

Free trade or freer trade

Carey Nieuwhof

I am certainly not an expert on free trade. Then again, I am beginning to ask myself if anyone is an expert on free trade. Everyday that term pops up on headlines everywhere, yet there is never any specific talk about what free trade really is, or clues as to who knows what free trade is. When people talk about free trade, do they mean real free trade or freer trade? When people are against free trade are they saying they dislike free trade, freer trade, freest trade, or no trade at all?

The free trade issue is one of the strangest phenomena of the last 6 - 8 years or so. It escapes definition. No one really understands what free trade means, yet it is the number one issue today. Allow me to take my trusty sword and slice through the free trade fog, for the following, as you will soon realize, is a laymans guide to this mysterious topic. Brace yourself. I am about to confuse you with more fuzzy chatter.

I believe free trade is what happens when Canada slaps no duties on incoming Yankee goods and the Americans slap no tariffs on our outgoing goods. Freer trade is where this happens only some of the time. But otherwise tariffs are left remaining as needed in certain industries. Clear? No. Good.

Who, you ask, is in favour of free trade? Well, the guy who started this debate, Donald MacDonald and the boys in his Royal Commission are. Brian Mulroney says he is now. Although during his campaign for the Tory leadership, he was dead set against it. As a rule, the Western provinces favour free trade, while from Ontario eastward, we find ourselves of the opinion that there is too much to lose through open borders.

Who, you then ask is against free trade? Well, the Liberals are. But they are also against protective tariffs. So, the Liberals do not want free trade with the U.S., but they also do not want tariffs on Canadian or American products either. Hmmmm. I suppose that means they are against any kind of trade at all. Hmmmm. That's a silly policy. I don't think they really understand the issue either.

Actually, John Turner was in favour of free trade just one year ago. Like Brian, he has flipfopped on the issue. When he ran for the Liberal leadership last year, Turner was all for it. However, now the Tories are for free trade, so I guess John thinks this means he has an obligation to oppose it.

Then there is the NDP. The NDP is a wonderful group of people. They hate conservatives. All Conservatives. They also hate Americans and American capitalists. The Tories want to let American capitalists have access to our markets. You can guess what the NDP thinks of that.

The NDP also believes that unions are always right. And unions oppose free trade because it looks like one or two industries will be shut down with free trade. This means workers will lose their jobs. However, they fail to realize that lots of other industries will grow and new ones will open. That is a chance for new unions to spring up. What is wrong with that? The problem is the Tories will be opening those new industries. There again, is your answer.

Well, this is where all three parties stand (or fail to stand) on the issue. We still don't know whether Canada is really pursuing free

trade, freer trade, or is simply negotiating a trade agreement with the U.S. The question is though, does Ottawa know what's happening? No.

Our free trade negotiators are sitting down at the tables to talk trade. Just trade. They have no preset conditions for entering the talks. They have no sacred trusts which are considered untouchables. And maybe that is a good thing. Why? Because, quite frankly, I don't think the negotiators have quite decided what they are supposed to talk about.

All they know is that they are supposed to discuss opening trade barriers. Perhaps that is the best thing that could happen. One imagines that soon, after months of talks, they'll begin outlining the parameters of a trade

agreement. Maybe they will soon decide whether freer trade, free trade or other arrangements would be in our best interest. Then they will draft an agreement, and submit that to Ottawa and Washington. Ottawa can choose to accept or reject it, just as Washington can. And there my friends, is where our answer lies.

No one knows what free trade is, because no one wants it defined yet. That definition will arise within the next 6 - 18 months. So wake me up in a year and a half. If the agreement is on Ottawa's doorstep for signing, and the definition is still not known, then, and only then, will I begin my worrying. For now, simple confusion will suffice.

Junk as a subject is finished

Ray Baker

And now, finally, the much awaited sequel to the Junk Drawer series and the Junk Mail series and the whole series of Junk.

This one was years in the making. (The column, not the junk) and only came to a head as a result of a recent wedding.

The wedding (of our No. 2 Son) gave Mom the best excuse she's had in years. "We must do this" for the wedding. Or that, or whatever. It even stretched to cutting the lawns for the wedding. However, one of the musts was to buy a new chesterfield and chair, and co-incidentally, there just happened to be a new furniture store opening in Midland "that every day". So we popped over to check it out.

Speaking of checks, you've guessed it, yes, they could deliver on Tuesday, and yes, a cheque would be fine, and let's see, including delivery charge and tax that will be, and thank you for coming.

We are in the store and a Mrs. Therrien who had met my wife some years earlier asked about the microwave "nuking" food, and junk drawers.

So she reads my columns regularly and, dare I hope, she is a fan! So she discussed junk drawers and mentioned what is now the sequel.

THE DREADED JUNK SHELF

That was the missing link, the trigger I had been waiting for. So if you are out there, Mrs. Therrien, I thank you. And all the readers all around Georgian Bay thank you for two reasons.

The women, who now realize they are not alone in their trials and tribulations.

