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Comment & Opinions

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EDITORIAL

Action welcomed

Finally, there's some activity from the government in Ottawa on the unity issue.

The Chrétien government will wade into the coming Quebec election in an attempt to boost the fortunes of Daniel Johnson, leader of the Quebec Liberals.

But they will have quite a task.

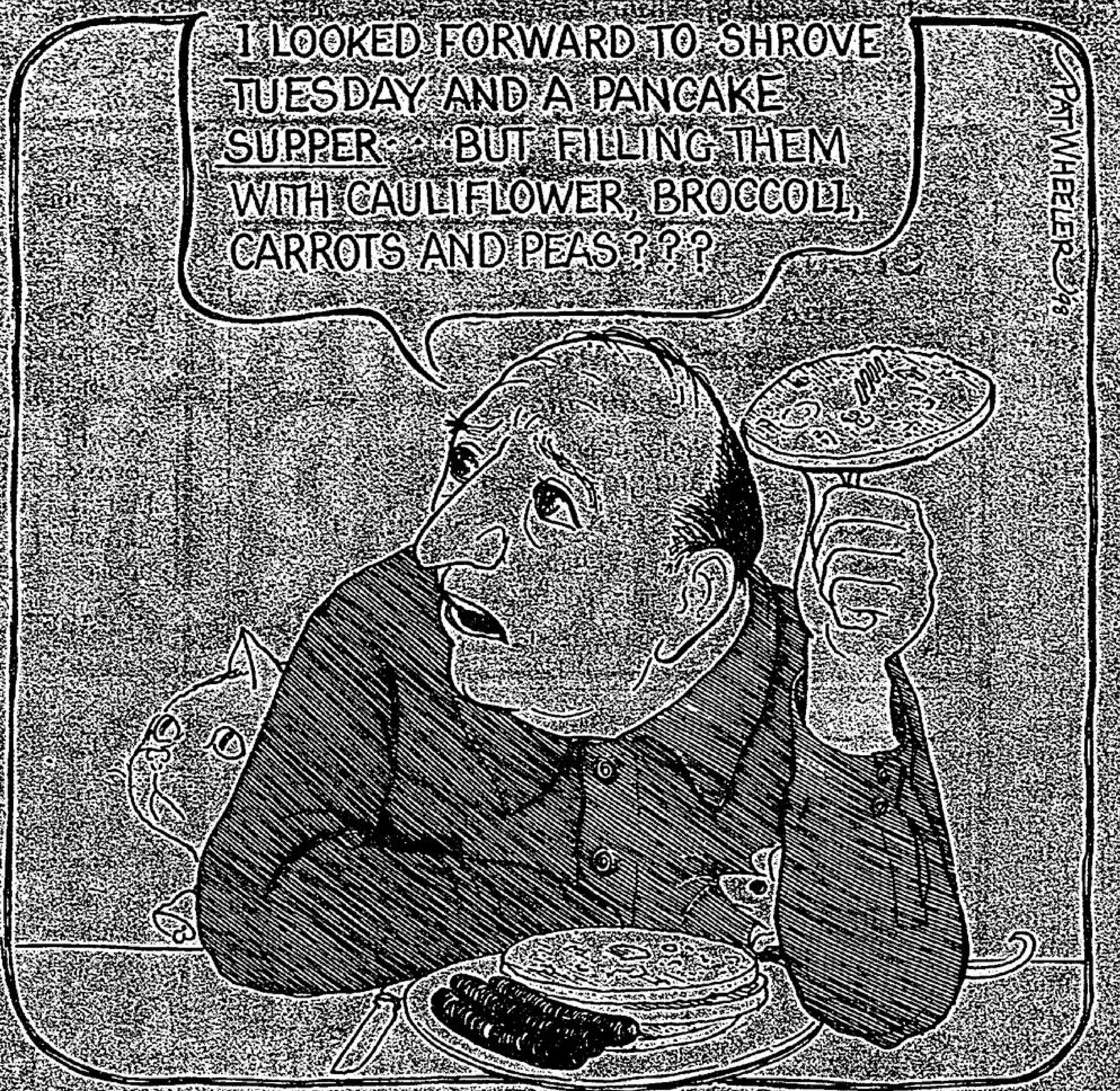
Despite colossal blunders and mismanagement on his government's part, Lucien Bouchard retains his Teflon coating, especially in the rural areas of Quebec. He managed to twist and contort the Supreme Court's proceedings on the legality of Quebec secession to deflect much of the obvious legal inadequacies, and this past weekend, he attacked the federal government for attempting to trap Quebec in legal loopholes.

It is high time the feds stepped in before a debate on the country's future gets up a head of steam. Last time, their inactivity very nearly cost us the country.

It is our hope that they will point out to the people of that province that it was the rest of Canada who helped out the people of Lac St. Jean; it was the rest of Canada that attempted to send Hydro workers during the ice storm and that it was the rest of the country that rushed to their aid when the power remained out because of the megamaniacal policies of Bouchard and his government.

The government of Canada must avoid the mudslinging Bouchard has already begun, and stick to a program of information - proving to Quebeckers that without the rest of the country - they will be far worse off.

