

THE VIEW FROM HERE

MIHAL ZADA



Bleeding out

I caught up with an old friend the other day. She had come home for a few weeks before moving to California to start a new job.

After updating each other on our lives and having a bit of a laugh, I asked her a burning question: Why California?

From a young age, my friend wanted to be a reconstructive surgeon. She grew up in Toronto, got her degree in London and then

studied to become a physician in Hamilton. That's also where she completed her residency. Last year, she moved to Arizona for a fellowship.

Now, she is a full-fledged surgeon, able to work without the

supervision of older, more experienced doctors. In fact, the health system she is working for is part of the University of California and there will be future doctors contacting her for advice.

But while the opportunity seemed fantastic, and she is a dual citizen, it concerned me that a person raised and trained in Canada would prefer the American healthcare system. I needed to know why.

The answer surprised me. I often hear comments about doctors who prefer the American system because they can make more money, a cynical reason to say the least, since even Canadian doctors make well above the average income.

It's true, she said, that a job as a surgeon in Canada wouldn't leave her scrambling to pay the bills. And she conceded her job in California would pay more. But that, she said, wasn't the point.

In Ontario, the public health system is built with a thick layer of bureaucracy whose stated purpose is to ensure costs stay down.

But for a surgeon beginning their practice, that means very little financial resources for staff and equipment.

A hospital job would be an option, but she would be on a call-list, given weekend and evening shifts, not able to do more than exam-

ine and refer patients.

There would be no quality of care, no follow-up and very little practice. That was not why she spent years training to become a surgeon.

She had been frustrated, while in training, by the way that bureaucracy seemed to do very little to save money. She described situations in which, in order to avoid paying nurses overtime, a surgery that would have been scheduled for one day was pushed off for the next, or even the next week. The surgery budget would appear to have saved money, only for that cost to come out of the inpatient budget, as a patient would take up a bed and require nursing care for those few extra days.

There are, of course, flaws with the American system. She says patients there, not being literate in managing their care, allow doctors to recommend pricey and unnecessary procedures or extras. And there is an inequality that is not seen in Canadian healthcare. But at least in California, she will be able to do the work she spent so long training to do.

Healthcare is, of course, an expensive business. And offering a public healthcare system is not an easy job. But its flaws have sent off at least one Canadian surgeon. Likely numerous others.

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"In Ontario, the public health system is built with a thick layer of bureaucracy whose stated purpose is to ensure costs stay down."

LETTERS

SEND TO: LETTERS@WELLINGTONTIMES.CA

GEEZER CERTIFIED

Re: "No Fun" in the August 31 edition of The Times.

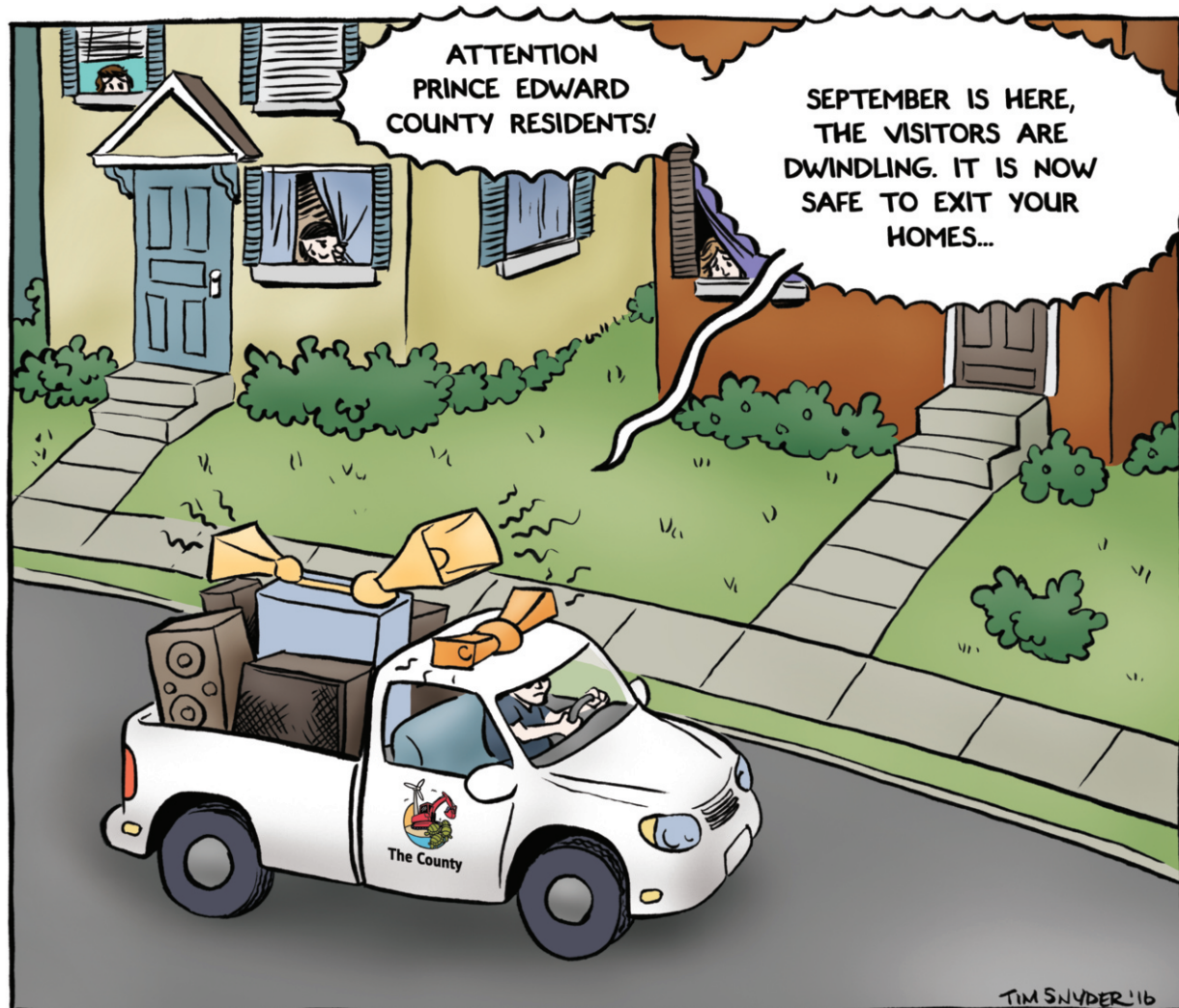
It's official—we're a bunch of old farts in the County.