The men, who up to now may not have thought of it but to whom it now makes sense.

First take an average shelf, eye level and well supported, preferably in the kitchen. Let Mom fill with pots, pans, casserole dishes complete with lids, wine glasses and prized ornaments, and stand well back.

Now let Dad over a number of months use every available square inch between, behind, and in front, for the temporary storage of Things-too-good-to-go-in-the-junk-drawer.

When this is full, the lids can be removed from the casserole dishes, choose items inserted, and the lids replaced. Wine glasses are saved until last. Not only because they are transparent but there is less sense of security in an open container.

When Mom is sick and tired of emptying treasures before she can even cook, she invariably throws them into the Junk Drawer. Well that's okay because it creates more space when the things are washed and replaced.

This holding pattern is self-generating and, of course, provides an instant eye level search pattern for needed items before the searcher, in a fit of final desperation, goes into the Junk Drawer.

As an easy extension of the Junk Shelf, the top of the Microwave oven and the top of the fridge lend themselves quite readily for the storage (temporarily of course) of irreplaceable objects.

In next week's exciting Part 2, a suggested starter kit will be listed by space, i.e. between things, behind things, and inside things.

This Week's Quote: "I'll just put this on here for a couple of days, okay?"

Ray Baker and his family live in Penetanguishene. They are all space saving experts.

Letters

Thanks, and special thanks

Dear Editor:

Thanks to the hard work of many dedicated volunteers and the generosity of the good people in the Midland and Penetanguishene area, the annual Midland and District Unit Cancer Campaign has gone over the top. We achieved total donations of \$49,207, which represents 117 per cent of our goal. It is to our community's credit that we stand second highest in the Lakeland District.

As the newly appointed Chairperson of the Unit, I learn daily about the many ways the Cancer Society helps each one of us —

through education and research, and through direct help to patients and their families.

Because of the selfless contributions of hundreds of men and women in our area, that assistance can and will continue, and the hope for victory in the battle against Cancer glows even more brightly.

I wish to thank you and the readers of your newspaper for the great support and co-operation in this campaign. The fight continues and we are winning.

Sincerely,
Shirley Whittington
Campaign Chairperson

Logic of statements questioned

Dear Editor:

I have tolerated Mayor Roach's questionable logic in statements to the media and council for the past six months in the hope that now he has a majority of supporters on council his governance of the Town of Midland would improve. This however, has proved to be a vain hope. I am moved to write this letter to clarify for you and your readers the ridiculous statements which followed the request for a donation for the Midland and Penetanguishene High Schools Scholarship Fund. Mayor Roach suggested that the \$200 requested be denied for two reasons, first because anybody who wants to send their child to university should be able to afford it themselves. In any case, he added, they leave the area and are of no value to it. The second associated statement suggested that the school board should draw money from its funds for this purpose. He further suggested that he would rather contribute the funds to an individual to buy tools with which to establish a local business.

Mayor Roach has obviously not done his homework since if he had read the covering material associated with this request, he

would have realized that all funds collected from whatever source, are put into a common pool and then divided amongst the award winning students in the two high schools. This means that some of the money could go to a student who is university bound, but it is just as likely to go to a student who plans to attend a community college or to one who may use it to purchase the necessary tools to start an apprenticeship at a local industry. The funds are simply designed to encourage and reward academic excellence at all levels. It would seem that Mayor Roach is more interested in promoting mediocrity than excellence.

I assume the mayor wishes there to be a quality educational system in this county, but one cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, even if one is the mayor. I would suggest to the mayor that he not say anything until he has a firm grasp of all the relevant facts. This should provide a long period of peace and quiet for the Town of Midland.

Yours faithfully,
Raymond J. Holt

Support for Performing Arts

Dear Editor:

Thank you very much from the members of Huronia Performing Arts for Children for your coverage of our shows for another season.

Special thanks to Judy French for covering our spring sales campaign's kick-off party. As

a group committed to bringing high quality children's entertainment to this area at affordable prices we count on the publicity your newspaper generously gives.

We look forward to your continued support when our new season begins in October.

Joan Gallagher-Main

Tag day successful

Dear Editor:

On behalf of Telecare Midland, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to our first TELECARE TAG DAY, thus making it such a successful event.

Special thanks go to this newspaper for the excellent coverage and to the grade eight class of Sacred Heart School who, under the supervision of their teacher, Mrs. Corey Hamelin, did such a tremendous job selling

the tags. Without them it would not have been the success that it was.

Many thanks also go to all our workers who helped in many ways and, of course, to the people in the area who donated so freely to help keep the Telecare lines (526-7836) open.

Dietmar Greppmayr, Director
Telecare Midland

Letters

The Penetanguishene Citizen welcomes Letters to the Editor. They must be legible, signed (by hand), and carry the writer's address and telephone number for verification. Pen names are not allowed and anonymous letters will not be published. Letters published by this newspaper do not necessarily reflect the opinion of this newspaper, its publisher or editor.

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Member

