

# OPINION

## Harper delivers big shot in arm for economy

Tuesday's federal budget contained little in the way of surprises since members of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government had been dropping budget details in recent weeks as frequently as the National Hockey League's Toronto Maple Leafs.

The fact that Harper was forced to swallow hard and accept the fact his government would take on a budget deficit (of roughly \$34 billion) this year, only months after proclaiming such a move wouldn't be necessary, was hardly news.

Nor was it news that money (\$7 billion) would be spent on infrastructure, job training (\$2B), social housing (\$2B), etc.

Tory cabinet ministers had announced roughly \$13 billion in new spending during the past week as they attempted to put the budget in a good light with voters before the Liberal-NDP-Bloc Québécois coalition determined if there was enough to dislike about the document in an effort to unseat the Tories.

Harper said in Monday's Throne Speech that his government would spend what was necessary on a stimulus package that would protect the economy from "immediate threat" and to ensure "long-term growth."

What he didn't say was that this was a budget he was forced — politically — into delivering.

Cash, and lots of it, was needed to try to boost the economy, keep people working and protect those who have lost jobs.

Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff revealed Wednesday he supported the budget as announced, with conditions.

The NDP and Bloc Québécois did not.

Fortunately for Canadians, the potential political ramifications that lay beneath this budget didn't end up taking precedence over what, on the surface, appears to be a good shot in the arm for the country.

Hopefully, it will remain that way.



**MAKING TRACKS:** Mike, Christiane and Taylor took the *Champion* to Walt Disney World in Florida where they celebrated Christmas. Take your community newspaper on your next trip and send your 'Champion Tracks' photos to [editorial@miltoncanadianchampion.com](mailto:editorial@miltoncanadianchampion.com). Be sure to include destination information and everyone's names.

## ReadersWrite

E-mail your letters to [editorial@miltoncanadianchampion.com](mailto:editorial@miltoncanadianchampion.com).

### Letter about notices not appreciated

**DEAR EDITOR:**

Is anyone else curious about the letter to the editor in last Friday's *Champion* that wondered about the notices in different languages that appeared in the paper recently?

I know I am, because the only thing that I took from that letter was that people can write letters in English but

they sure can't seem to read notices in that same language.

It seems like someone actually had the courage to subtly remind us that multi-culturalism is still barely tolerated in a healthy and growing community like Milton.

**MISHAL NASEER  
MILTON**

## Aroundtown

### I know now that ASL is a language all on its own

They say no question is a stupid question. I beg to differ, because last week I asked many questions that were far from intelligent.

The only redeeming factor is I asked them with a desire to learn and I refused to pretend I understood until I really did.

Last Friday, I stepped through the doors of the Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf, which I've driven by thousands of times with barely a glance. I had an interview with Heather Gibson, an educator there, who last week was appointed to the Order of Ontario. Gibson had developed an ASL (American Sign Language) language arts curriculum, and I thought I was there to learn more about the curriculum itself.

But as I spoke with Gibson through an interpreter, I quickly realized I had to take a step back and first learn the basics of ASL. I

used to think, very wrongly, that ASL took English words and assigned corresponding signs to them. But that's not the case at all. ASL is a language of its own, and when an interpreter translates what an ASL-speaking person is saying into English, she's merely giving the closest version she can.

Heather explained that a joke told in ASL could very well lose its funniness when translated into English — because there's no word-for-word translation. In fact, there are some ASL signs that have no English word equivalents.

For some reason, it took me a while to grasp the concept of a non-spoken, non-written language. And my ignorance was more than obvious to Heather when I asked such

questions as: Why learn ASL if you can lip-read? And how can you have a poem if there are no ASL books? The answers to those questions and more are in my story about Heather in today's *Champion*.

With Milton's burgeoning population, there are more and more cultures that make up the town. I now realize that the ASL culture is as real and valid a culture as any other.

Allowing my ignorance to show was well worth the embarrassment because it gave me insight into a language about which I didn't know much.

With this past Tuesday marking my sixth year here at the *Champion*, it was a great time to be reminded that learning should never stop. Not for me, and not for you.



Stephanie Hounsell

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