

OPINION

Canadians have already spoken

Federal Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff may believe the time is right to challenge the Stephen Harper-led minority Conservative government, but we doubt voters are enamoured with the prospect of returning to the polls for the second time in about 12 months and fourth time in five years.

Last week's threats of a non-confidence vote being called shortly after Parliament reconvenes this Monday had Conservative MPs shaking their heads and many ordinary Canadians asking, why now? This all reeks of having more to do with the political animosity that exists between the Conservatives and the Liberal, NDP and Bloc parties than any hot-button federal issue.

It's estimated that a federal election would cost taxpayers between \$200 and \$300 million — not an insignificant amount in this era of corporate bailouts and stimulus plans. Last October's federal election cost \$288.2 million and resulted in a third consecutive minority government. According to recent popularity polls, there's no reason to believe an election about a year since the last will yield a dramatically different result.

Political analysts seem almost unanimous in the opinion that whichever of the Liberal and Conservative parties would come out on top in a fall election, they would be clinging to yet another minority with the other party leaders plotting the next challenge.

Any of the federal leaders who have been reading the political tea leaves in recent years should already know the electorate is feeling burned out by campaign after campaign. With the exception of the referendum of 1898, the four poorest voter turnouts — by percentage — since Confederation have taken place in the last four elections: January 2006 (64.7 per cent), November 2000 (61.2 per cent), June 2004 (60.9 per cent) and October 2008 (58.8 per cent).

While Ignatieff may see the still-recovering Canadian economy as an opportunity to try to unseat his greatest political foe, we question the timing from a citizen's point of view. There must be more productive ways for Ottawa to be spending almost \$300 million of our money.



MAKING TRACKS: Miltonians (front row, from left) Jennifer Wiseman, Janine Vanderhorden, Brittany Wiseman (holding Champion) and Nathaniel Wiseman were part of the Etobicoke Salvation Army Missions Team, which recently visited Freeport, Bahamas to run a day camp for underprivileged kids. Bring your community newspaper on your next vacation and send your 'Champion Tracks' photos to editorial@miltoncanadianchampion.com. Be sure to include destination information and everyone's names.

ReadersWrite

E-mail letters to editorial@miltoncanadianchampion.com. Letters, which may be edited, must include the writer's name, address and phone number.

We don't want another election

DEAR EDITOR:

In response to the debate between Halton MP Lisa Raitt and Conservative candidate Deborah Gillis, I — a candidate and member of the Christian Heritage Party — would like to support Raitt.

In my humble opinion, the Liberals are dead wrong in their desperation to force another expensive election down the throats of Canadians.

It's becoming more and more clear as the years go by that our federal Liberals just want to be in power at the

expense of hard-working Canadians, many whose financial future is at stake.

Canadians don't need another election. We should put the millions that would be spent on an election into infrastructure and research and development, and let the Harper government finish its term.

To Gillis I say that I'm not hungry for power, I just want a better Halton and a better Canada, with better solutions. Let democracy run its course.

**TONY RODRIGUES
MILTON**

Editor's Desk

I'll stick with my good old community newspaper any day

There has been a lot of talk about citizen journalism on the internet.

Citizen media sites that contain news content generated by users have emerged as a form of bridge media, linking traditional media with forms of civic participation.

I say citizen journalism has been going on since the newspaper's creation, especially the community newspaper. Local residents contribute to the *Champion* daily — whether it's the submission of a press release or photo, an eyewitness account of a news event or a call with a news tip.

The difference is, in traditional journalism ultimately the newspaper holds the power to publish information how it sees fit. In citizen

journalism, the 'reporter' works independently and is only self-edited.

Perhaps the biggest difference, though, is that in traditional media trained professionals oversee delivery of the news. Professional journalists are taught to be unbiased, cover both sides of the story, check their facts, watch for potential libel situations and write clearly and concisely.

I question the reliability of the information I might find on a citizen journalism-based news site.

However, since I am trained to report on issues in a fair and balanced manner, I must

point out some potential positives regarding citizen journalism. Research on these sites

show they're seen as a watchdog for local government, can help a community solve problems and to some degree increase voter turnout. They can also nudge traditional media to improve.

But while these points have merit, I'll stick with my good old community newspaper any day.

Of course, I'm not biased.

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Karen Micelli

The Canadian Champion

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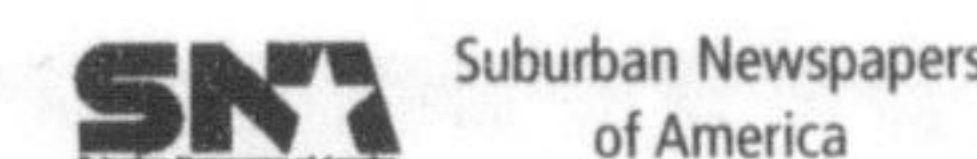
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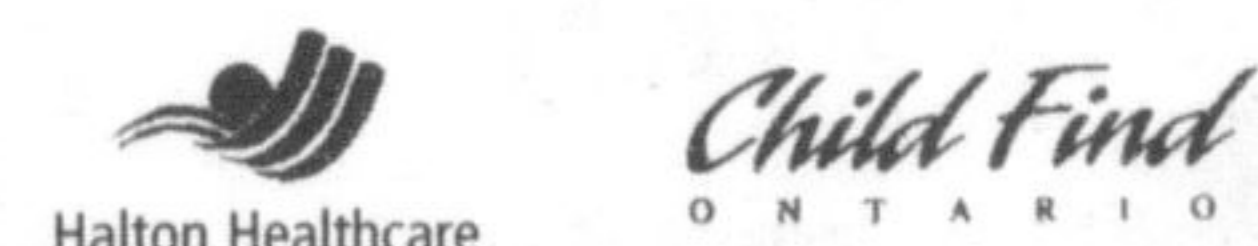
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