

Orangeville Citizen

Owned in the Community it serves!

ALAN M. CLARIDGE Publisher
THOMAS M. CLARIDGE Editor

10 First Street, ORANGEVILLE, Ontario L9W 2C4
E-mail: mail@citizen.on.ca Web Page: http://www.citizen.on.ca



Claridge

Community Newspapers Ltd.

THOMAS M. CLARIDGE
President

ALAN M. CLARIDGE
General Manager

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
William Bothwell

STAFF REPORTERS
Dan Pelton

SPORTS
Mike Maloney

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Stacie Duck

BUSINESS OFFICE,
CIRCULATION
Sandra Jovic

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING
Carolyn Dennis

DISPLAY ADVERTISING
Vanessa Claridge
Rosemarie Elsdon
Kathey Stanton

PRODUCTION
Fran Cunningham
Francine John

Thursday, July 23, 2009

Subscription Rate: \$48.30 per year (\$46.00 plus GST) in advance

Member of: Ontario Community Newspaper Association
Canadian Community Newspaper Association
Ontario Press Council, 80 Gould St., Toronto
M5B 1E9 (416) 340-1981

Printed by McLaren Press, 1 Langford Drive., Gravenhurst, ON
PIP 1R1 (705) 687-6691

All original editorial and advertising material
produced by the Orangeville Citizen remains the property of
Claridge Community Newspapers Ltd. and may not be
reproduced without written permission.

Telephone: (519) 941-2230 Facsimile: (519) 941-9361

E-mail: mail@citizen.on.ca



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

Health care reform: Obama's toughest challenge

WITHOUT A DOUBT, the biggest challenges facing U.S. President Barack Obama are found in his crusade to reform a health-care system that currently leaves nearly 50 million Americans without any insurance coverage and possibly 100 million others with only partial coverage and under the threat of losing it along with their jobs.

In anticipation of the anti-reform lobbies, Mr. Obama has been holding town hall meetings at which victims of the current system can express themselves and possibly counter the naysayers who have already convinced nearly half the U.S. population that the modest Obama scheme will leave them worse off.

The none-too-subtle campaign led by the private insurers includes a blitz of commercials that portray Canada's health care system as inferior to that in the U.S., with Canadians facing long waits for treatment of life-threatening diseases.

In an attempt to set the record straight, a non-profit, Web-based news service, The Real News Network (www.therealnews.com) sent a reporter to Toronto to get a random sampling of pedestrians who were asked to view one of the anti-Medicare commercials and compare our health care system with that in the U.S.

Not surprisingly, everyone responded that while our system has its flaws, it's far better than that to be found south of the border.

As we see it, the scheme envisioned by Mr. Obama falls far short of the type of universal medicare Canadians have enjoyed for more than 40 years. (Universality actually preceded the Oct. 1, 1969 founding of The Ontario Health Insurance Plan, the predecessor Ontario Medical Services Insurance Plan having been a similar scheme to what Mr.

Obama has in mind, creation of a government-sponsored alternative to private insurance.)

As probably every Canadian knows, the U.S. system provides excellent care for those who can afford it, but is the major single cause of personal bankruptcies.

Much less is known, however, about the inherent inefficiencies in the U.S. system that have led to Americans collectively paying more for health care while getting less.

In a bid to get that message across, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recently released a report entitled *Hidden Costs of Health Care: Why Americans are Paying More but Getting Less*.

Released by HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, the report documents the rising cost of deductibles, co-payments and out-of-pocket expenses that are making it more difficult for families with insurance to receive the health care they need.

"It doesn't matter if you have insurance or not: when Americans go to the hospital or the doctor's office, they are paying more and getting less," Secretary Sebelius said. "Every year, co-pays, deductibles and other expenses are taking a bigger bite out of the family budget and the American people are demanding reform."

Among other things, the report found that:

- An American with employer-based coverage paid an average of \$1,522 on health care (not including premiums) in 2006, compared with \$1,260 in 2001. When the added burden of higher premiums were included, out-of-pocket costs rose even more sharply, with a 30 per cent increase from an average of \$2,827 in 2001 to \$3,744 in 2006.
- Employer-sponsored health insur-

ance premiums have nearly doubled since 2000, a rate three times faster than wages. In 2008, the average premium for a family plan purchased through an employer was \$12,680 — nearly the annual earnings of a full-time minimum wage job.

