

Stouffville Tribune

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Frank Daggett

It's easier to whine than come up with practical solutions

They call it the silly season — the election circus with its mud-slinging, name-calling and constant ballyhoo.

I have another name for it: the vacuous season.

The recent campaigning by federal and municipal politicians reminded me how easy it is to whine and how difficult to suggest practical, intelligent solutions.

It's partly why I have a hard time casting my ballot: How is any voter supposed to make an informed decision based on a bland blend of whines, jibes and motherhood statements? Where's the beef?

Anyone can complain, but few go beyond the obvious to a real analysis of the problem and ultimately to potential answers.

Two campaign issues got my goat: the GST and free trade. How simple to "get rid of the GST," like an old sock. Problem is, you still have a foot to keep warm. Since the GST is not a new tax, it would have to be replaced by yet another tax.

Hmm, what to do? Since practically every developed nation had a GST-style tax long before Canada and the previous MST was crippling our manufacturing industry, why not stick with the status quo? I certainly haven't heard too many other options. And rescinding free trade. That's a good one. Ever hear of the "global economy"?

Seems it's here to stay, folks, and those who want to put Canada back behind the tariff barriers of yore had better pick up a business newspaper or magazine quickly.

How would abolishing free trade equip us for today's economy or that of tomorrow? Indeed, how can we best move forward? What skills do we need? What are our competitive advantages? In what areas are we lacking? How can we kick butt on the international scene?

Forget the campaign rhetoric, but don't let those elected representatives get away.

Remember when they arrived on your porch at dinnertime to hand you a glossy brochure and engage you in chit-chat while all your expensive heat went phhwwt out the open door?

Here's your revenge. With the silly season over and the holiday season upon us, take time to research the challenges facing this country and its communities. Take a real look at the issues, ask the tough questions, toss around some answers.

Then, instead of indulging in another whine, or listening to those of our politicians, make your elected representative work for you by approaching him or her with practical, intelligent and workable solutions to the issues that matter most.

LETTERS

On Dec. 6 anniversary, realize that both sexes are equally violent

Soon it will be Dec. 6, the anniversary of a day when Marc Lapine murdered 14 innocent women. Women's groups will use this opportunity to condemn ALL men as misogynist and violent people, responsible for all the problems of the world, creators of wars, sexist pigs, etc.

I say to them, "Stop it. My heart is with you. Blame Marc Lapine, condemn ALL violences, not only the ones against women. Realize that both sexes are equally violent."

My condolences to the families of survivors.

MICHAEL ABRAHAM
Toronto

Palestinians must change tactics in order to achieve a peaceful solution

Re: Israel should take the blame for its crimes against Palestinians

Houda Hayani wrote on November 7 urging us to blame Israel for its 'crimes' against Palestinians. Here are some excerpts from Ms. Hayani's letter: Canadian Jewish leaders are referred to as 'so-called community leaders. Israel is said to be conducting a 'murderous campaign against the Palestinians. Israelis are called racists who consider Palestinians 'less human than the rest of us.' Joseph Wilder, a Jewish community leader, is called self-righteous and bigoted for suggesting that Palestinian leader Yassar Arafat insidiously uses Palestinian children.

Ms. Hayani introduced herself as a peace-loving Canadian. These are not words one would expect from a peace-loving Canadian.

Arafat knows very well how to manipulate the West by playing on its compassion. Edward Luttwak, a U.S. security analyst, contends that the scripted scenario went like this: Palestinians conduct mass stone-throwing demonstrations. Palestinian police shoot at Israeli soldiers. Not knowing where the shooting is coming from, Israeli soldiers shoot into the crowd. Palestinian civilians are injured and die; children included. Photos and videos are taken. After a few minutes of careful analysis world opinion is formed — the bad guys and the victims are clearly identified. Political ends

have been served at the expense of a few dozen lives here and there.

How sad! I am Jewish, not Palestinian, but the sight of a Palestinian child suffering torments me too.

Did it really happen the way Mr. Luttwak describes? I can't say and neither can Ms. Hayani. But to assert, as Ms. Hayani does, that the killing is simply the result of Israeli aggression because Israelis are racist brutes, demonstrates the same self-righteous and bigoted attitude that she claims is held by Mr. Wilder.

Ms. Hayani calls the use of children as self-defence the work of insane people. Her logic is: the act is insane therefore it did not happen. Sadly, we live in a world that is not free from insane acts.

Most Israelis yearn for peace. Barak was elected on a peace platform. If Arafat is unable to reach a peace agreement with Barak there will likely be no peace.

When the Camp David peace talks failed, U.S. president Bill Clinton placed the blame clearly on Arafat's intransigence. Barak had made concessions that many Israelis were shocked to learn of. It seems that Arafat is not prepared, or able, to accept compromise. Arafat must learn that violence will not give him what he wants. The only solution is negotiation. After over 30 years I'm amazed he hasn't yet grasped this.

Palestinians have gained much over the years through negotiation. If focus is limited to what one does not have and the gains are ignored, then there is no hope for the truly peace-loving people.

For the suffering to end Palestinians need new leadership, new tactics, and most impor-

tantly, a new attitude. They have to stop trying to win and instead try to settle. After all, this is the basis for any honest negotiation.

MURRAY CASS
Markham

'Artsies' aren't the only creative people; 'techies' are, too

Re: Good education includes both arts and science, opinion by David Teetzel, The Era-Banner, Nov. 16.

I certainly agree with your opinion a good education requires a mix of both arts and science. But speaking from the "techie" side, why is it "artsies" think they are the only creative people in the world?

I got the impression from your column you believe that creativity is the exclusive domain of the arts faculty. I could not disagree more.

The changes in information technology are themselves enabling some of the most incredible advancements since the industrial revolution. The creativity and imagination involved in the innovation of new technology and products in software, hardware, telecommunications and wireless is amazing.

Creative thinking and creative problem-solving are certainly not taught only in music, art, dance and theatre classes. Where are you getting the idea that techies do no left-brain thinking?

DAVID WOODBURN
Newmarket

LETTERS POLICY

Stouffville Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The newspaper reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

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