Prince Edward County has the oldest average age of any county in Ontario. It's in the high fifties. Politicians and residents alike wonder what we can do to motivate young people who grew up here to stay here. Or how we can attract young people to move here. It's a real problem and we are in danger of becoming a geriatric county (we're only 6 or 7 years off in terms of average age).

So why did we just change a bylaw restriction on outdoor noise from the existing limit of 2 a.m. to midnight? Sure, 2 a.m. is late for us old geezers, but the proposed 11 p.m. and the settled compromise of midnight is just plain lame. It's no wonder young people don't want to live here.

If we continue to pass bylaws designed to patronize the very old average age of our citizenry, that age will continue to get higher. Before long, the average age in the County will be high enough that the average person here will be so hard-of-hearing that noise bylaws will be moot.

MARK RUSSELL, WELLINGTON



Tim Snyder, www.countycartoons.com

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Thank a farmer

Prince Edward County is in the midst of a drought.

An exceptionally dry spring has led to a poor growing season in most of eastern Ontario, with near record lows in rain-falls. Rivers and marshes are drying up or are at the lowest they've been in recent memory.

“about 60 per cent of Canadian farmers suffer from depression, anxiety and other mental health issues.”

Farming is a noble, often idealized, profession. Most of us would not be able to get along without farmers. They grow the food we eat, and without that, all the money in the world is

We can't control the weather, but many farmers in the County are gritting their teeth and praying for rain.

useless.

But as it turns out, it's also an intensely stressful profession.

Along with drought, nearly all commercial crops are on a downward trend in the markets. A farm owner manages insects and disease, government regulations, the value of their crops and of course, the weather.

Running a farm means constantly fixing and adjusting—tending to one problem only to tackle another. It's a small business with an exceptional number of moving parts, from managing machinery to navigating constantly changing market demand to working with a constantly changing climate.

All that stress, it turns out, is bad for you. A study from the University of Guelph's population medicine department found that about 60 per cent of Canadian farmers suffer from depression, anxiety and other mental health issues.

That makes farming one of the most stressful jobs in Canada, and puts Canadian farmers ahead of their American colleagues in problems with mental health.

The study's author suggests along with the stresses of the job, there is social isolation. Farmers also often work where they live, and being

responsible for the proper growth of plants and animals makes it difficult to escape for a vacation, or even get away for the weekend.

Although the study only included 1,100 farmers, it shines a light on a group of people who are often seen as tough and resilient.

It's a good reminder that, bearing enough stress, anyone can suffer mental illness.

Farming comes in many forms in this community, from old family farms to new, experimental gardens, from sheep and cattle to vineyards and cash crops.

Agritourism is a great contributor to the local economy as urbanites flood the countryside, seeking the beauty of idyllic lush, pastoral farmland.