- For "preferred provider organization" (PPO) plans purchased through an employer, the average family deductible increased 30 per cent in two years, from \$1,034 to \$1,344. And for small firms, deductibles increased 64 per cent, to \$2,367 from \$1,439.
- In 2004, only one in five people with health insurance through an employer had a co-payment of more than \$25, but by 2008 the number jumped to one in three.

"Millions of Americans don't have insurance, and millions more are still struggling to afford the care they need," Ms. Sebelius said. "We need to pass health reform this year to give these families the relief they need."

Perhaps the toughest challenge facing the President lies in the area of costs. Without a doubt, experience in Canada demonstrated that government health insurance plans that operate as alternatives to private plans soon find themselves saddled with the high-risk and low-income clientele, particularly when the private insurers are able to rid themselves of such individuals.

In the circumstances, the Canadian alternative of federal financial support for provincially operated health care plans would offer a more cost-effective solution to the mess in the U.S. than the current Obama scheme.

But no matter what form it takes, any universal health care system will be expensive and have to be supported financially, preferably at least in part through higher income tax rates for the wealthiest U.S. taxpayers.



This court ruling must be appealed

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, the ruling is dead wrong and the Town of Orangeville would be doing all Ontario a service by appealing it.

We refer, of course, to the decision of Ontario Superior Court Justice Francine Van Melle that Orangeville's 27,000 residents will have no voice when Dufferin County Council debates the pros and cons of selling the former CPR line north of Orangeville to Highland Rail Group.

If nothing else, common sense ought to have convinced the judge that Ontario's Municipal Conflict of Interest Act targeted *personal*, not contractual conflicts, and was never designed to disenfranchise entire communities.

Coming from a Superior Court judge, this bizarre ruling will bind all lower courts and tribunals until it is overturned on appeal.

As for the judge's suggestion that the circumstances were unique, let's consider the fact that in virtually every county and region decisions on how to deal with solid wastes will inevitably affect local municipalities differently, particularly if they have contracts. In Dufferin, half the municipalities and more than half the population currently have no landfill sites and must contract to have the wastes transported elsewhere.

Does this ruling mean Orangeville, Shelburne, East Luther Grand Valley and East Garafraxa should have no voice in finding solutions?

CITIZEN MAILBOX

What about the plight of residents?

I read the editorial stance taken by the Orangeville Citizen/Shelburne Free Press in the July 17, 2009 issue, regarding the plight of politicians with respect to Highland Companies plans to develop an open pit limestone mine in Melancthon.

Firstly, it is important to note there is a difference between NDACT'S messaging and positioning, as opposed to individuals who may be supportive of NDACT, but who express their own opinions to and about politicians. And to make it clear, I am a supporter of NDACT but not a member of the committee.

Secondly this paper has suggested in a previous editorial, that NDACT should negotiate with Highlands to limit the pit size to 100 acres. In my opinion I feel that this is not a negotiation that NDACT should be responsible for, but rather Council. Further I do not feel it would be possible to strike this agreement. Highlands makes bold public statements that they will not expand into Mulmur, but when asked to put those assurances on title to lands in question, they decline.

In my opinion they have every intention of mining every square inch of limestone, not at "any one time" as a Highland spokesperson assures us, but over the course of time which is a very different reality. They have stated they plan to leave a "good chunk" of the land in agriculture, but over 6,000 acres, what constitutes a good chunk-again they refuse to provide ANY information whatsoever.

Finally, the Township of Melancthon may not have any "concrete" plans before them from Highlands but that is only because Highlands refuses to divulge ANY information whatsoever, despite publicly stating they are within 3-6 months from filing an application for an aggregate license. Mayor Debbie Fawcett, however, was quoted in the June 23, 2009 Orangeville Citizen stating: It's been rumoured for years, so it's not that much of a surprise to us."

If this project has been rumoured for years, why has this Council not taken one proactive step in advance of a filing, from hiring subject matter experts, incorporated the AMOET study into their official plan as other municipalities have done or even researched and presented existing water studies at Council meetings.

This is not a Melancthon or Mulmur issue, this is a provincial issue. The Nottawasaga and Grand River watersheds impact more than 1 million Ontarians.