The government must then move to close this continuing chapter for good.



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CNA ccab

Snowstorms can't keep unity-minded down

Off the Record
Joan Ransberry

In Canada, the finger of blame is often pointed at the weather.

Last Tuesday, just as residents of Stouffville and Uxbridge were getting ready to go to a meeting to speak out for Canada, God intervened and hit us with a freak snow storm. Consequently, the turnout at the dialogue on Canadian unity was small.

While I made it to the meeting, I do recognize that sensible people don't venture out in snow storms. Then again, sensible people didn't build this country. Passionate people did.

I don't care if it sound sappy, I love Canada.

We Canadians have built a country that's the envy of the world. Since Canada is the best, it deserves our continued attention.

I don't care if you are fed up with all the wrangling over the Quebec issue. Apathy is not going to make the problem go away. Quite the contrary. Not giving a hoot will strengthen the separatist movement. Quebec is a glorious part of Canada. We mustn't ever stop in our desire to keep Quebec in the family of Canada.

We have an obligation to make sure our kids and grandkids inherit a vibrant economy, political stability, healthy communities, a united land, a caring, tolerant society and a future filled with hope and opportunity.

For these reasons, I'm asking Durham-York MPP Julia Munro and the Legion to host yet another local session of Ontario Speaks.

Incidentally, over the years, I've been involved in news coverage for branches of the Royal Canadian Legion in a number of communities. One thing is certain: History reminds us that the Legion has proven its passion for Canada.

It was no surprise when last September, the Legion noticed when nine premiers and the leaders of two territories met in Calgary to draft a framework for discussion on Canadian unity.

And, the Legion spoke out. More than 550,000 members country-wide said "no" to separation and "yes" to Canada.

A strong national government is necessary to ensure a united country, stresses area Legion member George Lovett.

Lovett is especially interested in the constitution's not-withstanding clause. "It should be eliminated to prevent any one province from enacting discriminatory laws or legislation," he said.

I'm not sure if I agree with Lovett's position on the 'not-withstanding' clause. I'd like to hear more on it. While we're at it, lets talk about diversity.

I think Canada's success has been built upon its ability to accommodate an extraordinary degree of diversity. Our diversity as a country has evolved over the course of history. Present day Canada includes our English and French languages, Aboriginal peoples and a vast language, culture and civil law tradition.

While I was disappointed in the turnout at the local Ontario Speaks session, I was impressed with the questions. One in particular makes us think. It is: What will Canada be like in five years? Perhaps the Legion and our MPP will give us yet another chance to answer the question.

The demobbing of Mr. Wallethead

Kate's Corner
Kate Gilderdale

"I married him for better or for worse, but not for lunch."

~ Someone famous.

Mr. Wallethead, hitherto the light of my life from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. five days a week and on the weekends we were both in residence at the chateau, joined the ranks of consultancy last year. This, as anyone who has gone through a similar experience will recognize, is a euphemism.

To put it in the current vernacular, he has been downsized, outplaced, rationalized, let go, demobbed. As far as his previous employer is concerned he has, like Monty Python's parrot, ceased to be. Happily, however, it was an amicable parting, replete with a good package.

In fact, he is having so much fun coming up with ideas for what to do with the rest of his life as a working stiff that no one should feel the slightest bit sorry for him. Conversely, yours truly, the Greta Garbo of the writing community, suddenly has a permanent husband on the premises and is thus far more deserving of sympathy.

My spouse is outgoing, helpful and friendly, a veritable gold mine of those interpersonal skills without which no leading-edge office of the '90s would be complete. I've never held it against him before, but we're talking 24-hour days here.

On the one hand you have a chap who thrives on meetings, people contact and brainstorming. On the other you have me, whose allergy to meetings is legendary and whose only experience of brainstorming consists of outmanoeuvering Spasm's efforts to chew through the wires attaching my Macintosh to the bedroom wall.

Writers are supposed to be grouchy, selfish and egotistical. It's part of our job description. We spend an inordinate amount of time staring at walls, blank screens and other inanimate objects because we are thinking. And when we are thinking, we don't take kindly to interruptions.

Mr. Wallethead is busy making our financial affairs shipshape for the new reality and is prone to bouncing in, gaily reciting the latest fascinating tidbit on my spousal RRSPs. Despite the fact that I could not eat, never mind afford shelter, without his generous propping up, my reaction tends to be a tad brusque.

When he met me I was something of a Valley Girl, whose ambition was to meet and marry someone who could keep me in the lavish style to which I planned to become accustomed.

I did the requisite secretarial course, pronounced my deep interest in an advertising career (it sounded more risqué than accounting) and got a job in television.

Although it was in the sales department, which was uncool, at least I had moved onto the fringes of the entertainment world, where I have languished ever since. Thirty years on and I'm still doing shorthand and typing, but have avoided complete social death by referring to myself as a writer.

Inexplicably, Mr. Wallethead cheerfully puts up with me, brings me coffee and is quick to recognize the no-fly zone when I am deep in thought. And as long as he's paying, I can continue to be a legend in my own mind.

Letters Policy

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