

Dear judges,

This cartoonist is unique to the Cambridge Times.

C.A. Gray illustrates a variety of local topics, with twice-weekly cartoons.

Among the submissions here is one from Dec. 15, 2016 that references the surging price of electricity. It shows a man sitting at the “Heat or Eat Café”, looking over a menu of items, each of which comes with a \$20 electricity surcharge in addition to its regular price. As it has been elsewhere, the high cost of electricity has been a hot topic in Cambridge during the past few years, with several local businesses citing it as the reason for shutting down.

During April of this year, Cambridge city council renewed its commitment to offering online voting as an option during the next municipal election. Reference was made during that meeting, and quoted in Cambridge Times, about Russian President Vladimir Putin not planning to get involved with the Cambridge election. At the time, accusations of election rigging in the U.S. were running strong.

C.A. Grey took the jest a step further, showing Putin denying it would be possible to fix the Cambridge election, while working a puppet of Mayor Doug Craig.

On the same weekend in September of this year, *The Handmaid’s Tale* (filmed in large part in Cambridge) cleaned up at the Emmys and a large promotional event was hosted regarding The Gaslight District – a redevelopment plan for a historic foundry. Our mayor is a big proponent of both.

In his cartoon, C.A. Grey depicts the mayor in costume from *The Handmaid’s Tale*, holding up an Emmy with one hand and clutching a gas light with the other as Margaret Atwood looks on.

Sincerely,

Richard Vivian

Editor

Cambridge Times

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# timesviewpoint

## TIMES EDITORIAL

### Task force was listening

The top-scoring potential multiplex location sites are situated on Hespeler and Pinebush roads. Initially proposed for leased Conestoga College lands at Fountain Street and Highway 401, that location scored the lowest of the short-listed properties.

It's clear task force members were paying attention when the public spoke about the importance of picking a location central to existing residents and providing spin-off business benefits within Cambridge.

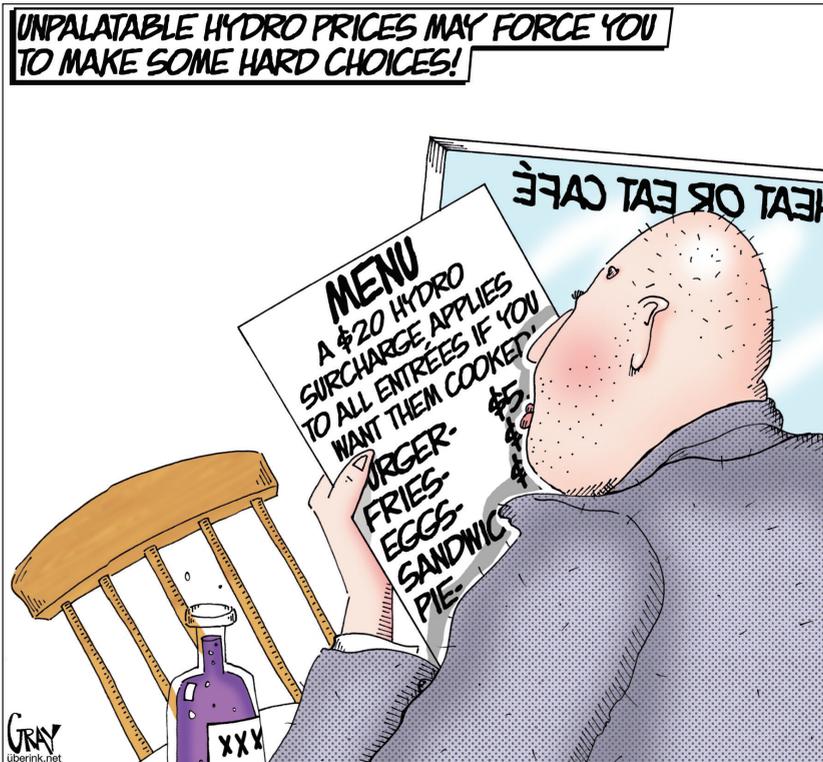
Building a sportsplex on the college property would be the least expensive option, though that site falls far short in other considerations and should be dropped from the project.

Without a doubt, finances are a key part of any major municipal project, however, people have made it clear they want a "signature" centre that will attract tourism and bring benefits to the community whose residents are paying for this facility.

City council has a lot of work ahead of it in finalizing a multiplex location, especially if it's not going to throw the task force's efforts into the waste bin.

Taxpayers pockets are already light from the increased cost of ... well, everything, and centrally located land won't come cheap.

Partnership opportunities and other alternatives to the pre-approved design concept must be fully explored to find crucial savings, as noted in the task force report.



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## WEBPOLL

### Weigh in on the issues...

HAVE YOUR SAY  
ON OUR WEBSITE:  
WWW.CAMBRIDGETIMES.CA

#### THIS WEEK:

Has the price of hydro affected your decision to put up an outdoor Christmas display?