Council's past practices give residents cause for concern. In the case of Phase I of the wind turbine proposal, Council made no decision within the time frame under the legislation after the proponent filed their application, the matter went to the OMB and Council did not hire one subject matter expert OR conduct one peer review. Ratepayers took up the cause. The proponent's studies were accepted, seemingly without question, by Council. After the turbines were constructed I recall one councillor publically stated that the finished product did not exactly resemble the pictures the proponent had presented at the outset. What should happen if the water impact studies Highland presents don't "exactly" turn out the way they were presented? At this point, it would appear Council is taking the same approach to this open pit mine making statements such as it will be decided at the OMB and our hands are tied because of provincial policy.

One way of shaping provincial policy is political lobbying, of which to date I do not believe any of our municipal councillors have done. It took a local resident at the July 2, 2009 meeting of Melancthon Council to advise them that the spokesperson and public face for Highland Companies, Michael Daniher a lawyer, shares the same business address in Toronto as Philip Dewan, who is registered under the Lobbyist Registration Act paid to lobby on behalf of Highland Companies at all levels of government on aggregate and wind issues.

Flamborough is an example of a community with a strong political champion allied with ratepayers who are successfully battling an open pit mine-the exact same threat that is being posed to Melancthon. Councillor McCarthy, backed by the City of Hamilton, took a hard stance against that mine application before any applications were filed. As a result of studies, political lobbying and a strong ratepayers organization, the MRN and MOE have said no to the application before them. Another example is Site 41, which according to Simcoe County was a "done deal", until public and political pressure

raised the profile.

With the exception of Highland Companies, everyone involved in this issue have been neighbours, friends and business colleagues, if not for years, then generations and have all in their own way, worked toward the betterment of the community. What Highlands has done to tear apart the social fabric of this community is a travesty. No one except Highlands wins in this. This issue, however, has presented itself, through no fault of politicians or ratepayers and as a result, we need a political champion to lead in this fight.

I would ask that local politicians take a strong stand and work hand in hand with your friends and neighbours against this devastating proposal. Will it cost money? Yes but if Highland Companies really and truly had ANY concerns for this community, they would have

Will voters take notice?

The columnist Eric Dowd, in a July issue and June 20 issue, is of the opinion that the Conservatives made a dumb move by electing Tim Hudak as their leader.

They cannot win this way because those people who complain about the Human Rights Tribunals are of the extreme right, a fringe group. You have to come with a program that puts money in their pocket book to win an election.

The Citizen, in its masthead, quotes William Jennings Bryan "...The humblest citizen of all the land when clad in the armour of a righteous cause is stronger than all the host of Error." It is a good quote. It reflects what scripture says in Matthew 5:6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled." It is known as one of the Beatitudes.

The HRCs have become a terror for many upright citizens, who for conscience sake speak out and get into trouble and not only individuals but also Christian organizations such as Horizons who provide services for the disabled. They were fined \$23,000 + two years wages because they fired a person for breaking the Christian code of ethics.

Freedom of speech and freedom of religion is at stake. Leaving the matter alone will only make matters worse. It is like a cancer that goes untreated.

stepped up to the plate by now with their very deep pockets and offered to fund the independent studies that Council needs to conduct.

If, on the other hand, politicians feel it is an impossible task and you are beat before you start, I would respectfully suggest that you stand down and let someone who can lead the community in this fight, assume the leadership role required.

Ken Phillips
RR#6, Shelburne

I live on a farm in the North Melancthon area, where surrounding prime farmland around us is under threat of becoming a limestone quarry by the Highland companies. Something that is really bothering me is that the Highland Companies are always stating that they have the communities

• Please turn to page A4

It is important to note that Mr. Norton, a former HRC Commissioner, who held post at the provincial level as well as the federal, is backing Tim Hudak. They are in favour of replacing the present system with a more regular court system where you are innocent til proven guilty.

Right now the situation is guilty or not guilty, you pay the court cost.

The storied libel lawyer Julian Porter, from Toronto, was able to get the HRC case dismissed against his client Mark Stein of McLean's magazine. In an interview he likened the dealings of the HRC to Kangaroo Court (Globe and Mail, July 2, 2008). But what about the average person, who has no deep pockets? He is at the mercy of the HRC!

Maybe Eric Dowd is right in his assessment of the situation, but it would be a bad testimony for the electorate to let economic factors be the deciding issue.

As for me, I hope that the voters of Ontario will seriously consider the issue leading up to election time and maybe with a change of heart vote for Tim Hudak and the PCs a Premier and party in favour of a just society where there is truly freedom of speech and freedom of religion.