And yet, the hot, dry, sunny weather persists. It's great for tourists, but terrible for farmers.

Doubtless, you've seen those bumper stickers that remind readers that if they've eaten anything, there is a farmer somewhere who had something to do with that food.

So perhaps, next time you get a chance, thank a farmer. But also offer a hug or a sympathetic ear. It's a tough job, but someone's got to do it.

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LETTERS

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FREE TRADE RUINED CANADA

The Times Comment states that “trade globalization has been a monumental success—raising billions from poverty”. This may be true for countries like China—but not in my country, Canada. Entire industries have been shipped overseas never to come back—betrayed by big business and big unions. Greed brought Canada to where it is today.

Go into any retail store or even a food store, most of it is imported. Bigger profits screw the next generation.

Our governments, federal, provincial, municipal have the highest debt load ever. Young, bright adults leave university with huge debt. They end up flipping burgers. The growing numbers of working poor can no longer afford a house in their own country. Many Canadian seniors can no longer afford to retire. Still, more and more industries are shipped to other countries.

In Canada, we struggle to pay hydro bills, food bills and water bills. We rely on foodbanks in places like Wellington. The Canadian middle class has been under attack ever since we started free trade.

No middle class—no democracy. We will be left with only have and have-nots. My Canada deserves better. Our young people deserve a

future in Canada. Our older citizens deserve a secure retirement. Canada is blessed with so many natural resources, energy and an educated

work force. This century should have been ours.

DAVE GRAY, WELLINGTON

MORE LETTERS ON PAGE 27



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Perfectly edible

If you're among those who can afford to make environmentally friendly choices about the way you buy fruits and vegetables, you're lucky. More and more, the produce aisle at the grocery store is becoming more daunting, with prices soaring and some commonly used veggies falling to environmental disasters like the California drought.

"A strange-looking apple or an ugly potato might be labelled as a No. 2 grade."

But perhaps you do have enough of an income to make both healthy and environmentally friendly choices.

You might have decided to reduce your carbon footprint by buying only Canadian produce, cutting out the stuff shipped in from Chile or South Africa. Or maybe you're choosing to buy only organic. Or sticking to farmers' markets and CSAs (Community-Supported Agriculture), where possi-

ble.

Even then, buying produce is like entering a field of political landmines, with questions about the ethics of large corporate grocery chains, monocrops and pesticide use making decision-making nearly impossible.

Lately, another option has entered the playing field. With the idea of food waste becoming a more prevalent discussion in North America, some supermarket chains, including Safeway, Sobeys and Loblaws, have introduced limited offerings of ugly fruits and vegetables.

This follows in the footsteps of French chain Intermarché, which in 2014 introduced Inglorious Fruits & Vegetables, a section for small and misshapen produce at a 30 per cent markdown in its European locations. The popularity of the concept has spread. Not surprising, as a shift in prices and the availability of fresh food have begun to cause concern here in Canada.

The thing is, government bodies like the Canadian Food Inspection Agency are partially responsible for misshapen food not being widely available until now. The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Regulations is a document under the Canada Agricultural Products Act which gives farmers clear guidelines for grading food.

Turns out, it's not safety, but rather commerce, that has kept food from making it to the general public, and instead, ending up as food for farm

animals or on compost heaps.

The grading system is based on shape, size, blemishes and dents on otherwise healthy and nutritious food. It means a strange-looking apple or an ugly potato might be labelled as a No. 2 grade fruit or vegetable, and that grade must be displayed on the product. This leaves commercial grocers and consumers with the impression that what they're buying is not as good.

The truth is, it's just not as pretty. And when we import our produce, the law was designed to ensure it will look its best.

So for years, this meant those perfectly edible fruits and vegetables never made it to grocery store shelves.

Canadians, like most people in the western world, waste an obscene amount of food—roughly \$31 billion every year. About half of that happens after it comes home, when the meat and vegetables we buy go bad before they're consumed. But about 30 per cent is tossed before we have the chance to notice, when Canada No. 2 carrots or Hail grade apples are quietly disposed of after sitting, unsellable, in crates.

So here's to the ugly and imperfect veggies that, like us, just need to be accepted—warts and all.

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ROADBLOCK DEPARTMENT

I will be darned! Here we go again. The County lets a million projects slip through its fingers. We all lose. Lost property taxes, lost jobs, lost business for suppliers.

How many times do we have to hear that the County throws too many roadblocks at people who want to invest and build here? Do we have a building department or a blocking department?

Let's change this. First, let's get the welcome mat out and start working with developers and home builders now—not months down the road. Time is money. Help, work with, suggest, compromise and lead by example. Finally, keep development fees to a minimum.

