

# THE OAKVILLE BEAVER

# OPINION

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## Editorials

### In the news

When it comes to news, Canadians seem to love their politicians. Every year since 1946, the Canadian Press has sent out forms to the country's media organizations to pick the year's top newsmaker.

But as you might expect, this year being the last of the millennium, CP asked these same media types to list their top 10 newsmakers for the past 100 years.

And guess what? Seven of the 10 were politicians, most prime ministers.

The only exceptions were Terry Fox, Frederick Banting and Billy Bishop.

We don't know how many men filled out these forms but it's clear, most of them have both short memories and are poorly informed on Canadian history.

Perhaps they were confused by the term 'newsmakers' as opposed to 'greatest' or 'most important'.

How else to explain some omissions such as Nellie McClung, author and activist who ensured the place of women in the British North America Act. (She came in as number 12.) Or how about Lucy Maud Montgomery? Aviator Wop May? Or the Dionne quintts?

No doubt the names on the list are mostly politicians due to the relative youth of our country and the fact that keeping Canada together has been a political tug of war for more than a century. In fact that's likely to continue.

Herewith the list from bottom to top: 10. Brian Mulroney, 9. Billy Bishop, 8. Wilfrid Laurier, 7. Lester Pearson, 6. Mackenzie King, 5. Tommy Douglas, 4. Frederick Banting, 3. René Lévesque, 2. Terry Fox and number 1. Pierre Trudeau.

Anyone you think should be on the list? (Fax us at 337-5567 and we'll print some alternatives or additions.)

*We don't know how many men filled out these forms but it's clear, most of them have both short memories and are poorly informed on Canadian history.*



## Letters to the Editor

The Oakville Beaver welcomes your comments. All letters must be typed, signed and include the writer's address and phone number. Send to: Letters to the Editor, The Oakville Beaver 467 Speers Rd., Oakville, Ont. L6K 3S4

### No need for Community Living strike to continue

The employees of Community Living Oakville are now entering the fourth week of strike action against their employer. This is an employer who would rather adopt a siege mentality and literally freeze out their employees than bargain in good faith. The employees are not the only ones who are suffering. So too, very unfortunately

and more importantly, are the clients that are still receiving care.

Management claims to be offering modified and limited services. However, the public does not realize quite how limited and modified things have become.

On the eve of the strike, clients were involuntarily re-

located away from their personal belongings, routines, and familiar surroundings. One man cried as he was leaving his familiar surroundings, that he called home. Where did they go? They were moved to other homes owned by this employer for the duration of the strike.

The employer's rationale was to provide adequate client super-

vision in the absence of normal employee staffing. However, those clients have lost the comfort of their own bedrooms, and are now sleeping on cots. Routines have been disrupted, and some client medical appointments have been cancelled due to the lack of supervision coverage being available. Yet, clients still continue to pay their full monthly rent on their personal bedrooms and living space, as if it is business as usual.

As for the homes now supposedly vacant, at least one now serves as a flop-house for the six security guards hired by the employer, in order to maintain 24-hour surveillance on union activities. For what purpose were they hired? We're not sure, because this has been a peaceful strike. This only indicates to us that the employer's resolve is to drag out the strike, at the expense of the client's peace and well-being.

M.A. Miller

William Strong  
Stacy Mitro

### Reflections on Y2K as the year winds down

TO BURT-ANN

A language moved by common use  
 May seem to suffer from abuse  
 Remember when terminal still  
 Meant it was time to make a will

When Y2K was once a phrase  
 And gay old time was high praise  
 When a ram still chased an ewe  
 And the millennium was old, not new

The ROM still held antiques, not bytes  
 A bit was still an equestrian sight

Or eight made up a drill set  
 And not a unit on the Net

When a web was spun across trees  
 To snare food, not user fees  
 Safe sex was not getting caught  
 Aids were something you still bought

Language changes and changes again  
 Words and phrases in a different vein  
 Chaucer to Shakespeare could not speak  
 I hope to talk to you next week

### Workers seek parental support for better conditions

I would like to comment on the Letter of the Week, printed in your paper on Dec. 1st, 1999, written by a parent who states that she is losing respect for Community Living Oakville workers. I am sorry to hear that she does not respect us, because this is one of the issues we are fighting for that is the respect to be heard and appreciated as professional workers. I do find her comment when she states that "the majority of the strikers are young, just starting their career with idealism oozing out of their every pore," offensive and disrespectful. Where is she getting her information? Has she joined us on the picket lines to see that the majority of the workers are mature people who have many years of work experience along with a college or university education. We are people who have the same financial responsibilities as others, including

families to support, mortgages, and rent to pay.

