

Cheers to all who helped hospital

The measure of the health of a community is its spirit, its heart if you like. And on Saturday Penetanguishene proved itself to be a community in good health when nearly 10 percent of the town's population turned out to help raise funds for heart monitoring equipment for the Penetanguishene General Hospital.

Five hundred people gathered at the town dock to begin a six kilometre sponsored walk through town.

Think of it, that would be 200,000 people in Metro Toronto, so its not small feat for our community.

Too often emergency services, social agencies and health care services are taken for granted. Almost ignored until we need them.

But the residents of Pentanguishene showed that they care about their community and its institutions.

In fact the walk was more than just a fund raiser, it was a gala affair. There were young and old, balloons, people in clown suits, celebrities, Russ Howard and company along with Angela Schimdt-Foster to name a few.

Our local politicians were well represented with Mayor Ron Bellisle, and Councillors Ray Baker and Bob Sullivan showing their support.

Unfortunately Brian Orser could not attend but Sister Joan Whelan took the challenge in his stead.

All in all it was an enjoyable, morning walk.

Who would have thought fund raising could be so much fun?

Nurse defends homes

Dear Editor:

Thirty years ago I graduated from St. Michael's Hospital as a Registered Nurse -- very proud of my profession and of myself. That pride has been trampled to death by the negative media coverage of my chosen professional career in Long Term Care -- specifically a privately owned nursing home.

Fourteen years of my life have gone into helping to match this nursing home the warm, caring, loving place that it is and the resentment felt by our dedicated staff and, I'm sure, the dedicated staff in 90 per cent of the nursing homes in Ontario, is rampant. I object strongly to the discrimination being shown by your ministry, against our elderly. Why are they being punished for needing a nursing home? Why are they not deserving of the same funding as residents in government-run homes?

Many of our population are unaware of the discrepancies in the system, due to this mental or physical condition. So who is left to fight for their rights? Caring families, caring staff and caring owners.

Despite the grossly unfair ratio of funding between hospital, homes for the aged and nursing homes (200:79:49) our residents do not suffer from lack of warmth or love or high quality nursing care, thanks to the dedication of the staff members who take great pride in the careers they have chosen. Our first priori-

ty is the care of our residents. Our employer demands the best of us and because we care very much about what we do -- we give our best and more.

We give our best -- is it too much to ask that our facilities be treated to equal funding with the government agencies?!

Private enterprise was the basis for the development of our country. Why are politicians so adept at discouraging this democratic means of earning a livelihood?

Your ministry has saddled us with a list of 480 regulations, five inspection groups and 30 per cent less funding than government-run homes. No other health care facility in Ontario has to comply with this type of stringent accountability, and yet the press continues to report negative facts fed to them by politicians who apparently are unaware of the facts.

For 14 years I have listened to and read the allegations and have said nothing. Today I have aired my views.

Sincerely,

Barbara E Brennen RN,

Editors note: This is a copy of a letter sent to Murray Elston, Minister of Health, D. Peterson, Premier of Ontario, Ron Van Horne, Minister for Senior Citizens' Affairs, and Allan McLean, MPP Simcoe East.

Thanks from Contact

Dear Editor:

On behalf of Contact Information Centre, I would like to express our thanks to the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 80 for their generous donation towards our meals-On-Wheels program. It is very gratifying for us to receive the support from the community. Support such as this helps to ensure the continuance of the Meals-On-Wheels program. I would also like to take this opportunity

to thank the volunteer drivers from Calvary Baptist Church, St. Paul's United Church, Alliance Church and Knox Presbyterian Church as well as the dietary staff from Huronia District Hospital for their special contributions to the program.

Thanks again.

Diane King

Meals-On-Wheels Co-ordinator

Viewpoint

by Carey Nieuwhof

Dropping the double standard

Being in the public eye has never been easy. Every move you make can have repercussions that, to the average man, are inconceivable. Every whisper that slips from the mouth of a national politician reverberates on the front pages of every newspaper in the country. To think that total privacy is possible in public life is folly.

Brian Mulroney has learned the pitfalls of hiring nannies for the kids when Mom and Dad step out for the day at 24 Sussex Drive. Pierre Trudeau learned that marriage and divorce can be difficult things. Gerald Ford learned that one's golf game can have a bearing on how one does on election day.

It's only natural that the public and the press would be interested in the activities of the people who run the country. It's understandable that these same people will have to be accountable for many of their actions in public life. But what North American, and the world, saw unfold last week around Gary Hart transcends the boundaries of what we should expect to learn about politicians and their private lives. What we saw happen last week was a highly questionable, and in many ways revolting, example of the kind of unnecessary and unjustifiable scrutiny to which our politicians

and public figures are subject.

It's a real shame that Gary Hart had to quit his bid for the presidency the way he did last week. Hart is an intelligent, articulate and credible politician. America saw his political career take off in 1984 when he rose from oblivion to challenge Walter Mondale for the Democratic Presidential nomination. Since then, Hart has developed his "new ideas" into a solid political platform. Had he been given a chance, he would have made an excellent nominee and likely a strong president. As Hart himself said on Friday, now we'll never know.

What is particularly disturbing about the way Hart had to leave politics is that he had to leave for, essentially, being human. Before you become too enraged over that assertion, let's look at the situation rationally.

If the allegations about Hart's alleged marital infidelity are true, then there can be no question that Gary Hart has some serious personal problems to work out. He has a marriage to look after, and he likely has to reassess some of the choices he has made over the past few years about where his personal life is going.

Those problems, if they exist, are real ones with which Hart, as a politician, as president

or as a private citizen would have to deal. Why, however, do those problems become much more serious though, simply because Hart is in the public eye? That is a very important question which the press and the North American public will have to answer.

What made the editors of the Miami Herald (which was the newspaper that unearthed the most damaging allegations about Hart) decide that it was alright for their reporters to tag Hart for days to try to uncover some sleaze on the campaign? One suspects the answer is two-fold. The truth is probable that: a) the paper has a need to unearth some story which it fears the competition may get a hold of first, but more importantly b) that it is a good, satisfying thing to shoot down a major political figure because it makes him look human. Both of these reasons are incredibly disturbing.

Throughout the Hart affair last week, I kept getting the feeling that the people who were rejoicing in the allegations about Hart were the same people who enjoyed watching Jim and Tammy Bakker fall from grace a month earlier. Both of these stories saw important people humbled by human error, before millions of people.

In both cases, the press concentrated not

so much on what the allegations meant but more on what they were about. Who was sleeping with whom? What kind of awful deeds were done? It was a tough finding filth on people's records was satisfying. That is a rather disturbing comment on both the media and on the public.

When are North Americans going to realize that we cannot elect perfect role models to our highest offices? When are they going to realize other things are far more important? Gary Hart would not have been given a chance to turn his life around had he stayed in the race. More reporters, more newspapers and others would have continued to dig up more and more from his past. The public, assumedly, would continue to lap it up. Hart was never given a chance to clean up his act. By all rights, he deserved that chance. The final verdict should have come at the ballot box, not at a press conference.

It's time the public gave its politicians a chance to breathe a little. It's time they were given a chance to admit they were wrong and to try again. It's time the public dropped a long outdated double standard.

I would encourage he who is without guilt, to cast the first stone.

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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