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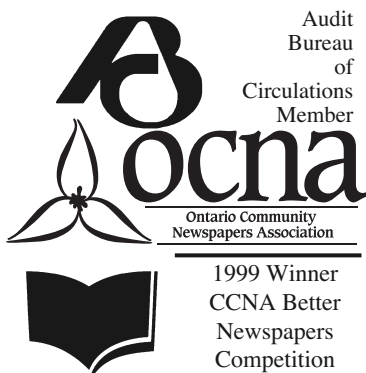
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"who dares not offend, cannot be honest"

One Manitowaning Road

opinion

editorial

'Pebble tossing' of NDP member hint of election to come

Can there be an election far off?

This week, the federal Liberal caucus met in Sudbury for its annual policy convention. Part of the event was a \$550-per-plate fundraising dinner, the sort of thing that most political parties do from time to time.

Glenn Thibeault, the new NDP member for the Sudbury riding, decided that this was a good opportunity to make some political hay so he threw a \$5.50-per-plate dinner event in his backyard the same night as the Liberal do, ostensibly to raise funds for families of striking Vale Inco workers who may be facing hardship just now.

Mind you, he clearly wasn't going to raise much money for miners' families at the \$5.50 rate so it's clear that Mr. Thibeault's effort was meant to focus publicity on himself and his upcoming campaign. He was somewhat successful in this endeavour as the CBC interviewed him earlier in the week and he was able to criticize (several times) the Liberals for somehow taking money out of Northern Ontario (at the \$550-per-plate rate) during a time of strike and other financial hardships.

There is no logic whatsoever in his criticism, of course, and the fact remains that such a meeting is a good thing for whichever community hosts it as several hundred delegates from across the country will leave a lot of money behind in terms of meals eaten, hotel rooms rented, gasoline purchased and all of the other purchases that go with a big convention.

The NDP had a very successful run in last year's election, all at the

Liberals' expense. Our own riding, Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing, was lost by the Liberals to the NDP, as were both Sudbury ridings and one of the Thunder Bay ridings. That was a gain of four seats by the NDP, and a corresponding loss by the Liberals.

Mr. Thibeault manufactured his criticism of the Liberals' fundraising event out of whole cloth simply because it was being held in his own backyard. He could have spent a little more time on the logic of his critical remarks so that they actually made sense.

It's also clear why the Liberals chose Sudbury as the host city for their large annual summer event: they wanted a substantial presence, with all of the attendant national publicity, in the centre of a region in which they had until very recently been the dominant political force.

Both the Liberals' strategic decision to have this late August-early September presence in the North, together with Mr. Thibeault's decision to ridicule its accompanying fundraising dinner, are a small indication of what we will very likely be seeing within the next few months as the Conservative government fails—perhaps falling on its own sword to force an election call if it feels this is a propitious time.

In all of these Northern ridings, the big races will be between the NDP incumbents and the Liberal candidates. The exception is the North Bay riding where the incumbent Liberal held his seat last year.

Mr. Thibeault's little bit of pebble tossing is just a hint of what we can expect in the Northern Ontario political wars.

letters

Wind farms will bring positive change to Manitoulin

Real threat to beauty of area is climate change

To the Expositor:

As a former resident of Manitoulin, a landowner in NEMI and someone who plans on retiring on Manitoulin I have been reading about the proposed wind farm on McLean's Mountain with great interest. I have decided to become a supporter of the project. I am aware of the many objections to the proposed wind farm, but have not been able to substantiate many of the negative claims made.

The issue of aesthetics is one of opinion and everyone has a right to their own opinion in terms of the aesthetic affects of the proposed wind farm. As they say, "beauty is in the eye of the beholder." As a result, I see little point in debating this issue.

I think we can all agree that we need to find alternative means of producing the energy we require to sustain our society. Therefore, we have a responsibility to consider wind farms as a viable alternative to fossil fuels. Are wind farms the perfect solution? Of course not. All forms of energy production have both positive and negative side effects. The key is to find a proper balance between the positive side effects and the negative side effects.

Many claim that wind farms are detrimental to bird populations. The fact is that windmills will kill birds. However, if you compare the number of birds killed by wind farms to the number of birds killed by the side effects of fossil fuels you will find that wind farms are a much better choice. It is also important to note that all buildings, towers and man-made structures, including your home, kill birds. There is a wind farm in Altamont Pass, California that has over 7,000 turbines on it. The death rate of birds related to this wind farm is 0.2 birds/turbine/year. This amounts to 1,400 birds per year. Meanwhile, the skyscrapers in Toronto kill an estimated 10,000 birds per year. We need to understand that the real risk to our bird populations is climate change caused by the pollution created by the burning of fossil fuels, not from wind farms.