What right does anyone have to say what has directed us into this line of work. For some, it may have been a young social conscience but for most of us, it is a profession that we have chosen for various reasons. We are proud of the work we do. I will agree that it is not the money that people choose this profession and, even if the money is not lucrative, we do expect a fair wage. Yes, the burnout rate is high, but I believe it is no higher than in any other sector of the social services. Government employees have received a raise increase of 4.3% this year. The government funds Community Living Oakville, so why are we being discriminated against.

She also comments on the clients being shuffled into overcrowded, uncomfortable,

unhealthy conditions or being sent home to their families. This was not a decision the workers made. These decisions were made by the management of Community Living Oakville and supported by the Board of Directors. The support workers that are on strike are just as concerned about these conditions as the parents are.

We need the support of the parents, not THEIR CRITICISM to help us end this strike. When the parents/families have come to us for support and advocacy by their family member, we have always been there to take on their causes and concerns. We now ask that the same support be returned in our goal for respect and working conditions that are fair and equal.

Gloria Pachkowsky  
Worker, Community Living Oakville

by Steve Nease

### Letter of the Week Inquest findings reflected those of fire chief

I write in response to Ian Rankin's letter which appeared in the Beaver, Wed., Dec. 1, 1999, "Chief's comments at inquest an outrage."

It is unfortunate that Mr. Rankin could not have attended the inquest proceedings. Had he been present, he might have directly heard the comments made and understood their intent.

During the inquest, it was necessary to determine the exact issues which led to this tragic situation. I made it clear that the issues in the fire from a safety perspective were: non-working smoke alarms and the absence of an escape plan. Fire departments across North America cite these fire prevention measures as necessary steps in a fire prevention strategy, and the jury's recommendations support us in naming these factors as crucial for safety.

I certainly never blamed the victims for the outcome of the situation. Rather, we analyzed various factors leading up to this tragedy to determine how such situations might be avoided in the future.

As the Oakville Fire Chief, I remain highly accessible to the residents of this community and I am always available to discuss fire safety issues. I can be reached at 905-845-6601, ext. 4426.

Wayne Gould  
Fire Chief  
Oakville Fire Department

### St. Mildred's expansion would hurt environment

In her recent letter ("Wrong issue protested"), Ms. Rose expressed concern that residents who live in the area of St. Mildred's Lightbourn School had put up signs protesting the school's proposed expansion, instead of focusing on more important environmental issues.

As one of these residents, we can understand how people who do not live in the immediate vicinity might not understand the serious implications of the school's expansion plans — both to the environment and to the quality of life in this area. St. Mildred's has purchased four adjacent properties on Linbrook Road on either side of the school for purposes of a multi-phase expansion plan.

On two of the properties alone, there are over 300 trees, most of which will be taken down to expand the school.

We are also concerned for the safety of the young children who attend both Linbrook School and St. Mildred's, and for the many older retirees who live in the area, because an expanded school campus will exacerbate traffic and noise levels that are already difficult to contend with.

Linbrook is a relatively small road. The school is already a formidable presence. The traffic gridlock, the litter, and the noise levels are already difficult to tolerate, and buses that go along Linbrook are frequently re-routed due to congestion.

Even in its present size, this is a large private school complex shoehorned into an otherwise quiet, peaceful residential neighbourhood.

St. Mildred's would do better to seek a special location away from residential neighbourhoods to accommodate its burgeoning campus, where its environmental impact would be minimal.

Linda Sage and Hugh Alexander  
On behalf of Neighbours Against St. Mildred's Expansion

