

LETTERS

Pawpaw on the way

Re: "Pawpaw on parade" (Nov. 22)

I enjoyed the article about the pawpaw trees. I have been fascinated by them for years since first encountering them in a woodlot near our home when I was growing up. They look so tropical and have such beautiful fall colour. I have planted quite a few in the Dundas Valley from seed I collect and propagate. However, their main means of reproduction is vegetative, which didn't get detailed in the story. The reason I mention it is because pawpaws adhere to the Victorian principle of architectural design, which states: If one would look nice, imagine what 50 would look like. Because that is what you are going to end up with after about 10 years. Some older people may remember the children's jingle about Little Jimmy way down yonder in the pawpaw patch. Make sure you have lots of room that isn't being used for anything else on the property.

David McInnis, Ancaster

Bah humbug

Kudos to the committee arranging the arrival of the CP Holiday Train. It was exciting, bright and the music was great! Hamilton showed its generosity bringing so many donations for the food bank. Great night for all. But walking back to the car, I couldn't believe my eyes — parking tickets on so many cars. Really?

Roberta Watt, Hamilton

Why is urban land vacant?

Re: "People want to save, not pave precious farmland" (Nov. 21)

Kudos to Lilly Noble for her opinion piece challenging the development industry's argument for urban sprawl to solve the housing crisis. To add to her comments, it appears to me after reading several of the industry's pieces, the common and consistent approach to dealing with the housing crisis is to place the onus for action on government. There is no disputing government's role in planning for new growth. However, when developers are the very industry regulated by that government, pointing fingers is never productive nor transformative. Instead, an assessment of what is presently within the development industry's control, to put shovels in the ground and create new housing for the future, would demonstrate the industry is taking bold action to reduce some of the growth pressures within the city. Case in point: there are vacant lands within the city's existing urban boundary that were approved for development of hundreds of residential units many years ago, but remain vacant. Why does the industry allow such lands to sit idle? With such developable lands within the existing urban boundary readily available, what message does this convey to the government agencies regulating land development and urban growth?

Mark Inrig, Hamilton

Expansion is necessary

Re: "People want to save, not pave precious farmland" (Nov. 21)

Building homes is now called paving farmland? I would not call urban expansion for homes, paving farmland. It is a natural and necessary evolution for population growth. The writer says, "By holding the boundary firm, we can more quickly increase affordable housing supply, while preserving farmland." How does this help increase affordable housing supply? Where is this acreage located within the existing boundary that has been set aside? Is it where people will want to build and raise their families? Does the writer not realize that many of these farms are growing corn for ethanol, not food for human or animal consumption? This farmland could be used for affordable housing. These homes do not have to be McMansions. To facilitate the provincial plan, boundary expansion is necessary and logical.

Wendy Frank, Grimsby

Birds trump people?

When I read the letter proposing the city allow backyard poultry, my first thought was a recipe for a new barbecue dish: Chicken NIMBY! The next thought was the kilometres of housing along King Street levelled to parking lot status, with their tenants evicted to who knows where. I would think a business-oriented agency, unlike Metrolinx, could have bought those properties for the future LRT while collecting rent in the meantime, thus reducing the \$3.4-billion budget and keeping people out of tents. However, one wall in the desolation housed a nest of chimney swifts, an endangered bird, and that wall has been left with substantial bracing in the middle of the lot. A close inspection revealed hundreds of nearby chimneys where the birds might have resettled, rent free. Too bad humans have not achieved endangered status. Hamilton should change its moniker from the Steel City to the Bird Capital.

Ron Johnson, Hamilton

Hire more nurses

Help me out here. Nurses are working a large amount of overtime causing government concern, everyone's concern really, as to nurses burning out. The number of nurses on the "Sunshine List" has tripled in recent years. Seems to me that the solution is rather simple. Hire more nurses instead of paying all that overtime. Just sayin'...

Rusty Escott, Dunnville

Justin Trudeau will leave a mixed legacy behind him

PM has had hits and misses when it comes to economy, Indigenous affairs and climate change

CRAIG WALLACE

Within the next two years, a federal election will be held. Current polls indicate, if an election were held today, Pierre Poilievre and the Conservative Party of Canada would win a substantial majority. If this occurs, what legacy will Justin Trudeau leave?

Economically, his legacy will be bleak.

In 2015, Trudeau and the Liberal Party of Canada took power, inheriting a small surplus budget left to them by outgoing prime minister Stephen Harper. Upon taking office, Trudeau immediately turned to deficit spending. Running deficits at this time went against conventional Keynesian economic theory, which states, in part, government should run deficits in "bad times" (wars, recessions, pandemics, etc.) and surpluses in "good times."

Trudeau's first four years in office had no major emergencies, therefore his decision to run deficits was "highly illogical," to quote TV's Mr. Spock.

Running deficits during the COVID-19 pandemic made total sense. But before? Not at all. That debt/deficit is made worse by increased interest rates, and to date, the Trudeau government has released no plan as to how they will return to a balanced budget.

