

MESSENGER EDITORIAL

Via Rail should be shut down or sold by the federal government

Investment managers and investors should often ask: If I didn't already own this stock, would I buy it today?

By any criteria, Via Rail, a federal Crown corporation, is not a good investment – even under unrealistically favourable assumptions. The federal government should rigorously examine this charitably-designated 'enterprise,' then aim it toward one of two fates: sale or liquidation.

Via Rail's chronic cash-burning condition offers no economic value to any potential buyer, though there are always contrarians with the confidence, and perhaps the capability, to turn a seemingly hopeless asset into something valuable. For example, a number of ailing airlines have been bought and sold. But Via Rail, as structured and priced, has little allure to potential free-enterprise buyers.

Operating and capital funding from the federal government for Via has been massive: \$548 million in 2019 (before the impact of COVID-19) and \$597 million in 2021, as examples. Sadly, we should expect that massive financial support to continue.

The government should hire management consulting and investment banking firms to review and value Via Rail. By employing a variety of scenarios, including modelling fundamental changes in Via's orientation, routes and staff levels, an engaged outside consultant should seek out opportunities for Via to move toward future positive cash flow.

Any genuinely independent review by experts would likely conclude that Via Rail requires additional investment and radical modernization – if it is not merely to survive but thrive.

The subsidy per passenger for Via's Corridor (Quebec to Windsor) route was \$180 in 2021. Higher ridership alone wouldn't eliminate the subsidies.

In the absence of imaginative, radical and, perhaps, ruthless restructuring and reorientation, it's unlikely that conventional investor valuation metrics (such as enterprise value to revenue; enterprise value to earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization, price to earnings, price to operating cash flow, price to free cash flow, and or even price to net asset value) would generate a visible potential value for even the most optimistic of potential buyers.

Yet stranger things have happened, with seemingly unappealing assets snapped up by a strategic industry-savvy acquirer.

Taxpayers will never know unless the federal government puts Via Rail up for sale (either in its current state, imperfections and all or after a credible restructuring plan is produced).

The federal government should embark on setting Via Rail, a truly underperforming asset, on either a sale or liquidation track. Using the cost of federal debt, the present value of Via Rail is about negative \$16 billion.

There must be a better use of taxpayers' money than keeping Via Rail, a chronically bad investment.

Ian Madsen is a senior policy analyst at the Frontier Centre for Public Policy and author of the forthcoming *Sell Them or Shut Them Down: 111 Reasons Governments Should Divest State-Owned Enterprises*.

© Troy Media

Baba lives the Canadian dream at the Manotick Legion

Baba leaned against his table at the Manotick Legion, watching the provincial election results pour in on the big screen.

He took a sip of his Corona, exhaled, and wore a smile big enough to have its own postal code.

Perhaps the low voter turnout in the recent provincial election translates into voter apathy.

Maybe it's a sign of fatigue after more than two years of COVID-19. It could even be that some Canadians would rather grind Bridgerton, Stranger Things or The Mandalorian on Netflix or Disney Plus than make the effort to vote.

It didn't concern Baba what the people who didn't vote were doing. All he cared about was who did vote.

On the big screen, there was no script for what was unfolding. It was raw, political theatre. Baba, along with his wife and youngest daughter, were glued to what was unfolding. So was everyone in the room.

The right to vote is not something Baba and his family take lightly. Like many new Canadians, he and his wife are thrilled to have the opportunity to take part in the democratic process. It wasn't always like that for him.

Baba is from Iran. When he was a young man, he left a country filled with conflict to land in America. He ended up working as an electrical engineer in Houston. Americans did not know much about Baba's home country of Iran. They knew that in the late 1970s, there were 52 American hostages held for 444 days by Iranian authorities before they were released in January, 1981. Iran had been through a revolution, with Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi being overthrown. The Pahlavi dynasty and Iranian monarchy was replaced by an Islamic republic, ruled by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The hostages were released upon the signing of the Algiers Accord, just minutes after Ronald Reagan was sworn in as the President of the United States.

In the 1980s, Baba returned to Iran. Throughout most of the decade, Iran and Iraq were at war.

"There was no hatred or animosity between the people of Iran and Iraq," Baba said. "The people always got along. This was a war between two governments that disagreed."

The day Baba's life changed was the day he and his wife decided it was time to leave Iran.

They were driving and were pulled over by someone who identified himself as a security official. He looked at the young couple in their car, and then started firing questions at him while pointing a gun in his face.

After a while, he ordered Baba to get out of the car.

"I was just about to get out of the car,

and my wife grabbed me and pulled me back in," he said. "She was shouting at me, 'don't get out! He is going to shoot you and kill you!' She pulled me in the car and we drove off."