There is something very wrong with our planning department when you hear over and over again that the County is just too difficult to work with, that it takes way too long to get results or one has to jump through too many hoops.

The time has come for council to explain to me and other taxpayers why this is so, or put some progressive thinkers in charge of the building department.

DAVE GRAY, WELLINGTON

DOGGED PURSUIT

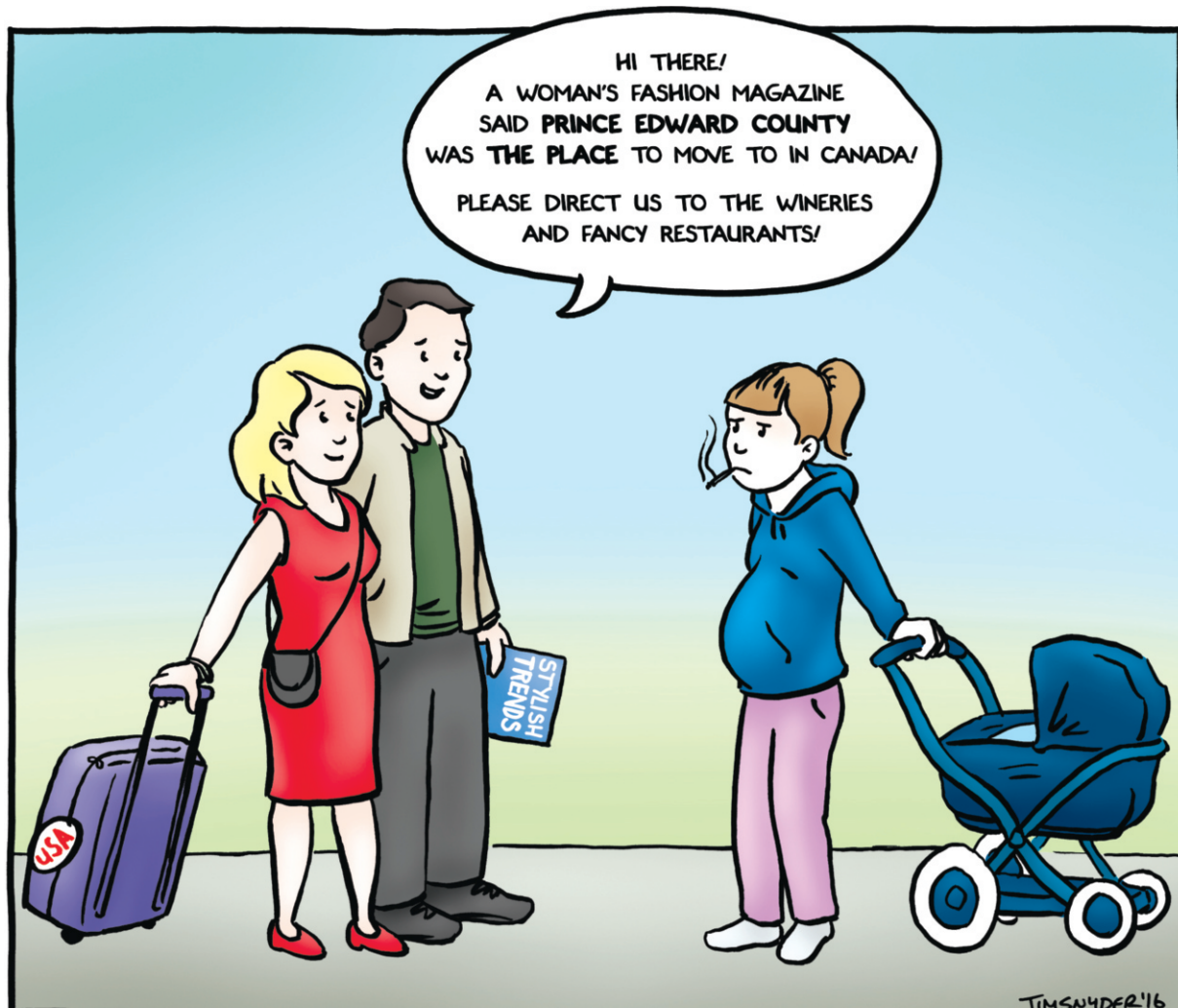
The Times' coverage [on March 2, 2016] of the White Pines decision was outstanding.

As usual, you hit the nail on the head of every facet of the legal and emotional arguments.

This has been a long, hard slog for so many of us, both time-wise and financially. For me personally, I deeply appreciate your dogged commitment to exposing what we all believe to be true about the impacts of industrial wind turbines

and I will always rely on *The Times* in the future to find out what is actually happening in the County.

BETH HARRINGTON, SOUTH MARYSBURGH



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