

The Essex Free Press is an independent weekly newspaper, locally owned and operated by The Essex Free Press Limited

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## Under attack

It's not easy being a subscription-based community newspaper these days. External pressures from alternative forms of media and misinformation about what we offer to readers and advertisers threaten our continued existence. Add to that the recent news that Canada Post will no longer contribute to the subsidy program that is currently available to subscription-based newspapers with a

circulation of less than 25,000.

### editorial

*laurie brett*

As of April 1, 2007, Canada Post Corporation will withdraw the \$15 million that it has contributed annually

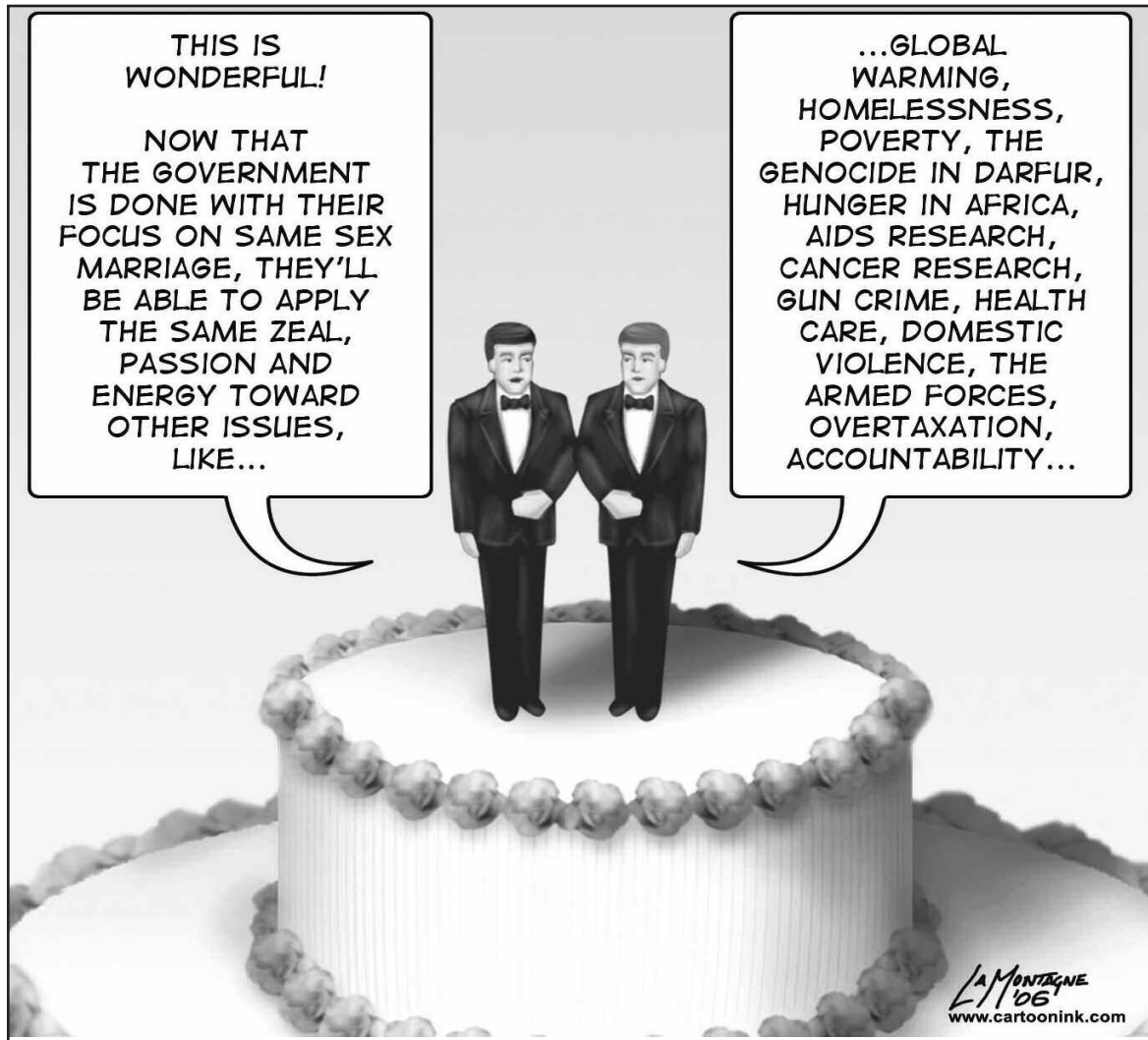
to the Publications Assistance Program operated by the Department of Canadian Heritage. The program provides a postal subsidy to magazines, community newspapers and periodicals, operating with a current budget of \$65 million – \$50 million provided by Canadian Heritage and \$15 million by Canada Post. The reduction of \$15 million amounts to almost 25 percent of the budget.