Many are claiming that there are health risks relating to wind farms. Perhaps there are, but compare these health risks to that of coal burning plants and nuclear energy used to produce electricity. The health risks related to wind farms, if they exist, are nowhere near the health risks related to the production of energy using coal or nuclear energy. Before passing the Green Energy Act, the province of Ontario did consider the potential health risks of wind farms and found no basis for not developing wind farms on the basis of health risks. The Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit also conducted a thorough study of the research available and found that the opposition to wind farms on the basis of health consequences was not justified.

The economic impact of wind farms has the potential to be very substantial. Not only to Manitoulin, but to Ontario as a whole. In a recent article in the Sudbury Star, Mayor Jim Stringer is quoted as saying that the project would pump approximately \$100,000 in extra tax revenue per year into the tax base of NEMI. This represents approximately 2 percent to 3 percent of the total annual revenue of NEMI; I would suggest that this is significant. Germany has embraced wind farming. As many of you know, Germany has one of the largest economies in the world. It is interesting to note that the number one creator of jobs in Germany over the past few years has been the production and manufacturing of wind turbines. If we follow suit, this new industry could go a long way toward replacing our failing automotive sector. This has benefits to all of Ontario and to Manitoulin. We need to remember that Manitoulin relies heavily on tourism. If our manufacturing sector continues to suffer, tourism will in turn suffer.

The auto industry is moving very quickly toward replacing the combustion engine, which accounts for a large percentage of the pollution we produce, with battery-operated or electric engines. If they are successful in doing so, we will reduce our consumption of fossil fuels substantially. We will, however, increase our need for electricity. If we rely on electricity produced by coal burning plants and nuclear plants to provide this electricity how much will we really help the environment?

We therefore need to find alternative means of producing electricity.

The auto industry is also looking at hydrogen as a source of energy. Hydrogen may be a valid alternative, but we know that this is many years away. Corn-based ethanol has also received a lot of attention lately as an alternative to burning fossil fuels. Corn is, however, unlikely to become a significant source of energy. If you consider the fact that a large percentage of the world's population lives below the poverty line and is suffering from starvation, it hardly makes sense to use a staple of our food supply to produce energy for our automobiles. It is interesting to note that if we used all of the tillable land in North America to grow corn for ethanol we would only produce approximately 20 percent of the United States' need for fuel. It is also interesting to note that it takes two units of energy to produce one unit of ethanol. Therefore, it is unlikely that corn-based or any food-based form of ethanol is a long-term viable solution to the burning of fossil fuels.

In the end, we all need to make a responsible decision as it relates to this issue. Interestingly, I did a web search on the negative effects of wind farms. After reading all of the material available I was very concerned about wind farms. I then did a web search on the positive effects of wind farms. After reading that information I was convinced that wind farms are a good thing. It did, however, occur to me that I was not considering the source of the information I was reading, which I think we would all agree is very important. I then decided to read what David Suzuki had to say on wind farms. We are all familiar with David Suzuki as he is considered one of the world's leading experts on green energy and global climate change. It is interesting to note that he is an avid supporter of wind farms. If you wish to read what David Suzuki has to say about wind farms visit his website at www.davidsuzuki.org. I would suggest reading an article he wrote titled "The Beauty of Wind Farms."

Change comes with uncertainty. It is normal and prudent to approach change with caution. In this case, however, Manitoulin has a chance to become a leader in an area that is far more beneficial than detrimental. Let's not stop change because we are uncertain; we need to embrace this opportunity and move forward in a manner that is likely to be viewed positively by many people both on and off the Island. The real threat to our health, our economy, our wildlife and the very beauty of Manitoulin is global climate change, not wind farms.

Lyle Van Every
Sharon, Ont.

Gordon's praised for dark sky

Prov needs similar designation

To the Expositor:

I would really like to commend Gordon's Park for its well-deserved recognition as a dark sky preserve. We here in Providence Bay, however, have had no luck in that regard. The municipality will not acknowledge that many local folk and visitors also enjoy sitting on the beach to enjoy stargazing with a non-light-polluted dark sky here as well. We have pleaded and politely asked to have some alternative to the blinding, overwhelming security spotlight at the marina that lights up the entire bay at night. It is obviously an engineering mistake that really needs to be reevaluated and corrected. Kudos to the marina manager who has lowered it as much as he can while still maintaining enough light for the security camera, but it obviously needs a different approach.

Noise pollution, light pollution, and overcrowding are what most people come here to escape. I hope council will give this issue some consideration.

Jean McGauley
Providence Bay