

Messenger Editorial

MESSENGER EDITORIAL

It's not that complicated

Protectionism.

It's always been considered a dirty and ugly word in provincial politics.

Yet, given the current climate of business in Ontario, protectionism may be the only thing that can save our local economy in rural Ottawa.

The new wage increases and labour changes instituted by the Wynne Government were misguided and out of touch. The hardest hit local businesses are the grocery stores. They are the largest private sector employers within the communities in the Carleton riding. They provide hundreds of jobs in the communities they serve. They hire our students. They give back to the community, often in ways that their customers never see.

But the worst is yet to come, and we will start seeing it when the snow melts.

One of the frustrations of Ontario seasonal small business owners is that they cannot compete with businesses from Quebec coming in and undercutting them. Think about it for a minute. Every summer, you probably see a number of drive-ways being sealed, landscapers at work, and roofs being redone. You probably drive by a lot of different construction sites. Oh yes, and you also see Quebec license plates everywhere.

Our contractor and trades workers are not allowed to go to Quebec to work, yet it is somehow okay for Quebec workers to come in and

undercut Ontario workers in our own province. The issue was raised in 2013 by MPP Jack McLaren, when he was still a member of the PC caucus. His bill was shot down, Liberal guns a blazin'. It's much more complicated, we were all told.

Really? Is it?

Well let's un-complicate things for a second.

This summer, there is absolutely no way that our local tradespeople and contractors in the Carleton riding, and in all of Eastern Ontario, will be able to compete with their Quebec counterparts who are paying their workers about 15 per cent less in wages.

And what is Ontario afraid of? We are not asking to open up jobs in Quebec for Ontario workers. We are simply wanting Ontario to even the playing field and give Ontario workers and business the same protection here that Quebec workers and businesses have there. What are the Wynne Liberals afraid of? Losing votes in Quebec?

We can talk about wage increases all we want. But it won't do anything for the province's small business economy as long as the guy sealing your neighbour's driveway is from Gatineau.

And as for the local grocery stores, let's hope that people support them rather than make a weekly road trip to Costco in Gatineau for cheaper beer and produce.

JM

Out of place as a ruralsexual 20th Centurian

Trendy words slip in and out of our everyday language.

I thought of one of those words that was overused about five or 10 years ago, but I can't recall the last time I heard it.

Metrosexual.

Do you remember that one? I don't really fit that description. In fact, I used to joke that I was ruralsexual.

But last month, I found myself at ground zero of Metrosexual-topia.

Lululemon.

I had to return something for the Diva. She belongs at Lululemon. Me? Not so much.

I walked into Bayshore and looked at the ginormous iPad-like store locator. I started typing in Lululemon. The letters were like eight feet high. People were walking by. I was thinking about saying, 'I'm not going there for me.' Then I realized they probably already knew.

I'm not good on the big iPad map. In fact, I ended up on the wrong floor, headed in the wrong direction. Why can't it just tell you to turn right, left, or go upstairs?

Eventually, I found the store. I walked in. I felt like I needed my passport. I was just a tourist in Yogatopia. I prayed to God that I wouldn't run into anyone I knew.

Then I saw men's clothes. They aren't meant for men like me. Their clothes are for neat and organized men who are capable of putting stuff from Ikea together without it being an eighth of an inch off. I'm too Homer Simpsony.

An over-bubbly employee walked by with an erasable marker. She had just emerged from the change room area. I looked at the names on the board. Kali, Kaitlin and Kayleigh. Then another woman appeared and her name was written on the board. Keisha.

'Oh, for Krist's sake,' I thought to myself. 'Of course it's Keisha.'

Keisha's boyfriend was standing beside me.

We didn't speak, but we bonded. We made eye contact. Like me, he had that 'OMG I hope I don't see anyone I know' look on his face.

At that moment, a man emerged from one of the change rooms. It was Don. I'm guessing he was in his 50s and had a haircut and look that screamed accountant-chic. He was wearing skin tight charcoal men's yoga pants and a long sleeve skin tight charcoal top. I wanted to make a comment to Keisha's boyfriend, but I didn't want to draw attention to myself. Don was a small logo on his chest away from being on the crew of the Starship Enterprise. Or maybe Don was auditioning for that new Vegas act, the Charcoal Grey Man Group. Or maybe he was one of the dancers for the Mike Myers "Sprokets" skit on

Saturday Night Live from back in the day.