This is not a positive legacy to leave. In that, he follows the unfortunate footsteps of his father, Pierre Trudeau, and the disastrous economic situation he left Canadians.

When Justin Trudeau came to power in 2015, he said in his mandate letters to his ministers that "no relationship was more important to him, and to the country, than the one with Indigenous peoples."

Have his actions while in power reflected this?

In 2019, he had First Nations protesters removed from a Liberal fundraising event who called for him to live up to his promise of ending boil-water advisories on all First Nations reserves. (He promised to end all these advisories by 2021. As of late 2023, while the situation has improved, there are First Nations reserves still without clean water.) He introduced the National Truth and Reconciliation Day in



ADRIAN WYLD THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE PHOTO

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau makes his way to question period Tuesday in the House of Commons. Overall, history will not be kind to him, Craig Wallace writes.

2021. And then, instead of spending even part of that holiday with First Nations residents, he went away on a family vacation.

His conduct there can best be described as "tone deaf." His government spent millions fighting a lawsuit directed against the federal government underfunding of First Nations children's welfare programs. On the other hand, his government has made progress on land claims, and he did appoint the first Indigenous Canadian as governor general. So perhaps the fairest thing to say about Trudeau and the First Nations is his legacy will be very mixed.

How about climate change? Again, we see a mixed legacy. He is certainly doing and has done more than any Conservative politician that I can think of in this area. His policy of taxing carbon to discourage its use is a traditional market-based solution to change unwanted behaviour. He insisted there would be no exceptions. And then recently, he suspended the carbon tax on home heating oil for political reasons.

So how committed is he to fight-

ing climate change? That is open to question now.

He came to office in 2015 pledging to unite Canadians. Instead, what we see is two western provinces (Alberta and Saskatchewan) overtly hostile to the federal government and, in fact, threatening to pass legislation that will allow them to ignore federal laws. He has taken no action to protect Canadians negatively impacted by Quebec's bills 96 and 21. Here Trudeau has continued the historical Liberal "pandering" to Quebec while being indifferent or even adversarial to western Canadians. His national unity legacy will be quite poor.

A positive legacy he will leave is his \$10-per-day child-care program. This has helped thousands of Canadian families and is something he can be very proud of.

Trudeau took office in 2015 with a bright, progressive image. Obviously, the realities of office will negatively impact how any politician is viewed. But I believe overall, history will not be kind to him.

CRAIG WALLACE IS A HAMILTON RESIDENT AND AUTHOR OF FIVE BOOKS.

The time for making change is now

ERIN GRIVER

Recently, the governments of Ontario and Canada came together to establish the National Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence in Ontario. While this is a big step, there is still much work to be done.

In October, another four lives were tragically lost due to intimate partner violence (IPV) and gender-based violence (GBV). It's an epidemic that continues in Ontario and across Canada and has claimed 46 lives in Ontario between November 2022 and September 2023, with even more lives added to that total in October.

The senseless acts of violence in Sault Ste. Marie put a spotlight on IPV and GBV just days before the beginning of Woman Abuse Prevention Month. The provincial and federal governments responded by pledging \$162 million over four years to the implementation of a plan to end gender-based violence in Ontario, but the provincial government is still refusing to formally declare IPV an epidemic.

More than 70 municipalities

across Ontario have declared IPV an epidemic, with Sault Ste. Marie being among the most recent. They did so following an impassioned speech to the Sault Ste. Marie city council by Brian Sweeney, the father of one of the four who died by femicide on Oct. 23.

"Not enough is being done. Everything is being pushed down the road so that sooner or later we might get to it. We don't have time (for inaction) anymore," Sweeney said. "The pain is so overwhelming, I wouldn't wish it upon anybody."

With November recognized as Woman Abuse Prevention Month, now is the time to begin making change toward ending gender-based violence. It's not just up to governments and politicians to make a difference; you and I can also do our part. Making change doesn't have to be hard; it can be as simple as empathizing, educating and engaging.

We need to understand the importance of believing survivors, and not minimizing the impact caused by gender-based violence. More than 11 million people in Canada

have experienced intimate partner violence at least once since the age of 15.

People can also do their part by educating themselves about the different forms of IPV so they can take an informed stand against it. The Government of Canada has released a number of resources, including 16 steps for 16 days of activism. Learning how to identify potentially dangerous situations and support those who have experienced abuse is an excellent way to start to create change in your own circles, and in your community.

Engagement is one of the most crucial steps in eliminating IPV. By speaking up and speaking out, contacting local politicians and lawmakers, and standing up for women directly impacted by violence, we can work together to raise awareness of this predictable and preventable epidemic.

According to the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, the number of femicides in Canada has increased every year since 2019, and 2023 is on pace to continue that trend. Through empathy, education and engagement, we can do our part to ensure there won't be more tragedies like the one in Sault Ste. Marie, and work toward the end of femicide and intimate partner violence.

ERIN GRIVER IS DIRECTOR OF INASMUCH HOUSE, MISSION SERVICES OF HAMILTON.