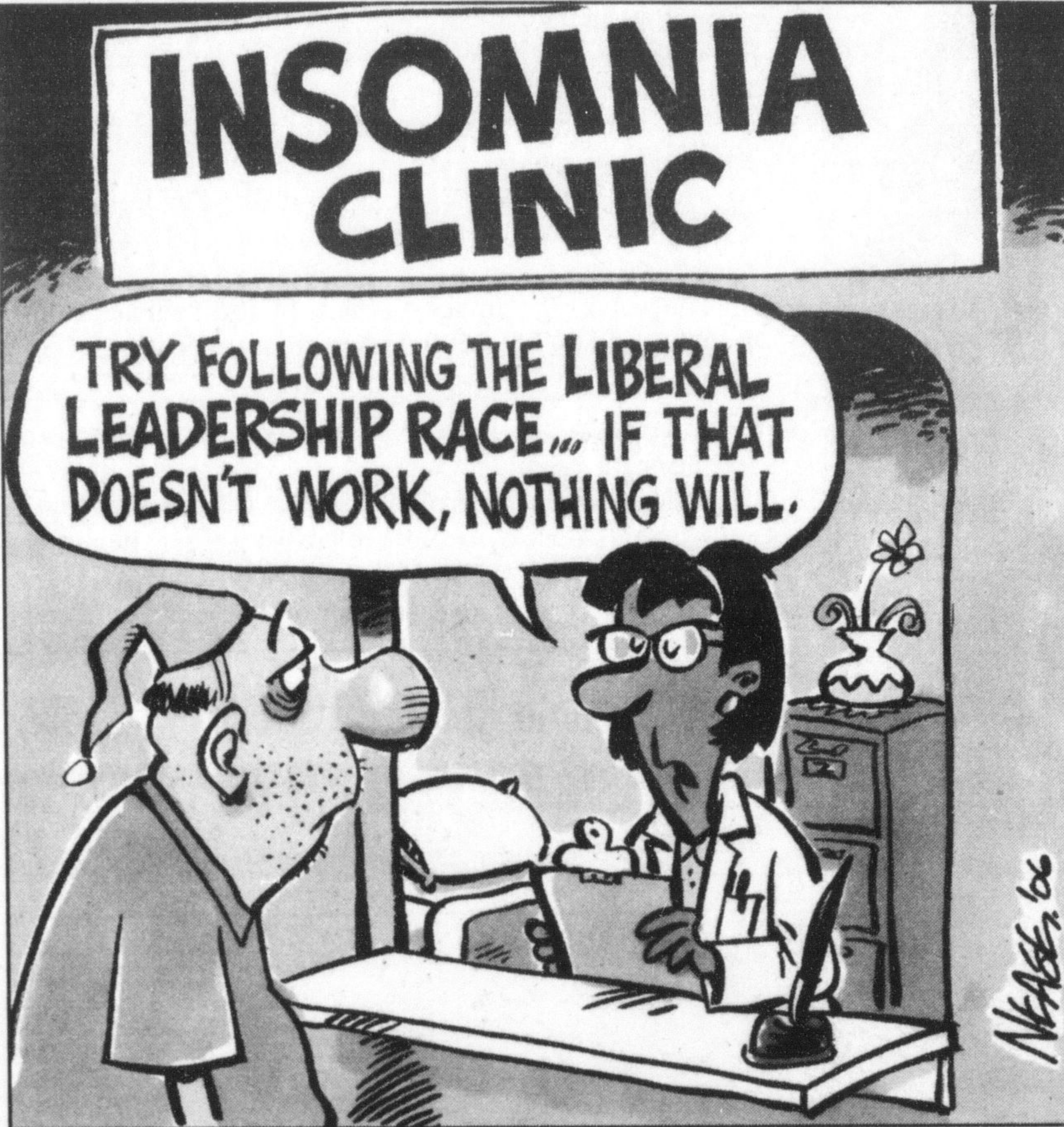
The vast majority of those donating are baby boomers, meaning that the donation pool is aging. While the CBS has held recruitment drives at universities and high schools in recent years, young people need to understand the importance of giving blood and just how easy it is to donate. To those young people who already donate, we applaud you. Please spread the word to your friends that blood is needed by people of all ages.

Another conundrum facing the CBS is that many people are repeat donors.

While that, in itself, is good news, it means the CBS is relying on the same people to keep donating.

What it all boils down to is the fact the CBS could use "new blood" — for the benefit of all of us.

A blood donor clinic will be held August 17 at the Milton Seniors' Activity Centre, 500 Childs Dr., from 2 to 8 p.m. Currently, there's a special need for O negative donors. To book an appointment to donate call 1-888-236-6283.



ReadersWrite

Send your letters to miltoneid@haltonsearch.com or drop them off at 875 Main St. E.

Support has been overwhelming

DEAR EDITOR:

No one will ever have more to say about our small town than the Grant family of White Drive.

We as a family are so privileged to have chosen this place to be our home for 27 years. After experiencing a devastating home fire last week, we as a family have been overwhelmed by the support we have received.

All of us can't believe how wonderful people can be.

To all involved in the rescue of our precious Matthew, we're not sure what to say, but we must tell you all that we are as a family forever indebted to you.

The Grants will be back, our home will be rebuilt and our love for Milton and our love for our neighbours and friends will never go away.

Thanks to everyone who helped. We won't forget your support.

THE GRANT FAMILY
MILTON

Editor'sdesk

Councillor Curtis, 'Father Mark', turned 50 in style

When I turn 50, I don't think I'll be announcing it. In fact, I think I'll just be trying to forget it.

But for someone else I know, the milestone presented an opportunity to make a contribution to his community with the help of others. I'm talking about Mark Curtis, well known to us as 'Canada's Singing Priest' and Milton councillor.

A few weeks ago he and his lovely wife Rita hosted a 50th birthday party to raise money for the Milton District Hospital Foundation's \$3.5 million campaign to purchase a CT scanner — equipment commonly used to diagnose things like cancer and heart conditions. The event was held in the beautiful country setting of Springer House in Burlington.

We all know Milton Councillor Mike

Boughton recently raised money for the cause by shaving his head prior to surgery to have a brain tumour removed, as well as through his annual Golfing 4 Cancer event.

The Curtis family had their own family health-care scare that led them to realize the need for a CT scanner in Milton.

Currently any local resident who needs a CT scan must go to Oakville and the wait times are long.

The evening led by master of ceremonies Mayor Gord Krantz was not only for a great cause, it was a lot of fun.

Celebrity guests — world famous former jockey Sandy Hawley along with former NHL goaltending giant Johnny Bower

and father of 'the Great One' Walter Gretzky — made for an interesting and entertaining evening.

My husband Frank and I enjoyed dinner with our table companions, former Halton Hills Mayor Kathy Gastle and her husband George.

Of course, the evening wouldn't have been the same if Father Mark hadn't sang, which he did in a wonderful duet with New Life Pentecostal Church music director Esther Kessler.

All in all, with guests making donations in lieu of birthday gifts, the event collected more than \$5,000 for the CT scanner campaign, which has now raised just over a million. That's something to be proud of.



Karen Miceli

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