

Editorial Page

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Guest Editorial...Susan MacDonald Nipigon - Red Rock Gazette

Halloween vandalism... a sign of the times

Somewhere along the line, the concept of Halloween as a special occasion for the young and the young-at-heart has been lost. Halloween hi-jinks have become acts of vandalism and, as always, those who least deserve to suffer are the ones who do.

Imagine how you might feel if, on the day after Halloween, you went to visit the grave of a loved-one to find that it had been not only vandalized, but desecrated.

It's a strong word - desecrated - but aptly describes what had been done to several headstones in Nipigon's Cliffside Cemetery during Halloween night. What would you call the spray-painting of foul words across headstones?

I don't know about you, but I'm outraged by an act so mindless and so cruel.

Surely some things must be sacred to any reasonable person. Perhaps we're not dealing with reasonable people, though, but rather a person or people with no concept of right and wrong, no respect for the feelings of others, and very little in the way of brains.

Vandalism of this sort is, I believe, the attention-getting device of immature minds.

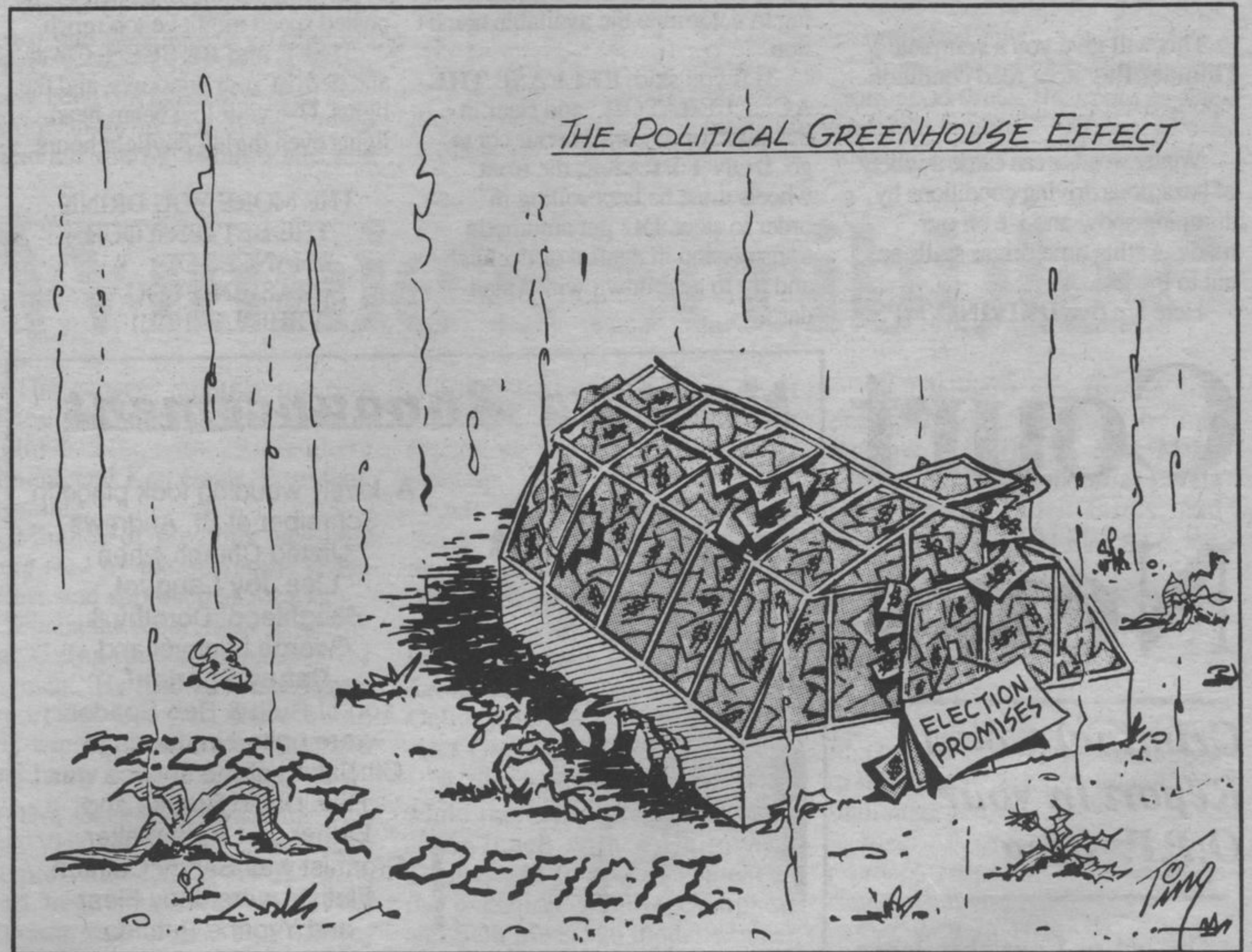
Whatever happened to the "good old days" when children, dressed in cast-offs-made-into-costumes, blitzed the town each Halloween, paying the tribute of a song or other similar "trick" for their treats? The worst thing that might conceivably happen was that a few outhouses might be turned over.