About 350 community newspapers depend on the program, including the Essex Free Press, the Harrow News and the Kingsville Reporter. Small newspapers in rural and remote communities will be affected and may have to consider alternative methods of distributing their newspapers. Worse than that, many of us may have to consider changing the size and weight of the product we offer so as to reduce our postage costs. Some of us may even opt to switch to a free model which, in the worst case scenario, would signal the end of delivery to some rural areas and a much smaller newspaper for urban recipients.

We know that our readers are loyal. Because we participated in a national media study, we know that the Essex Free Press is both the "best read" and the "preferred" community newspaper in the Essex area. We know that we continue to be valued by the communities that we serve and we plan to do everything in our power to continue to be viable. But we need your help.

If you believe in the value of paid-subscription newspapers like the Essex Free Press, we urge you to contact Essex MP Jeff Watson to let him know. It is within the Conservative government's power to ensure that people living in rural areas continue to have access to community news that matters to them.

In the meantime, the Canadian Community Newspapers Association is actively lobbying for the Department of Canadian Heritage to cover the shortfall. We'll be doing the same.



If they come up with counselling for fans of the Detroit Lions, don't be surprised! The Lions growled a bit, but fell Sunday 30-20 to the Minnesota Vikings at Ford Field. The Vikings themselves have been terrible of late, and their quarterback, Brad Johnson, threw five interceptions the week before. But despite all, arch rival Minnesota is still in the race for a post-season position.

Our Lions are now 2 – 11 for the season. The team's ground threat, Kevin Jones, suffered an injury trying to score from the one-yard line. Shaun Rogers, the Lions Pro Bowl lineman, is out for the season with injuries. Can it get any worse?

The time has come for changes with the club starting at the top. Matt Millen's tenure as general manager has been an unmitigated disaster and he should be fired by his boss this week. That boss is William Clay Ford, now patriarch of the fam-



### opinion

*bill gay*

ily and owner since the 1950's of the football club.

Mr. Ford, give it up! It is time for new ownership. Just as the Mike and Marian Illitch family succeeded Bruce Norris as Red Wings owners, and Tom Monaghan as Detroit Tigers owner, so must new blood come to the Lions. The team's last championship was 1957 and their infrequent play-off appearances since have been very brief.

Mr. Ford has never been reluctant to spend money on the team, so that doesn't seem to be the problem. The Lions play in magnificent Ford

Field, which is about as modern a venue for NFL play as you could find.

Now well into his eighties, William Clay Ford could never eclipse his brother, the late Henry Ford the Second (Hank the Deuce), at Ford Motor Company. William Clay always found his place in life at the offices of the Detroit Lions, although he has served as chairman of Ford after Hank's death.

William Clay's most lofty achievement in the car industry occurred in the early fifties, when he lobbied for the reintroduction of the Lincoln Continental, which was discontinued in 1948 due to low sales. Given charge of the new Continental's styling, the result was one of the most stylish luxury cars in industry history.

But now, the time has come to move on. Please Mr. Ford, find a management team that can make the Detroit Lions winners. Your long-suffering Lions fans deserve no less.

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