#### LAST WEEK:

Will you be donating to a local charity this holiday season?

Yes, it's part of my gift giving: 39%  
No, I'm on a tight budget: 61%  
I wasn't going to, but I will now: 0%

## Plenty of help available for those who need it

The holidays can be a happy, but also stressful time, for any of us. For those of us who are already struggling to cope, the stress can feel unbearable.

A recent separation or divorce, the loss of a loved one, a change in our financial situation – any of these circumstances, among a host of others, can make the holidays a particularly difficult time.

That's why we're grateful to be in a community that is home to an entire network of helpful programs and services.

To find help near you, or anywhere in Ontario, you can go online to [www.211ontario.ca](http://www.211ontario.ca) or speak directly with an operator by calling 2-1-1.

The 211 line is free, available 24/7 and offers help in more than 100 languages.

You can also access a local database of services online at [isearchmycommunity.ca](http://isearchmycommunity.ca). As always, in the event of an emergency, please call 911.

Are you wondering what type of help is available in our community?

Most residents in Cambridge are within walking distance of a neighbourhood association.

From the Silverheights and Preston Heights community groups in the north end of the city to the Kinbridge Community Association in the south, neighbourhood groups throughout Cambridge are here to help you feel safe, supported and connected within your community.

If you're struggling to put food on the table, Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank can help you get through a difficult week or month.

If you want to speak with a counsellor, the Family Counselling Centre of Cambridge and North Dumfries offers

support for people of all ages.

And the CMHA's Distress Line is available 24/7 and is completely free.

If you need a safe place to escape

violence, abuse or homelessness, Cambridge Shelter Corporation, Women's Crisis Services, and Argus Residence for Young People can all provide shelter.

These are only a few of the many services available in our community.

As we count down to the holidays, let us be grateful for everything that we have. And let us also remember that each of us is coping with a different reality.

Are you in a position to give back?

If your answer is yes, then please take that step today. Don't put it off.

Whether you want to make a donation, volunteer your time or get involved in some other way, offer your help now while it's still top-of-mind.

If you're looking for easy and quick ways to give back, check out the United Way gift catalogue at [www.uwcambridge.on.ca](http://www.uwcambridge.on.ca). Or give us a call at 519-621-1030.

*Suhanya Ketheeswaran is a community engagement specialist with United Way Cambridge & North Dumfries.*

### TIMES GUEST COLUMNIST



SUHANYA KETHEESWARAN

To submit a Guest Column, email editor Richard Vivian at [rvivian@cambridgetimes.ca](mailto:rvivian@cambridgetimes.ca). Please be sure to include a headshot photo and a one-sentence biography at the end. Total length should be about 500 words.

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## TIMES EDITORIAL

### Food for thought

Have you ever been overcome with worry about how to put food on the table?

Being able to balance the budget and afford sustenance for yourself and your family is one of the most challenging and frightening things for a family to go through.

This is Hunger Awareness Week (Sept. 18 to 22), a national campaign that began in 2006 as a way to educate people about the reality of hunger in Canada and to encourage all Canadians to help those in need.

Here are a few facts to digest, courtesy of Food Banks Canada:

- More than 860,000 men, women and children turn to food banks each year for help;
- Half of all Canadians know someone, whether they realize or not, who has visited a food bank;
- Nearly 50 per cent of Canadians think employed people don't use food banks, when in reality one-in-six users has a job;
- one-in-three people assisted by a food bank is a child.

These are startling figures, especially for a country as affluent as Canada. We urge everyone who can afford it to donate to Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank, be it financial, food contributions or their time. Visit [www.cambridgefoodbank.on.ca](http://www.cambridgefoodbank.on.ca) or call 519-622-6550 for information.

We can do better than this. We must do better than this.

**HANDMAID'S TALE WINS LARGE AT EMMYS!  
GASLIGHT EVENT ROCKS!**



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## Adjusting to change isn't always that easy for me

I don't know if it is my age or if it is just that I have become too comfortable with my surroundings.

But lately, I tend to find myself getting lost or upset with the change of things that have been part of my lifestyle.

Take for example the local Zehrs in Hespeler. It took me a few tries to get used to the new store when they moved location, but I was able to do it eventually.

But last week I had occasion to be in the east Galt area, and yes my passport was sufficient to allow me to cross the 401, and I needed to pick up a few things so being near the Zehrs there I decided to go in.

What a mistake. As soon as I went in I should have known that I was in trouble just by the setup of the store.

After wandering aimlessly for 10

minutes looking for where everything was, I screamed like a school kid heading back on the first day of class.

I ran out, hopped in my car and drove to the safety of Hespeler and did my shopping there.

Another example was the new Beer Store in town.

Since my wife drinks wine, I always went to the liquor store and did one-stop shopping and had no reason to go to the Beer Store.