Baba reported the incident to local police, and they had no idea who the person was who stopped him. The more he dug into what happened, the more he realized that his wife saved him from a likely roadside execution.

"We never did find out why he stopped us," Baba said. "But that was what it

was like. We were not safe. After that happened, we knew we had to get out of Iran and move to somewhere safe to raise our family."

Baba had lived in the United States, but he wanted to go somewhere even safer than that. He began the process of moving his family to Canada to start a new life.

In 1986, Baba and his wife and their one-year-old daughter arrived in Canada. They had a suitcase full of clothes, and \$50 cash.

"At first, we went to Montreal," he said. "I could not find work there because I could not speak French," he said. "The family who helped us put us in touch with some people in Toronto. We moved to Toronto and I was able to find work right away."

Within three months, Baba was working, making a good living as an electrician, and was on his feet. The revolution and the war between Iran and Iraq were becoming distant memories.

"Canada has given us a wonderful life," he said. "It has given opportunities for my daughters to grow up in a safe community and to be educated at a high level."

Baba looked at his daughter across the room, and then glanced at his wife and his other daughter beside him at the table. He said nothing, but he didn't have to. The look in his eyes told the entire story. He was the proudest of the proud Canadians. This country gave his family the opportunity to flourish. He had taught his children the importance of country, of friendships, of the importance of community, and of giving back.

His eyes went back to his oldest daughter, across the room. She inherited that deep love of community and a yearning to give back.

"I only cried once in my life," Baba said. "It was four years ago, when she was first elected. We never imagined that our little girl who came to Canada as a one-year-old would grow up to be in the legislature."

As if on cue, Baba's daughter came over to give him a hug. Her mother and sister joined in.

Goldie Ghamari had a lot of friends and supporters at the Manotick Legion on election night.

But none gave her as much love and support as her family.

FROM THE OTHER SIDE

Jeffrey Morris



MANOTICK Messenger

The voice of South Carleton for more than 30 years

5567 Manotick Main St., P.O. Box 567,
Manotick, Ontario K4M 1A5

News and Editorial: manotickmessenger@gmail.com

Advertising and Marketing: garyhcoulombe@gmail.com

Website: www.manotickmessenger.ca

Staff/Contributors: Ryan Birtch, Gary Coulombe, Larry Ellis, Skyler Fraser, Goldie Ghamari, Carol Anne Meehan, Scott Moffatt, Jeffrey Morris, Greg Newton, Phill Potter, Charlie Senack, Grace Thrasher.

Advertising deadlines: DISPLAY Thursday prior 10 am.

All layouts and composition of advertising produced by employees of Manotick Messenger Inc. are protected by copyright invested in the publishers of the Manotick Messenger

Member, Ontario Community Newspaper Association
Canadian Community Newspaper Association



The Manotick Messenger is published every other FRIDAY in Manotick, Ontario. Letters will be edited for length, clarity and libellous statements. Display rates are available on request. The Manotick Messenger is not responsible for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts, photos or other material used for publication purposes.

MESSENGER EDITORIAL

Climate change creating a new normal for farmers

COP26 is just around the corner – the 26th United Nations climate change conference starts in Glasgow on Oct. 31.

The planet is experiencing an increasing number of extreme and unprecedented weather patterns. Last summer, the Northern Hemisphere was hit by extreme drought and heatwaves in Russia, Canada and the United States. Floods also affected parts of Europe. Consequently, food prices are going up everywhere in the world, including Canada. Consumers are seeing first-hand how climate impacts their pocketbooks.

Farmers, arguably the best environmental stewards in the world, have come a long way with more sustainable practices. Those with farms of some scale have largely been faithful to the ongoing progress of soil and animal science, which needs to be celebrated.

Any effort to sequester carbon needs to be rewarded across the food supply chain, starting at farmgate. The stick approach largely dominated by a carbon tax can be influential, but so will carrots, especially in the agri-food sector. In that sector, risks must be avoided at all costs, given the low margins and the competitive environment most companies operate in.

With our abundant land, access to clean water and clean energy, Canada's agri-food sector is poised to do well in a world in which carbon is priced effectively. It's not a coincidence that we've recently seen companies like AB InBev, Kraft Heinz, Lovingly, Nestle and Roquette invest in Canada by building new processing plants. A stronger, more robust domestic processing sector will empower our agri-food sector to control its carbon footprint.

For the longest time, global food supply chains were designed and motivated by our collective race to the bottom, looking for the cheapest deal possible for producing, processing or packaging our food. For example, eating peaches grown in Argentina, processed in Malaysia and bought here was quite common.