My mind suddenly escaped to an Ingmar Bergman, Seventh Seal-like black and white daydream. Dark clouds rolled in above the harsh waves. Sarcasm had put Embarrassment in check in their chess game on the beach. They were playing for my soul. It's amazing that, 35 years later, Film Studies 101 is still messing with my head.

If I have lost you, well, Google can fill you in.

Finally, the bubbly yoga girl employee noticed I was out of place – like a packet of mustard amidst the peanut butter and jam at the Hampton Inn breakfast nook.

"Can I help you?" she

chipperly chirped.

"For God's sake, yes," I said. "I just want to return these items. Um. They're not mine. It's for my wife."

As she took me to the bubbly yoga cashier, I looked around and did some more investigative journalism to reaffirm how out of place I was. The yoga people all had this look to them. It was hard to put a finger on it. As I saw myself in a full length mirror, I noticed my Adidas hoodie under my Adidas winter jacket and I was wearing my Adidas hat. My Adidas logo was being overshadowed by the Lululemon logo. By the way, I did learn while there that the Lululemon logo is a stylized "A" that stands for "Athletically hip," which was one of the names founder Chip Wilson was considering when he named his company.

And why did his parents call him Chip? Was Biff already taken in their family?

Finally, the return transaction was completed. I left Lululemon and craved something kind of testosterone. Spellcheck says that's not a word. Spellcheck has obviously never gone to Lululemon to return something for Mrs. Spellcheck. I wonder if they have a kid named Chip Spellcheck.

I went to A&W in the food court. The meat is free of hormones. Evidently, sodium isn't a hormone. Regardless, after a Teen Burger onion rings and a root beer, I felt manly again. They didn't have a Yoga Girl Burger.

Last stop was Van's. I belonged in there less than I did in Lululemon. I had to pick up Van's socks for Adam. Millennials wandered around staring at their phones, saying words I didn't know. They gawked at me. I was clearly guilty of cultural trespassing.

According to Millennials, people my age don't know anything. For example, I don't know why fluorescent knee-high socks with a palm tree print for \$20 are popular.

But they are. Because I don't know anything.

I guess the only thing worse than being ruralsexual is being a 20th Centurian.



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**OTHER
SIDE**

by Jeff Morris

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P.O. Box 567 Manotick, Ontario
Tel: 613-692-6000 www.manotickmessenger.on.ca

Publisher: Jeff Morris
Managing Editor: Jeff Morris

Contributing writers:
Grace Thrasher, Larry Ellis, Phill Potter

Advertising and Marketing:
Gary Coulombe

Photographer: Mike Carroccetto

Phone: 613-692-6000

email:

Advertising: advert@bellnet.ca

Editor: newsfile@bellnet.ca

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We must rethink our approach to battling opioid abuse

Thirteen Canadians a day were hospitalized for an opioid overdose in 2014-2015, according to the Canadian Institute of Health Information (CIHI), and the rate of opioid poisoning hospitalizations has been steadily rising.

What began with the over-prescription of opioids such as OxyContin, a painkiller once thought to have a low potential for addiction, led to the diversion of legal drugs to the illegal market, and later to the dramatic expansion of the illegal production of fentanyl.

As the horror stories of addiction and death multiply, it is clear that what was once a medical issue is now a population health crisis.

We have had little success in dealing with this crisis because we focus on it in terms that fail to understand it as something other than a problem with illegal drugs. Seizing fentanyl shipments as they arrive in Canada has done little to interrupt the supply on the street.

We supply police and other first responders with the opioid antidote naloxone and ask it be used to keep the addict/offender alive so that they can, in all likelihood, be processed into the criminal justice system. Supervised consumption sites rely on the police to “turn a blind-eye” to those entering or leaving the facility likely in possession of illegal drugs. The success of Ottawa’s “pop-up” safe-use sites in city parks came entirely from the willingness of the police to pretend they are not there.

As a first step, this is fine. But it is not a long-term solution.

