

Orangeville Citizen

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The humblest Citizen of all the land, when clad in armour of a righteous cause,
is stronger than all the hosts of Error. - WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

2009: a year with lots of challenges for us all

SELDOM, IF EVER, have we entered a new year with so few confident expectations.

A year ago, gasoline cost a little more than \$1 a litre locally and the business pages of the dailies were full of stories about the boom in Alberta. Although the election itself was 11 months away, the presidential election race in the United States was well under way, with Hilary Clinton expected to nose out all her competitors for the Democratic party's nomination.

In Canada, the economy was strong just about everywhere, the lone exception being Ontario's manufacturing sector, which would have been in real trouble had it not been for orders related to the oil sands projects then under way. Politically, we had reasonable stability, with the federal Conservatives able to govern as if they had a majority of seats in the Commons, thanks to the Liberals' disarray as leader Stéphane Lévesque struggled to achieve the popularity that accompanies skills in the areas of policies and communications. And a law drafted by Prime Minister Stephen Harper's administration had set an election date in October 2009.

In Ontario, the re-election of the McGuinty Liberals a few months earlier had included a personal defeat for Progressive Conservative leader John Tory in the Toronto riding held by Education Minister Kathleen Wynne, and the expectation was that Mr. Tory would soon find an MPP willing to give up his or her seat so he could participate in legislative debates.

Closer to home, Dufferin County Council seemed close to embarking on a solution to the county's longstanding lack of a means of handling its solid wastes, most likely through construction of a gasification facility on a 200-acre site that once was to have housed an ordinary landfill operation.

Although we read occasional stories about so-called sub-prime mortgages and a related increase in the number of foreclo-

sures in the U.S., the general expectation was that things would continue pretty much as they had for the last few years, with inflation posing as the main economic threat.

That was indeed the case until the middle of the year, when crude oil prices peaked at about \$147 US a barrel and the price at Canadian pumps approaching \$1.50 a litre. (Locally, the highest was about \$1.40.)

Since then, we have experienced an economic domino effect the likes of which the world had never seen, the sub-prime mortgage fiasco having triggered a credit crisis and a related collapse in stock values, to the point where today stock market indices have plunged roughly 40 per cent from peak levels and governments just about everywhere have been trying to come up with workable means of stimulating their economies.

In the circumstances, no one faces more challenges than Barack Obama as he prepares to assume the U.S. presidency later this month.

Although there's little doubt that he has assembled a highly credible cabinet team, or that he's on the right track in seeing a need for universal health care, an improved educational system and better relations with the rest of the world, no one knows whether his economic policies will prevent the U.S. entering a depression equal to, or greater than, the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Of all the problems he faces, perhaps the greatest is the fiscal mess he will inherit from the (mis)administration of George W. Bush.

Although supposedly a conservative, the outgoing president chose to pick up only one truly conservative policy tool — tax cuts for the wealthy — while doing nothing to curb spending at a time when the country was conducting costly wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The result was mounting budgetary deficits at a time when governments elsewhere (including our own) were either bal-

ancing their budgets or following Keynesian economic theory by using surpluses to reduce their debt loads.

Enormous as the challenges facing the Obama administration clearly are, they will be mirrored to some extent just about everywhere, including even places like China and Russia.

In Canada, the challenge will be for governments at all levels to come up with wise stimulus packages, the aim being to use the economic downturn as a time to improve infrastructure to the point where an economic recovery can be speeded and made more effective through modernization.

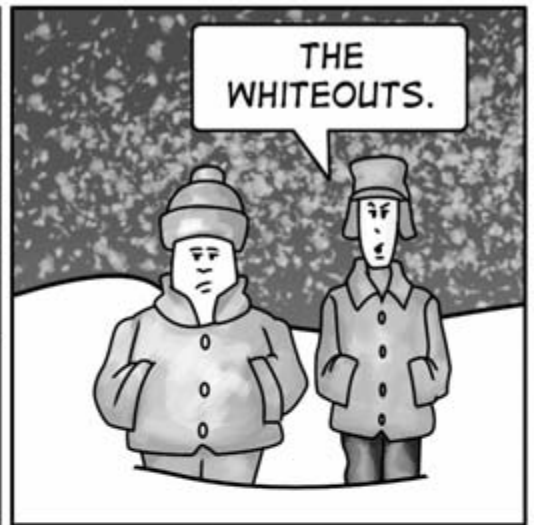
For example, this should be a time to improve our transportation infrastructure by building and widening trunk highways, restoring rail passenger services and improving airport facilities.