The goal to offer low prices will obviously remain, but an economy that prices carbon will compel companies to seek different markets with more localized operations.

However, we need to leave our farmers alone when pricing carbon since they don't have the ability to pass extra costs down the food chain. That's why it was vital that Bill C-206, to exempt all farm fuels from the federal carbon tax, received Royal assent weeks before the Sept. 20 federal election.

But there's one major problem. The carbon tax in Canada is set to reach \$170 a tonne by 2030 and will hit \$50 a tonne next year, as promised by the newly-elected Liberal government.

Nobody really knows how such a high tax will affect food security for consumers. The federal government either doesn't have any information on the issue – no report or analysis – or hasn't made anything public. And we all need to know.

Dr. Sylvain Charlebois is senior director of the agri-food analytics lab and a professor in food distribution and policy at Dalhousie University.

Saying good-bye to a wonderful friend

I know that this newspaper is a voice of rural south Ottawa with hyper-local content front to back, but every now and then, we go outside the community in this column and I take you on a trip to my hometown.

Down the 416, on the shores of the St. Lawrence, there is a blanket of sadness covering the town of Prescott. The Fort Town's most beloved son, Leo Boivin, passed away last week. He was 89.

You don't have to be from Prescott to know who Leo Boivin is. The 19-year veteran of the NHL, mostly in the Original 6 era, is a Hockey Hall of Famer. If you or your kids played competitive hockey with the Cyclones or Silver Seven, maybe you headed down to Prescott for some games at the Leo Boivin Arena, or maybe you or your kids played in the Leo Boivin Midget AA/AAA Hockey Tournament. Maybe you remember him as the head coach of the Ottawa 67s before Brian Kilrea, or as the head coach of the St. Louis Blues.

I don't think there is a person who grew up in Prescott or who lives there now who wouldn't consider Leo a friend. He had time for everyone at that arena, and he was always there. He got as much pleasure out of watching and talking to Atom house league players as he did talking to and offering pointers from future pros like Ben Hutton. What kind of advantage did Ben have growing up with Leo Boivin watching him and offering him guidance? Ben played for the Cyclones, the Nepean Raiders and the University of Maine before finding his way to the NHL as a defenceman.

In 1997, I was working for a company called Pinnacle in Dallas as their NHL hockey card brand manager. I met Willie O'Ree, the first Black player in NHL history who played for the Boston Bruins. I discovered that Willie had never had an NHL hockey card, so we made the first O'Ree card. I will never forget when he asked me where I was from.

"Prescott, a little town south of Ottawa along the St. Lawrence River," I told him. Willie smiled. "I know Prescott," he said. "That's where Leo Boivin is from."

Willie had played for the Ottawa-Hull Canadians in the minors for a couple of years. He also knew the stories of the famous Inkerman Rockets, a junior team that played their games on an outdoor rink near Winchester. Leo Boivin played for the Rockets when he was 15.

"I remember my first NHL goal," O'Ree said. "We were playing the Montreal Canadiens. Leo had the puck around our blue line and he fired this rink wide

pass and put it right on my stick. I was along the boards on the right wing and I came in on Charlie Hodge. The guys told me to shoot low on him, so I came in and took a low, hard shot and scored. Leo assisted my first NHL goal. He was a great teammate."

The next time I went home and saw Leo – he could always be found at the rink – I told him about Willie's story about the goal. Leo's face lit up with a smile, and I could see he was replaying the moment in his head.

There are a lot of Willie O'Ree hockey cards out there now. Ironically, there are only two really good photos of him. One is a posed shot, and the other is an action shot taken at Madison Square Garden in New York. Two Bruins are in the photo. One is O'Ree. The other is Leo Boivin.

As part of my job, I also met Gordie Howe several times and got to spend a lot of time with him. One day in 2004, we were at an event at the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto. Howe, like O'Ree, also knew about Prescott.

"Are you going home to Prescott before you go back?" he asked. I was living in Seattle at the time.

"Yes," I said. "I'm going to see my parents for a day before I go back home."

Howe smiled. "Do you know Leo Boivin?"

"Of course," I said. "Everyone in Prescott knows Leo. He's a friend of my dad's."

"Are you going to see him?" Howe asked.

"There's a good chance I will run into him," I said. "He's usually at the rink."

"Do me a favour," Howe said. "If you see him, punch him in the mouth for me."

I was kind of taken back by that, but then Gordie Howe gave me a smile.

"That little son a bitch got me with that hip check so many times, it's amazing I was able to play as long as I did."