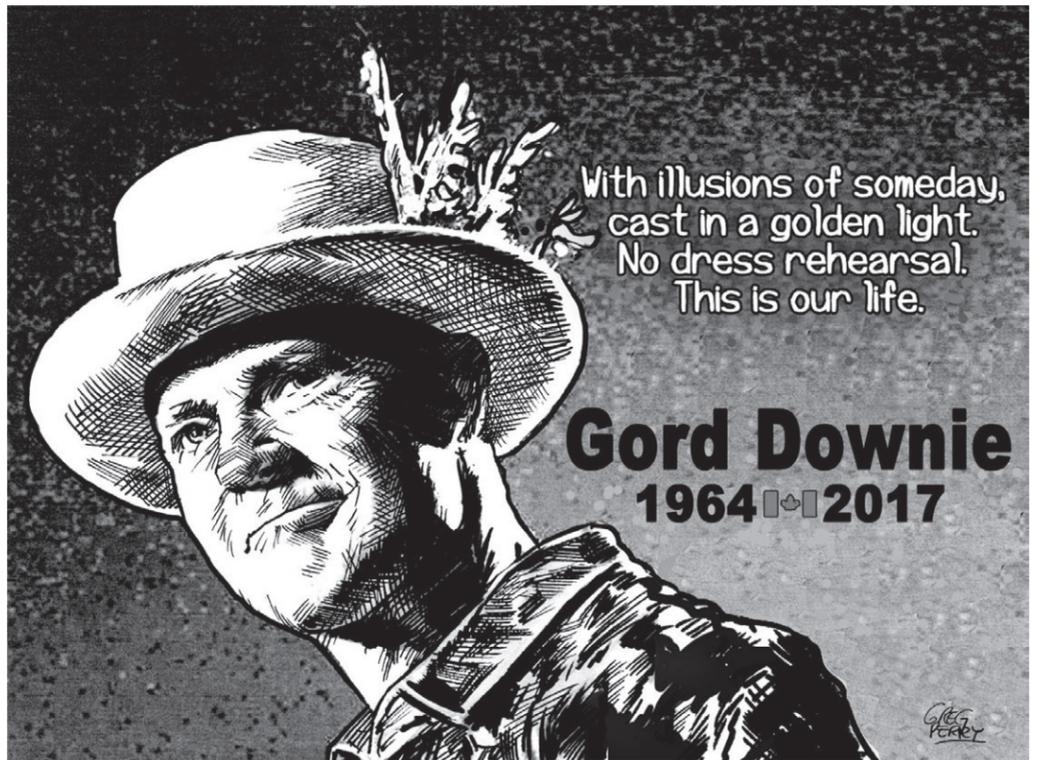
We need to see addiction as, first, a health issue, not a criminal issue, and, second, as an issue that primarily preys on populations that are economically or socially marginalized.

Decades of a “war on drugs” has done nothing to reduce the supply or the demand for substances that are, to some extent, arbitrarily deemed illegal. However much we want to cling to the notion that “drugs are bad,” it is time to try something new. The criminal justice system is not the place to deal with addiction. It is a social and economic problem that requires more than a patchwork of public health interventions and treatment services based on local advocacy efforts.

With the scale of the opioid crisis reaching the middle class and young recreational drug users, many are being missed. Naloxone peer distribution programs aimed at street-entrenched chronic drug users are unlikely to reach suburban neighbourhoods. Strategies to reduce harms of drug use without criminalizing it first need to be embedded within a wider health and social policy reform.

This would mean a major policy shift in how we discuss addiction. But as the fentanyl deaths claim more and more lives, we cannot continue to pretend that we are on the path to solving this problem. The evidence is strong. It is our mindset that needs changing.

Gabriela Novotna and Tom McIntosh are expert advisers with EvidenceNetwork.ca and researchers with the Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit at the University of Regina.



This big galoot needs some gluten

I love fairs.

I love the Spencerville Fair and the Metcalfe Fair and the Richmond Fair and just about every fair beyond and in between. I loved the state fairs when I lived in the States.

And there is one thing I love the most about fairs.

Gluten.