In Ontario, it should also be a time to move quickly on the construction of new nuclear power plants, ideally by using both the existing and proposed Candu technology and having projects at both the Bruce and Darlington complexes.

As for Dufferin, this surely must be the year when County Council finally solves the solid waste dilemma by selecting one of the proponents of a scheme that will turn the wastes into harmless byproducts while producing some energy.

It will also be a year when Dufferin will at long last have a multi-lane highway connection with Toronto, through the widening of Highway 10 between Orangeville and Caledon and completion of the Highway 410 extension to the north end of Brampton.

But welcome as this improvement will be, it won't affect the gridlock between Brampton and Toronto, and ought to be accompanied by improvements in public transit, ideally through introduction of limited GO train service between Orangeville and Brampton or Streetsville using refurbished rail diesel cars.



A wise choice for deputy mayor

OUR CONGRATULATIONS go out this week to Ken McGhee on his being chosen as Mono's new deputy mayor, succeeding Dave Baldwin.

Mono council was faced with an unusual challenge last fall when Mr. Baldwin announced his plan to retire at year's end and it was found that it would be inappropriate, if not unlawful, for Council to name a successor before there was actually a vacancy.

Our suspicion all along was that Mr. McGhee was the best candidate for the job, and not simply because he's now in his eighth year on council.

As it turned out, there was a need for fast action, since Council didn't meet until Tuesday night and if no appointment was made then Mayor Lorie Haddock would go to tonight's meeting of Dufferin County Council with only her own two votes for the county's second largest town. Now, with Mr. McGhee on hand, the town will have twice the number of votes should they be needed.

While he's heading to county with just one day's experience in his new role, Mr. McGhee told our reporter he's confident he will be able to blend in. "Lorie, Dave and (Mono CAO) Keith

McNenly have kept me up to date on the issues going on at county council."

Ontario Municipal Act rules gave the council two options for filling the position of deputy mayor. They could interview applicants and fill the position themselves or call an election. But since it appeared an election would cost taxpayers about \$20,000, the better route became obvious.

Another potential candidate, Councillor Laura Ryan, initially expressed interest in the deputy mayor's job but decided Mr. McGhee's experience made him the ideal candidate and became his nominator, the other councillors being unanimous in agreement.

Council now has a tougher challenge, in deciding who should fill the vacancy caused by Mr. McGhee's "ascension."

Council will officially declare the seat vacant at its meeting next Tuesday and will then have 60 days to appoint a replacement councillor.

One option might be to pick an unsuccessful candidate in the 2006 municipal election, which saw Ms. Haddock oust incumbent mayor Keith Thompson. Mr. Thompson is no longer a Mono resident and the Mayor says several viable candidates have expressed interest in the position.

CITIZEN MAILBOX

Home care worker says change needed

An open letter to MPP Sylvia Jones:

I am a home care worker, delivering home health and home support services in the town of Orangeville. I am writing to you because our current working situation is at a breaking point. Something must be done. No more bandages.

Ontario home care workers work hard and deliver quality service. With low wages, no pension and no benefits, our employment conditions are well below the standards set

I see that the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) has been amended again by the current Ontario government. Among other changes, the revised PPS specifies that the Ontario Municipal Board is empowered to refuse appeals by developers to rezone employment lands to residential lands.

That should make it easier for Orangeville and other Dufferin County municipalities to reject zoning appeals from residential developers, and to retain employment lands for their intended purpose.

Charles Hooker
Orangeville

for colleagues working in facilities and hospitals. Why are we so different?