I saw Leo when I got home and told him what Gordie Howe said. We shared a laugh.

The old rink in Prescott is closed and a new Leo Boivin Arena is being built. We were all hoping he would be around for the opening, but unfortunately, that won't be the case.

I don't know when my first trip to that new barn will be. It will be sad not to see him. But I'm sure I will do what everyone else will do. I will close my eyes, take a deep breath, and relive memories of a wonderful man with the warmest of smiles and the kindest of hearts, and take comfort that he is there in spirit.

FROM THE OTHER SIDE

Jeffrey Morris



Messenger

SERVING MANOTICK AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES
IN OSGOODE, RIDEAU AND SOUTH GLOUCESTER

5567 Manotick Main St., P.O. Box 567,
Manotick, Ontario K4M 1A5
www.manotickmessenger.ca

Publisher: Jeff Morris

Managing Editor: Jeff Morris

Contributing Writers:

Grace Thrasher, Larry Ellis, Phill Potter

Advertising and Marketing:

Gary Coulombe

Photographer: Greg Newton

Email:

Advertising:

garyhcoulombe@gmail.com

Editor:

manotickmessenger@gmail.com

News/sports:

manotickmessenger@gmail.com

The Manotick Messenger is published every other FRIDAY in Manotick, Ontario. Letters will be edited for length, clarity and libellous statements. Display rates are available on request. The Manotick Messenger is not responsible for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts, photos or other material used for publication purposes.

Advertising deadlines: DISPLAY Thursday prior 10 am. All layouts and composition of advertising produced by employees of Manotick Messenger Inc. are protected by copyright invested in the publishers of the Manotick Messenger

Member, Ontario Community Newspaper Association
Canadian Community Newspaper Association



MESSENGER EDITORIAL

Doug Ford running out of time to get spending under control

The clock is ticking on Ontario Premier Doug Ford. He promised Ontarians “the party is over with taxpayers’ money.” Now he needs to keep his promise to get spending under control before time runs out and the next election starts.

While some may argue that Ford has not had a chance to fix the province’s financial problems due to the pandemic, the Progressive Conservative government increased spending by \$5 billion during its first year in office.

How can Ford prove to Ontarians that he really can stand up for taxpayers?

There are at least four key moves the Premier and his government can make.

First, restrain spending.

The pandemic showed that our health-care system needs some improvements. But that doesn’t excuse the soaring government spending Ontarians have seen in nearly every other area of government.

Two years ago, the Ford government spent a total of \$164.8 billion. This year, it plans to spend \$186.1 billion.

Any increased spending, other than in health and long-term care, should be temporary and pandemic related. If the Ford government reduces spending to pre-pandemic levels in ministries other than health and long-term care, taxpayers could save \$15.2 billion.

That would go a long way in eliminating the province’s \$33.1 billion deficit.

Second, Ford needs to cut taxes to keep his election promises.

Ford promised to lower the second income tax bracket by 20 per cent. That could save an Ontario taxpayer up to \$827 a year. For hardworking Ontarians trying to make ends meet amid rising costs of living, that money could go a long way.

That one tax-cutting promise would cover over a month’s worth of groceries for a family of four, even at today’s inflated food prices.

Third, the premier needs to end corporate welfare, once and for all.

Ford spoke against corporate welfare during the 2018 election campaign, but his government handed over nearly \$300 million to the Ford Motor Company for factory renovations, even though Ford is a wealthy company on the Fortune 500 list.

Finally, we need to end political welfare.

Ford told Ontarians that giving \$12 million a year of taxpayer money to political parties with no strings attached was wrong.

“I do not believe the government should be taking money from hardworking taxpayers and giving it to political parties,” Ford said just three years ago.

Ford still has time to redeem himself.

By pursuing these four policy avenues, Ford can show that he still intends to fight for everyday Ontarians.

With only months left before the next election, it’s time for Ford to get cracking.

Troy Media. Jay Goldberg is the Interim Ontario Director for the Canadian Taxpayers Federation.

Dylan Little’s legacy of love

Sometimes the worst things that can ever happen bring out the best in people.

While Facebook has slowly decayed into a cesspool of hate, sarcasm, and people bullying people by accusing each other of bullying, every now and then it becomes a platform where love and support take over.

The Little family experienced this firsthand over the last couple of weeks.

Last month, Dylan Little was killed in a car accident on Snake Island Road in Osgoode on his way to work for his first day at a new job. It turned the world of his parents, Darren and Cindy, and his

sister, Amy, upside down. Almost everyone has known a family in their lifetime that has gone through a tragedy of some kind. You never expect that you are going to be the family who experiences the stomach-wrenching knock on the door from the police. The Little family went through that nightmare.