I mean, don't get me wrong. I like overpriced and rickety rides that I have to sausage my two-hundred-and-fortyseven-pound frame into. The safety pins and duct tape holding the rides together don't phase me – okay, so maybe they do a bit – but if I am shoving something laced with gluten into my gluten-hole, all my fears fade away.

And, again, don't get me wrong, but you meet some great people working the fair circuit. Sure, maybe some are a touch on the greasy and shady and tattooey side and some might smell like the cigarette butts in the ashtray of their 1981 Duster, but they are so nice and kind. My dream of being one of the cool people with a big stuffed animal prize finally came true at the Ottawa Ex midway when I was 16. I won a giant pink donkey, and man, I was all that carrying that thing around on my shoulders. I walked around thinking, “That's right girls, I won this. I tossed the softball into the milk can. I guess that means you think I'm all that, right?”

I left the Ottawa Ex just as I had arrived – girlfriendless. And in a few months, I think we ended up tossing out the mattress in my bedroom because there may have been some, um, visitors that crawled their way from the pink donkey to nest inside the bed.

But the whole experience was worth it.

You know why?

You got it! Gluten. The Food Fair at the Ex was like Glutenpalooza.

A couple of summers ago, we were at a country fair in August when the Diva found a Mennonite vendor selling home-baked goods. We were all hungry, so what could be better than delicious Mennonite home baking?

“They're gluten free,” she said as she brought them back. Neither of us had ever eaten anything gluten free, but it seems trendy and popular. She gave a muffin to each of the kids, and then one for ourselves. The kids took a couple of bites, and, not wanting to hurt her feelings, claimed they didn't really want to have anything to eat.

Right.

Then, I took a bite of mine. I thought she had taken the wax paper wrapper off of the muffin before I bit into it. Honestly. She hadn't. I couldn't tell.

As my internal saliva machine went into overdrive, everything crumbled dryly in my mouth

into dry little bits of dryness, sucking all of the moisture from my body. I may as well have shoved a Costco-sized roll of Bounty down my throat. I wondered if I would ever have enough moisture in my throat to swallow again.

The Diva took a bite, then looked at me. She was at a crossroads. The look she gave me told me she was standing at the corner of ‘I'm chewing on sandpaper jerky’ and ‘I'm dreading the sarcastic tirade that my big galoot of a husband is about to unleash.’

I tried to form words, but my dehydrated larynx couldn't form a sound. After three or four tries, I was able to Stephen Hawking out a few words her way.

“What flavour did you get, honey?” I asked with feigned glee. “Mine is pencil shavings. What's yours? Sawdust chip?”

She looked more annoyed than amused, though I know

that eating part of the wrapper and not even knowing it gave her the trump card in this exchange.

“I wonder what flavour the kids had?” I continued. “Ant hill? Maybe gun powder? Styrofoam and carrot?”

She gave me the look. Obviously, I was tiring her and testing her patience.

“Seriously,” I continued, “do you know what these muffins need?”

She looked up with considerably less patience in her eyes than she had 10 seconds earlier.

“Um, let me guess,” she said. “Gluten?”

“Yes!”

At that moment, we both laughed at the fact that neither of us had any idea whatsoever what gluten was.

“I think it's in flour or wheat,” I said. “But I'm not sure what it is.”

“I think it's the part of wheat and flour that has flavour and moisture,” she said. “Honey, go back and ask them for muffins with extra gluten.”

The poor little Mennonite woman who sucked at baking muffins didn't have any.

Since then, we have come across some people who have food allergies who are on a gluten-free diet. We also have friends who opt for gluten free choices because they are trying to be healthy. Even Pizza Pizza has an option for gluten free crust. All of our friends have assured us that you can eat good food on a gluten-free diet, and that the little Mennonite woman may have forgotten to add, oh, I don't know, water?

So if you are one of the people who, by choice or necessity, are going gluten free, I commend you. You are doing something I couldn't imagine doing.

But before you chomp into your gluten free foodlike product, just don't forget to take off the wrapper.



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What's missing in Ontario's approach to marijuana distribution

Ontario deserves some credit for forging ahead with guidelines for its legal marijuana distribution system, but the province's plan is filled with ambiguities and unknowns.