But I wanted something for a family get-together that the LCBO did not have, so for the very first time I entered the new Beer Store and immediately knew I was in trouble.

The setup confused me, like a

curve ball confuses some of the Toronto Blue Jay hitters, but I persevered and 20 cold minutes later I had what I wanted and got the hell out of there – probably to never set foot in there again.

But alas, the worst was yet to come.

This time I dragged my wife into the confusion.

We had to visit a family member in the hospital and we were totally unprepared for the excursion that was to come.

Just finding our way in was a challenge, then figuring out which way to get to the room took some effort as neither one of us seemed to have our direction right.

We wandered up and down the

halls and elevators of the hospital and in some cases seemed to do complete circles.

I am sure we passed the Tim Hortons three or four times before finally finding the right room.

After the visit I thought "OK, we are safe."

I was wrong. Twenty-five minutes and two bathroom stops later, we eventually emerged into the outside light, more embarrassed than anything and as I said to my wife as we were driving out of the parking lot, "Next time I am bringing popcorn and marking where we had been."

Now I have to go to city hall so, Coun. Mike Devine, if you see me wandering, point me in the right direction.

*James Hillis is a lifelong Cambridge resident and a local blogger.*

### TIMES GUEST COLUMNIST



JAMES HILLIS

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## TIMES EDITORIAL

### Action on debt is overdue

This week's provincial budget will be a celebration for the Liberal government as it brings the budget back into balance for the first time in almost a decade. The only thing we can say about it — what took you so long?

The government started this deficit trip in response to the great recession of 2008, when the financial system was on the verge of collapse. It was the right response to turn on the spending taps to help stabilize an economy on the precipice of disaster. But in the decade since, the economy has recovered, especially in Ontario which now has the strongest economic growth in all of Canada.

In fact, the signs for Ontario have been positive for a number of years, but instead of putting money back into the rainy day fund and starting to pay down its historic provincial debt, the Liberal government kept spending. The only reason the budget was brought back into balance was that revenues outpaced projections.

The provincial debt now stands at more than \$318 billion and Ontario's debt to gross domestic product is closely approaching 40 per cent. It's the provincial government' third-highest budgetary expenditure at more than \$11 billion per year, falling behind only health and education spending.

It's time for the provincial government get serious about debt reduction, otherwise it won't have the tools in the toolbox for the next economic downturn.



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## When it comes to online info, aware doesn't mean informed

It was just the other day that I was sitting in the reading room of my club. I was not, in fact looking out of the window thinking of all of the wonderful words you are waiting to read.

I was staring at the screen of my iPad Pro waiting for the *Cambridge Times* website to load. As I waited, I was thinking about how this poxy piece of plastic has changed my behaviour.

I do not have a TV or a smartphone. The iPad was my first foray into modern technology. I'm sure many of the observations I make are commonplace to some of you, but they were new to me.

I had, to my surprise, spent more time on Facebook, Pinterest and LinkedIn than is useful.

I had been struggling from the outset with the demanding dominatrix known as autocorrect or the spellcheck function in MS Word.

Imagine my delight when I dis-

covered that I could just dictate to my Word program, and it would do the typing for me.

I was doing exactly that when, (insert foreshadowing here) I felt a cold chill on the back of my neck. Yes, it was the club librarian, and the dictation function was still on.

This is the transcript: "So, you are interested in how human behaviour is affected by computer technology, and the easy access to the Interwebs?" she asked.

"Take a closer look at some of the Facebook groups you belong to, especially the local Cambridge ones. Here's an example, the post was taken directly from *The Record* and reads as follows: Local councillors spend \$120,000 on travel — Cambridge spends most for second straight year. Did you read it?"

As fabulous as she was fictional, I had to admit that I had not.

"Well," she said, "let me tell you about the comments that were made on this post. The majority were excited, and angry as they were firmly convinced Cambridge council had spent \$120K.

"Despite being reminded that the article actually broke down the details for each municipality, and Cambridge council only spent \$46K, the commentators refused to believe this common sense statement. They also refused to read the article."

I was about to argue with my attractive and aggressive avatar when her hand closed like a vice over my mouth.

"You were about to tell me," she

said, "that surely having access to a hand-held Google machine would put information at everyone's fingertips. That an informed electorate would make a positive contribution to public discourse."

"Uummmfffsmm," I replied.

"Wrong," she growled, her cold grey eyes inches from mine.

"Do you need another example?" she asked. "The subject of the multiplex sports box has been discussed and debated for years. Everyone has their favourite sites, and everyone has their expert opinion on why their site preference is best. No one seems to be bothered by the fact that these properties are owned by someone. Why are people astonished that the owners of large commercial properties have plans of their own that do not include a sports box?"

We both looked at each other, and simultaneously shrugged our shoulders.



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