God bless Ontario.

Ron Bosman
Orangeville

Up, up and away!

So, as we have been told — ten thousand times over the last few days — it is the 40th anniversary of the first walk on the moon.

It seemed like a pretty big deal at the time, our first true step toward making those Star Trek fantasies reality; people stood before their televisions, glasses of whiskey in their hands, and wept with pride and the excitement of things to come.

Having heard Neil Armstrong's voice "One small step" - etc. over and over, I am now beginning to feel a sense of non-event about the whole thing. Within the frame work of all this palaver, 40 years on, there has only been one passing mention of anyone else's having done the walk on the moon.

"Only a dozen astronauts have walked the moon since then," one announcer said.

I didn't know there had been any more moon landings - certainly, there was very little fuss, in comparison, made of those subsequent walks. Anyway, the next one is not going to happen before 2020!

In a recent press conference, one of the original moon-walk astronauts, now in his 70's, as they all are, commented: "The moon is not a very interesting place — Mars is, though."

The first problem with a Mars walk is getting there — in a smallish capsule, taking in excess of six months for the journey. That's just for starters; never mind the damage to the person of the combination of long-term weightlessness (leading to osteoporosis) and muscular atrophy due to lack of exercise.

When Marco Polo went to China he merely opened up lines of trade without grave deleterious effects on the local population, which was numerous enough and tough enough to weather any influence a European might bring.

When, however, the "white men" went to Africa, they transported disease and conflict; they abused the land and the people, transporting both at will and returning nothing of good to the lands and the people they ravaged. In every way, the populations of the continent of Africa are still paying the cost of history there.

Similarly, when they began to explore North and South America, they stole and killed at random, always in the opinion that the world belonged to them. In the long run, there was more of an inclination to completely overrun the American continents forever, where Africa has been mostly taken back but altered and damaged, perhaps irreparably.

Not that I am worried about the folk who populate other planets at the moment. There is no question in my mind that there are other folk — there are, for sure. This is not the only planet in the universe with life on it. That life cannot be imagined, of course, even though we writers of fiction do love to speculate.

We are quite tethered by our own environment, after all, but I sure hope that they are all more intelligent and benevo-

lent than is the human species (and rats and viruses).

No, what worries me is the fact that we show no inclination whatsoever to clean up our own back yard before we embark on the unutterably expensive adventure of trying to reach other worlds to mess up.

Such walks as there have been on the moon have only resulted in heaps of junk being left behind.

There are still virtually unreachable places on earth but the greedy eyes of those who are researching the ways of attaining them only have their destruction in mind.

The perils of the Arctic will soon be conquered so that the potential for drilling for oil and other riches can be started.

The purity and importance of the Arctic to the world will be ignored for the sake of short-sighted awards while long term damage will be inflicted on this precious territory just as it has been on every other accessed area of the world.

Once the depths of the oceans can be brought within our reach, we will exploit and ruin all within. We will discover fantastic creatures in those depths, heretofore safe from our malevolence and treachery, and, in all likelihood, we will cause critical changes to their environment.

It is not an issue of money, it is a matter of mind-set. Humans are basically lazy, myopic and unimaginative. We are complacent beyond sanity, allowing and participating in the devastation of our world and excessive afflictions for the majority of the people living on it.

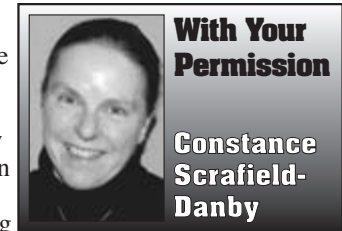
We agree by our silence to the use of war as a primary support to the economy, however much suffering it imposes; we acquiesce to the continuing pollution of our atmosphere, land and water by maintaining the current fashion of how our industries and agriculture are run; we vote for politicians who have no will and no passion for change and improvement.

Famous scientist Stephen Hawkins ("one of the greatest brains of the century") said recently that mankind should start trying to reach planets which are habitable for us, as our path of ruin for this earth may well make it uninhabitable before too long. It was a back-handed comment on our failings which I have just reiterated in a more blunt fashion.

With the mountain range of money that is spent on space "exploration" and war, the problems of this world could long since have been solved.

But we all know that — it is a well-worn complaint. There is no excuse for the deprivations that exist in this world.

The only reason is that those with the power to alleviate and remedy the causes, won't.



With Your Permission

Constance Scrafield-Danby