Our modern world has made children afraid to cross the threshold of a neighbor's house, and parents, of necessity, wonder if their kids' treats have been poisoned. Our children have learned their lessons well; we've made them paranoid. We had to.

Are these most recent senseless acts of destruction also a sign of the times? Where do we go from here?

Soaping windows and throwing eggs are bad enough; vandalizing the final resting place of many of the area's early citizens is inexcusable.

If this is what Halloween has come to, then, sorry kids, I can do without it. S.M.



Letter to the Editor

FRENCH IMMERSION

Hundreds of little Canadian children are registered for French immersion classes, to receive French language concepts for the rest of their lives. Young mothers and fathers would show great love for their children if they took the time to read research done on this subject, and not listen so intently to the educational system in our country that is very French oriented.

It is becoming common knowledge that early French

immersion distorts good English grammar. Isn't it better to be excellent in the English language, because it is foremost in learned and spoken languages in the world? The French language is 13th on the scale of spoken languages. Would you dare to limit the possibilities for your child's future? Who are they going to converse with? Each other? Quebec (who resents the English language) or France? The rest of the world knows English!

Consider the possibility that the French intend to "take over"

Canada. Would you be contributing to a usurpment of power and authority if you allow your young children to enter French immersion classes too early?

The decision is yours, young mothers and fathers. The majority of Canada wants to trust that you will make a wise decision for your child's sake and the future of Canada.

Vona R. Mallory
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Jeff Craig - please come home immediately!

This column can be considered to be an All Points Bulletin. Its message is simple. Boiled down to five essential words, it would read:

JEFF CRAIG, COME HOME IMMEDIATELY.

Back when life was simple, Jeff lived just down the street from me. He's a cheerful, good-looking young guy in his mid-twenties, going through the gypsy stage of his journalism career, flitting from newspaper to newspaper - writing a column here, covering city hall there, taking over the duties of editor somewhere else, then packing up his notepads and his Roget's Thesaurus and moving on to some other more attractive newspaper just over the ink-smudged rainbow.

Last I heard, he was deep in the wilds of northeastern Ontario, churning out copy for the Temiskaming Tribune or the Cobalt Chronicle-Journal or maybe it was the Porcupine Times Picayune.

Doesn't matter. I tell you all

that by way of background, in case you spot the guy on the street.

The reason Jeff Craig must be apprehended and returned to my neighborhood immediately is because Jeff Craig is one other thing.

A computer genius.

More to the point, he's a computer genius who convinced me that my life would be transformed and my writing revived if only I bought a Tandy-1000-EX-Floppy-Disc-640-Megabyte-PC-with-Accessory-Hard-Disc-Drive-and-RGB-Color Monitor CM-5.