Ontario is the first province to define how it intends to sell non-medical marijuana to the public. About 150 stores across the province will be operated by a division of the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO).

Ontario has set the minimum legal age for purchasing marijuana at 19.

But there are few specifics on pricing or costs. The government was completely tight-lipped on many facets of a highly complex marijuana puzzle.

Most important, no consideration has been given to edible cannabis products or how these products will be marketed.

Nor have guidelines for home cultivation and use been contextualized, especially for households with children. Cooking at home with marijuana, for example, can be tricky.

What's more, the food service industry and restaurants were not even mentioned in the announcement.

So how will legalizing marijuana for recreational use affect food in general? The province says it won't allow edibles, for now. But the black market will fill the gap and may impact everything the province is trying to achieve in mitigating public risk.

Since the federal government's announcement that marijuana would be legalized starting July 2018, several food companies, processors and distributors have been considering commercializing cannabis-infused products.

Edible products are tremendously popular in other markets where marijuana is legal. In some U.S. states, consumers can purchase a variety of marijuana-infused food products, from fudge, cookies and brownies to hard candies, gelato and gummy bears.

Some food products, like brownies, have long been a staple of cannabis coffee shops in some parts of the world. But the new products are quite different and may be deceiving. They're skillfully produced and packaged to closely mimic popular candies and other sweets.

Making cannabis more readily available to children, especially in edible forms, represents significant risks. Research shows marijuana use can damage children's brain development. It can also harm fetuses when used by pregnant women.

Failing to establish a policy framework related to edibles, or pretending the problem doesn't exist, will only lead to more future challenges.

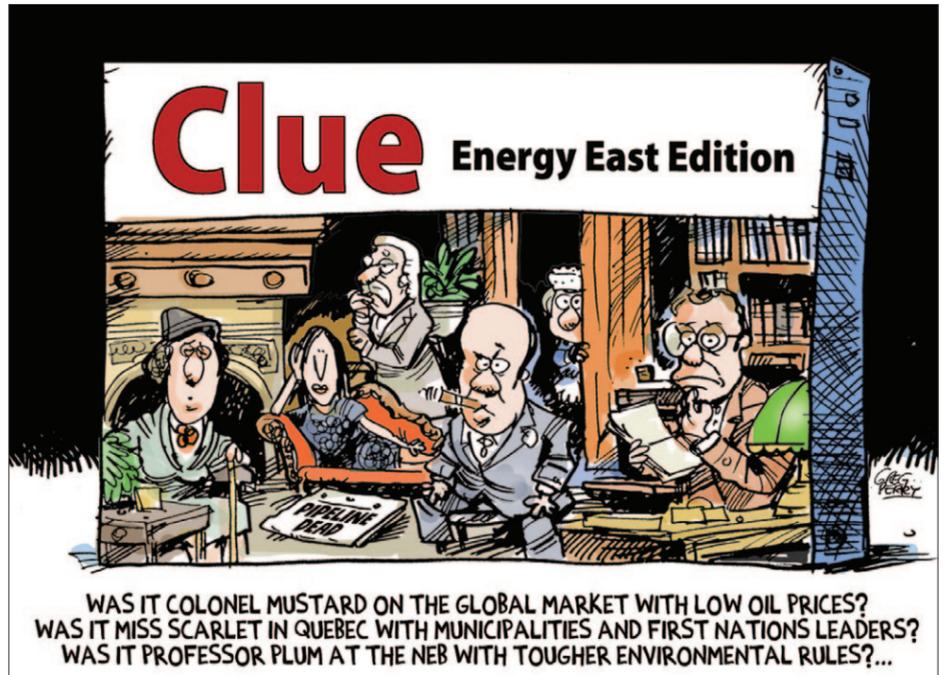
The food service industry is considering its options but it needs some government policy clarity. Risks associated with the use of marijuana in food haven't been clearly articulated.

Governments may see the legalization of recreational marijuana as a new, substantial source of revenue. That revenue will likely motivate Ontario to reconsider its options related to marijuana food products.

But as the province grows its addiction to marijuana tax revenues, and as it no doubt adds retail outlets, it should develop clear guidelines for edible products, and for marijuana as a food ingredient for domestic use.