Cindy Little is one of the most well-spoken people I know. In the community, she is known to many as a personal trainer, a businessperson, a member of Manotick Toastmasters, a mom, or even a podcast host. Her Facebook posts have been cathartic and raw as she tries to wrap her head around this awful tragedy while expressing sincere thanks to the more than 1,000 people who have reached out to her family. She is living in the ironic world where the sun is shining at its brightest in a sky that seems eternally at its darkest.

She wrote about how Darren’s military friends had an expression, “OTF”. It stands for “other than funerals.” Why do friends and acquaintances wait until someone dies before they get together? People need each other when they are not needed. There is a need for friends to spend time with each other OTF. Although Cindy was deeply appreciative of all the good friends that visited her family and mourned with them, it made her wish that friends could get together more often. Maybe even for no reason at all. As we slowly emerge from COVID-19, we are embracing time spent with friends.

OTF.

We judge people on their actions more than their words, but when they both come together in a meaningful way, the intersection can be beautiful.

Some of the actions of people who knew Dylan and know the Little family have been beautiful.

Josh Boodhoo, a close friend of Dylan’s, is a professional jiu-jitsu fighter. On Oct. 30, just days after he lost his buddy, Josh corralled his emotions and channeled his focus to win the gold medal at the North American AJP Pro brown belt 85kg championship in

Toronto. The day after winning gold, he sat in the Little’s home and told them how he dedicated the competition to Dylan.

“Everything has been so hard this past week, the crazy mix emotions has had me drained and feeling so weak,” Boodhoo posted. “The only thing keeping my mind determined to continue and compete was he would want me to keep my head up and go get that gold, I thought I need to win this for him and I will.

“I love you bro, I did this for you.”

Boodhoo was not the only friend of Dylan’s or the Little family to step up.

Two of Cindy’s friends, Julie Clement and Chantale Harty, started a GoFundMe to raise money for a commemorative bench that will be placed on a trail in the community. The goal was to reach \$7,500. As of press time, the amount raised was nudging \$20,000.

“We would like to arrange for a memorial bench to be made in Dylan’s name and placed close to their home on the families favourite trails where they often walk their dog Jaeger. This resting spot will give them a special place to visit to talk to Dylan, feel closer and help to heal their hearts over time,” Clement and Harty wrote on the GoFundMe page.

Dylan’s friends gathered for a photo at the site of where the bench will be. It will be a beautiful place for his friends – being able to sit and reflect and enjoy the serenity of one of Dylan’s special places.

When a young person passes on, his or her family often want to create a legacy for their child. Rowan’s Law, a legacy for local high school student and rugby player Rowan Stringer, was driven by the need for concussion awareness for young people in Canada. More recently, the corner of Franktown Road and Munster Road has become the site of a memorial for South Carleton High School student Ian Goddard, who was killed in an accident at that intersection in April. It is a stark reminder of how something must be done on a road where the speed limit doesn’t even register as a suggestion.

Dylan Little’s legacy is different. While the bench will be a place for his friends and family to gather, what he has accomplished is certainly bigger than any of us in the mortal world could ever have done.

He brought people together on a mostly negative social media platform and pried open their hearts. He also brought out an extraordinary amount of love and compassion in people who, during a pandemic, may have forgotten what those things were.

And bringing love and compassion back to the lives of so many is an incredible legacy to have.

FROM THE OTHER SIDE

Jeffrey Morris



Messenger

SERVING MANOTICK AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES
IN OSGOODE, RIDEAU AND SOUTH GLOUCESTER

5567 Manotick Main St., P.O. Box 567,
Manotick, Ontario K4M 1A5
www.manotickmessenger.ca

Publisher: Jeff Morris

Managing Editor: Jeff Morris

Contributing Writers:

Grace Thrasher, Larry Ellis, Phill Potter

Advertising and Marketing:

Gary Coulombe

Photographer: Greg Newton

Email:

Advertising:

garyhcoulombe@gmail.com

Editor:

manotickmessenger@gmail.com

News/sports:

manotickmessenger@gmail.com

The Manotick Messenger is published every other FRIDAY in Manotick, Ontario. Letters will be edited for length, clarity and libellous statements. Display rates are available on request. The Manotick Messenger is not responsible for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts, photos or other material used for publication purposes.

Advertising deadlines: DISPLAY Thursday prior 10 am. All layouts and composition of advertising produced by employees of Manotick Messenger Inc. are protected by copyright invested in the publishers of the Manotick Messenger

Member, Ontario Community Newspaper Association
Canadian Community Newspaper Association