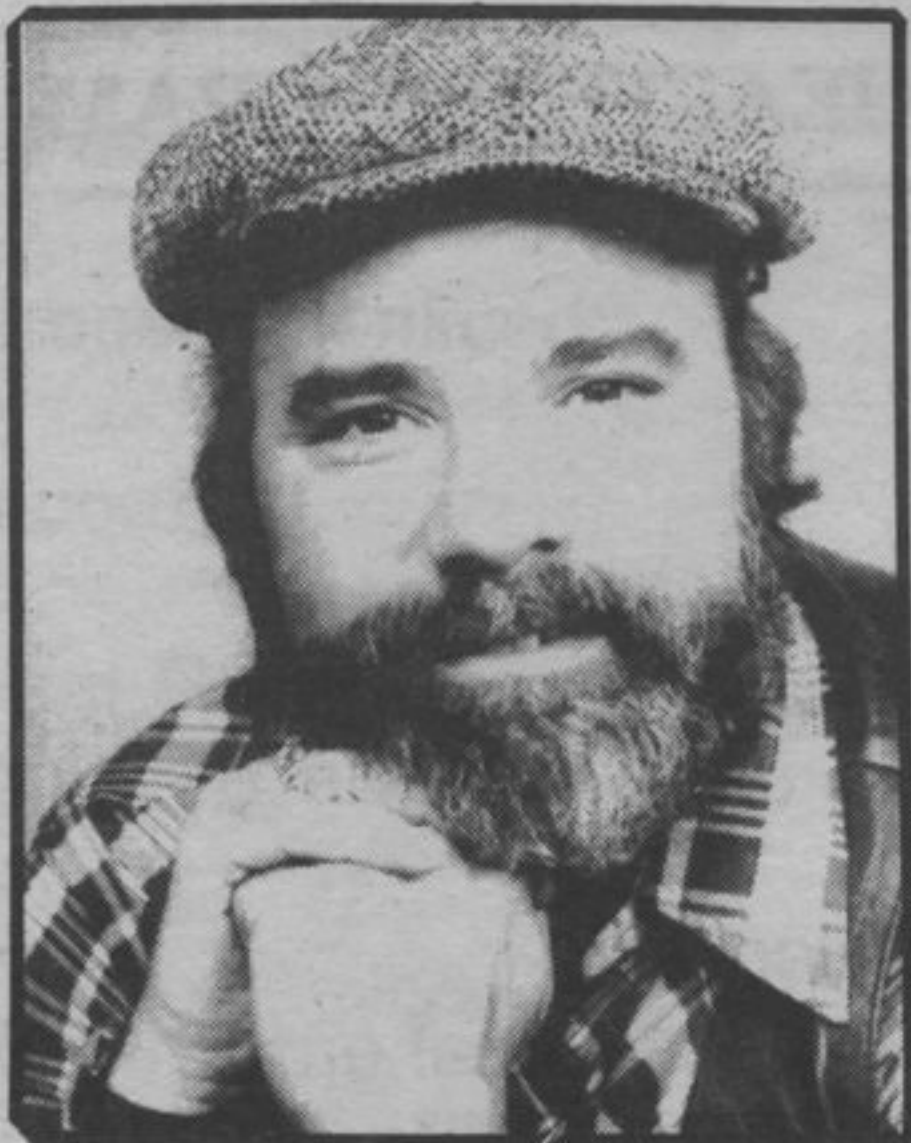
Looking back now, I realize that I didn't truly need the aforementioned. I was reasonably happy punching out my column on the old dented Olympia portable typewriter I'd been hunched over for years.

True, the space bar seemed to be suffering from a touch of bursitis and I couldn't write any sentences that called for a capital "Q", but we were like an old married couple, my Olympia and

me - well past the ecstasies of the honeymoon, but comfortable with each other.

Comfortable until Jeff Craig came along, anyway.

Jeff is an exceedingly polite



Arthur Black

chap, but I'm certain I saw the flicker of a smirk cross his face when he discovered I still worked on a typewriter.

He said nothing, merely showed me his state of the art

personal computer. It was like handing the ignition keys of a Lamborghini to a guy who'd been driving a 10-year-old Volkswagen bug. I was hooked. Within hours, I was negotiating a second mortgage on the house and selling my firstborn into slavery, in order to arrange financing on my very own personal computer.

Jeff Craig supervised the buying of the gray plastic modules that were my keyboard, my monitor, my disc drive and my printer. Jeff Craig came home with me, hooked up all the wires and thingummies to the proper doohickeys and the proper whatchamacallits. Jeff Craig taught me important PC words like "format", "cursor" and "MS-DOS".

Then Jeff Craig moved away.

To be honest, I was having such fun with my new toy, that I scarcely noticed he was gone for the first few days.

Then my computer turned on me.

It was subtle at first. Curt little messages like NOT A VALID

FILE crept onto my screen.

Soon it was issuing orders in gibberish like ENTER Y TO DOWNLOAD FONTS, N TO SKIP, ESC TO CANCEL and it was delivering doom-laden ultimatums like CANNOT SAVE FILE or LIST IS EMPTY.

My local computer store was no help. They speak only Egyptian there. "Why didn't you punch in the A>copyA:**/B command?" they ask me disgustedly.

My computer is in full mutiny now. It lets me type out anything I want on the screen, then eats it right before my eyes. Does anybody else have a computer that snickers? Mind does. Come home, Jeff Craig, and make it behave again.

I had to use my backup system to get this column out. It's a cordless, laptop manual word processor with infinite megabyte capacity that comes with its own data obliterater on the opposite end of the unit.

I think we used to call them pencils.