Providing home care requires that I must travel between clients. Many home care workers, like me, spend as much time getting from one client to the next as they do delivering care to their clients. When travel time is unpaid it's not uncommon for a home care worker to be on the job 8 hours a day but only get paid for 4 hours. Is this fair?

Finally, the mileage rate paid by most agencies is meager. Many employers on compensate at rates of \$.32 per kilometer! WSIB pays \$.37 per kilometer to attend appointments and the government pays over \$.40 per kilometer. What makes us so different from the others?

I know the home care system can be improved. Compensation for all of our work, including travel time, is very important. Fair wages, mileage compensation and work protections from home care workers - like all other workers - is the place to start.

I love the work I do and know that I am a professional delivering the kind of care that

is essential to the health of our clients I meet each day. I hope that my work is also respected by the agencies and Ministry that I work for. Change must occur.

If home care workers were to stop working on the same day where would the health

Is selectiveness part of plan?

While it's always a treat to read anything by Ron Bosman, sometimes it's hard to penetrate to his central point. Take his Dec.24 letter for example. He talks about the horrors of abortion, Paul McCartney and dead seals, unborn babies, the baby Jesus, King Herod's nastiness and finally "God's Ultimate redemptive plan." I think that his central point is that killing is bad.

I assume that for him the issue is the taking of life, as in

Thanks, and be thankful

Our family has been without a doctor since February 2008, as our wonderful, dedicated doctor, Dr. G. A. Vanderburgh retired from his Shelburne practice. We were privileged to have a family doctor all of our lives, but now find ourselves on a waiting list along with thousands of other applicants waiting for a response, hoping there will be a doctor to take care of our family.

Recently, I had a minor bladder infection - I thought if I went to Shelburne's Mel Lloyd centre someone might be able to see me, but I was told to go to Headwaters Emergency in Orangeville for treatment. I

felt guilty to go to an emergency unit for a prescription for a minor ailment. (I can't even have my annual mammogram without a doctor's note, how do I get checked? It is frightening, as my family has a history of breast cancer).

The staff at Headwaters are impressive, as I am sure they see numerous minor health issues daily because of the doctor shortage, thank you for helping me. We must never take our healthcare professionals for granted.

To those who have a doctor, be thankful.

Irene Graziotto
Mansfield

two great nations ever cooperated and worked together (the Israelites were the descendants of Isaac and the Arabs the descendants of Ishmael).

Wouldn't it be better for the priests, preachers, pastors, Islam, and rabbis to be preaching and praying these two great nations should again be working and cooperating instead of telling lies about each other, tearing each other apart and killing each other? If the great nations came to gather, then the Christians, Jews and Muslims would be working for a better world in peace and harmony, but until that happens there will be no, "Peace on Earth."

George C. Hunt
Shelburne

Who stands for them?

I am angry and incredulous! When will this madness stop? How ridiculously politically correct have we become? Who is standing up for our troops? I am writing in reference to news today that one of our brave soldiers has been charged (by Canada) with 2nd degree murder in the death of an enemy combatant. It is early and I am responding solely to radio reports and I am fully prepared to recant my feelings if future facts dictate. But at first blush I am outraged, disgusted, and ashamed of my government.

Our soldiers are already completely at a disadvantage in this disgraceful battle with enemy insurgents. We are not permitted to "fight fair"...the Canadian way. The cowardly enemy hides amongst women and children. And now this! Shame on you federal government!

I for one am 100%, unequivocally and unconditionally behind our troops who stand in harm's way. They deserve better. God bless each and every one of them.

Ian Fairley
Orangeville

Kudos for insight into issue

Kudos to Don Pelton for seeing through the negativism and opportunism of the Committee to Hold Council Accountable.

Although they were very vocal in their criticism of council's decision for a pay raise, Council should realize that there are many non-vocal citizens who support and appreciate the hours they put in on our behalf. Ranting and

raving at council meetings and to the press, then refusing to be a part of the solution, does not solve problems. It only reveals self seeking characteristics, which are too often seen in politics.

Let's keep unproductive and destructive criticism out of our local politics and work together for solutions.

Shirley Bartlett
via e-mail