Otherwise, the underground market will fill the gap and that's hardly a desirable outcome.

Sylvain Charlebois is the author of Food Safety, Risk Intelligence and Benchmarking, published by Wiley-Blackwell (2017).



A fish called Panda

There are planned reunions, like the ones your high school will hold every decade or so. You smile to yourself when you see how the popular and best looking people have aged, sometimes less than gracefully. Of course, you look in the mirror and you haven't aged at all.

But there is another kind of reunion. These are the unplanned and impromptu ones where you run into old friends and reminisce about the best of times. Even when the worst of times are remembered, it is usually with some humour or with a positive spin.

Saturday morning, there was a Carleton Ravens Alumni Brunch at TD Place Stadium. I looked forward to going, not having any idea who was going to be there. But one by one, old teammates and friends filtered in.

Obviously, none of us had aged at all. There have been some crazy things that happened in the Panda Game through the years. It didn't matter if you were on the Carleton side or the Ottawa U. side. It was mayhem. Water balloons flew over our heads as students from both schools had built giant sling shots in the stands and were propelling objects to the other side of the field. The smell of firecrackers filled the air. It seems that each game was delayed three or four times to deal with streakers. In one game, a streaker started climbing one of the goal posts and got to the top of the upright on the Bank Street side of the field. Then, naked and drunk, he had no idea what to do or how to get down. All he could do was wait for the emergency response team to get him down with a ladder. Then he was arrested.

And then there was the fish. "I had no idea you had been hit with a fish," Angus Donnelly said over the sausages and eggs we were having. "How the hell did that happen?"

Angus was a tough-as-nails, heart-and-soul guy as a teammate. He came into Carleton in 1982, the same year that many of us on that team did. He was a national level rugby player and one of the best defensive linemen in the country. Simply put, if you were in a situation, he was the guy on that team that you would want to have your back.

It was the 1983 Panda Game. Before the game, I sat nervously in the dungeon that passed as a dressing room near the hockey arena under the north side stands. I even remember the cassette I listened to on my Sony Walkman. Maniac and What a Feeling from the Flashdance soundtrack, Burnin'

Down the House by the Talking Heads, In a Big Country by Big Country, Safety Dance by Men Without Hats, It's a Jungle Out There by Bonnie Tyler.

The game was supposed to start with a skydiver parachuting the game ball to centre field at the beginning of the game. He didn't quite execute the landing. He ended up in the knee deep water in the Rideau Canal behind the south side stands.

Late in the first quarter, I was on the field, awaiting a snap for a punt. A few seconds before the ball was snapped, I was stunned by a "thwack" on the side of my head. Then, the ball was headed my way, along with about 10 angry Gee Gees charging at me. I refocused, caught the ball, and punted

it. As the ball left my foot, I noticed something on my hand and wrist. I noticed it on my jersey. Then I smelled it. I looked at the ground beside me, and I saw a dead fish that was split open.

After the play, I came off the field and went straight for my towel and water bottle. I rinsed and wiped. It was in my face. It was all over my helmet. It even felt like some of it had found its way inside my shoulder pads and down my shirt.

At halftime, I went into the washroom to try and wash the rest of it off. But no matter what I did, all I could smell through the rest of the game was that fish.

In the fourth quarter, we pulled off a miraculous comeback. It remains the greatest comeback in Panda Game history. We were down 28-4 with nine minutes left, and then everything just fell into place. Our quarterback, Cam Collins, kept finding wide receiver John Dawley for pass after pass, and touchdown after touchdown. When the dust settled, we had stolen a 33-28 win away from the Gee Gees.

That night, the team partied like never before. I didn't go out because I stunk like fish. I went home and had a half hour-long shower and did my laundry.

It's funny but the fish is still the first thing I think of when I remember the Panda Game.

I imagine that somewhere last week, there was some idiot Ottawa U. grad sitting at a bar and telling all his friends about how, 34 years ago, he snuck a fish into the stadium and put it in the slingshot and hit the Carleton punter in the head. It was the best shot in the history of fish in slingshots.

I'm sure his friends don't believe the story when he tells it. But it's true.

I bet that guy has really aged.



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