

The Chronicle-Journal

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE NORTHWEST

Published by Continental Newspapers (Canada) Ltd.
75 South Cumberland Street, Thunder Bay, Ont. P7B 1A3

Frank Augruso,
Advertising and Sales Manager

Greg Giddens,
Managing Editor

Hilda Caverly,
Director of Finance

Harry Brown,
Director of Circulation

Robin Williams,
Press Foreman

David Wadson,
Systems/Graphics Mgr.

www.chroniclejournal.com

24 Sussex sucks Canadians' cash

IF YOU had a choice, would you choose to live in a house that construction experts had deemed to be in critical condition, no matter how pretty it appears from the outside?

Probably not, and yet "critical" is exactly how the National Capital Commission (NCC) — the federal agency in charge of Canada's six official residences — describes 24 Sussex Drive, where Canada's prime minister is supposed to live.

Built 150 years ago by a lumber baron, the stately stone house overlooking the Ottawa River has become a crumbling fire trap. It is no wonder that our current prime minister, Justin Trudeau, has chosen not to live there with his wife and young children.

Trudeau and his family reside down the street at the less sumptuous Rideau Cottage, and reportedly like it just fine.

The last prime minister to occupy 24 Sussex was Trudeau's predecessor, Stephen Harper. The first prime minister to lay his head in the lumber baron's mansion, nearly 70 years ago, was Louis St. Laurent, who reportedly hated the idea and did so very reluctantly.

Since Harper moved out three years ago, 24 Sussex has been vacant, becoming a symbol of indecision and the just plain ridiculous. Washington's White House and Britain's 10 Downing Street might also be in need of a paint job, but it's hard to imagine that they would be permitted to lapse into a the deplorable condition that has befallen their Canadian equivalent.

A thorough renovation at 24 Sussex has been pegged at about \$34 million, versus the \$38-million price tag for simply demolishing it and building something new on the site, perhaps with a more modern, less Victorian design.

To upgrade all of the official residences, including Rideau Hall, the Governor-General's mansion, the NCC is recommending that we spend \$83 million over the next 10 years.

Either way, it's a lot of money that could be used for other purposes. And Trudeau, who lived at 24 Sussex as a child when his father, Pierre, was prime minister, has certainly proven that a Canadian political leader doesn't need to live in a mansion.

A prime minister and his family does require round-the-clock security, but that can be arranged virtually anywhere.

Now here's where it gets a bit ridiculous. While 24 Sussex — as well as the leader's getaway at Harrington Lake — are in very bad shape indeed, Stornoway, the residence for the official opposition leader, is quite good actually.

So here's a thought: If St. Laurent, who was no fool, thought it silly in his time for a prime minister to need an official residence, most Canadians nowadays would probably consider it silly to have special digs for whoever is leading their official opposition. Why can't he or she pay rent like everyone else?

Anyone who browses the NCC website will see that Stornoway is an attractive, ample house — befitting of a prime minister without seeming too grand. It would do the job nicely, and apparently doesn't require any substantial renovation, other than a new roof.

As for 24 Sussex? Tear the sucker down. Save about \$35 million, and turn the property into a park that everyone can enjoy. We're told the view of the river is terrific.

Write to us

Letters to the editor, exclusive to The Chronicle-Journal, are most welcome. Those kept to 300 words or less have priority. Address them to:

Chronicle-Journal Letters
75 S. Cumberland St., Thunder Bay ON P7B 1A3
Fax: 343-9409

E-mail: (no attachments please)
letters@chroniclejournal.com

We reserve the right to edit, condense or reject submissions. Writers must provide their full name, address and telephone number. Please cite page and date for articles mentioned. Letters may appear on our website.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Kindness of strangers in crisis appreciated

I WOULD like to personally thank the couple who stopped behind us when my family's vehicle was hit, side impact, by a deer.

The deer blindsided us and we were all in shock. You came to us and were on the phone calling ambulance and police and stayed until the ambulance took us to the hospital.

Your kindness in this situation helped with a very good outcome. Thank you for staying after we left with the ambulance to give the details to police. We only wish we grabbed your names before we left.

My family and I would also like to thank the firefighters, local police and ambulance crew for your very quick response to the scene and your care and concern for my two children who are gripping their teddy bears you provided to them still.

Your quick action also helped with a positive outcome. May God bless you all.

Jennifer Koval
THUNDER BAY

Jesus, the Bible have made a real difference

OVER the last 20 years, I have read The Chronicle-Journal faithfully. Dorothy Hays has written many letters to the editor and I have read them all. Often I have felt sorry for her as she does not believe in God or his son Jesus Christ.

I quote Dorothy: "What is wrong in giving up age-old myths with no evidence what-so-ever and believing that helping others is the right thing to do?" (*Vesper Not Willing to Hide Behind Pulpit — Letter, Nov. 18*). Dorothy, you are correct in saying that "helping others is the right thing to do." That is what Jesus taught.

Now having mentioned the name of Jesus, I ask you, is he a myth? The whole world keeps track of time according to when He died. We also remember His birth with the oldest and most celebrated holiday in history, Christmas.

The Bible is the greatest book ever written. There is more truth in it than in any other book. The Bible and The Chronicle-Journal are the only two things that I read every day. The Bible tells me that the Jew-

ish people were to be scattered all over the Earth in different countries for a very long time but God said at some point that He will establish the Nation of Israel. This prophecy came true in 1948 after Hitler tried to kill all of the Jews.

How is the Bible a myth when it tells of the future way before it happens?

I do have faith in God and his son Jesus Christ only because I have had many answers to prayer and I believed they were real, by his grace.

Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes unto the Father but by me." If you don't believe in a God, just call upon Jesus (his son) and he won't disappoint you.

Barry Laukkanen
NIPIGON

Refusing requests to die 'horrendously cruel'

Re: Death of Audrey Parker (Activist Sought to Change Assisted Dying Law — CJ, Nov. 4; No Changes Planned to Assisted-Death Law — CJ, Nov. 3).

AUDREY Parker of Halifax was approved for medical aid in dying; her breast cancer had metastasized to her brain, and her suffering was intolerable. She had wanted to live a few more months to have Christmas with her family, but feared losing competency and chose Nov. 1 as her date to die. She is the latest Canadian to reveal the cruelty of our restrictive laws.

In response to Parker's plea for a change in law, allowing for advance requests, federal Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould said, "We're not considering changing something in the legislation. Were confident in the legislation that we brought forward, that it finds the right balance in terms of being able to access medical assistance in dying, protecting the autonomy of individuals to make the appropriate decisions for themselves as well as protecting vulnerable individuals."

This is an appalling statement for her to have made, as within a matter of weeks the Council of Canadian Academies will deliver its reports on the examination of three types of requests for medical aid in dying that are not covered by Bill C-14,

Canada's medical aid in dying legislation. The requests being studied are requests by mature minors, requests in cases of mental illness, and advance requests.

Has our justice minister made up her mind already? Wilson-Raybould is terribly wrong in believing that the law strikes the right balance. Eighty per cent of Canadians want the option of advance requests for medical aid in dying (Ipsos Reid, 2016). An advanced request for medical aid in dying would allow people diagnosed with a competency-eroding illness to specify in advance the circumstances in which they would want an assisted death.

Bill C-14 requires that a patient show competency just before the procedure is provided. The patient must be competent and must confirm the request for assisted dying. This is horrendously cruel, as patients who are heavily sedated for pain, must have their pain medication reduced in order that competency can be shown. If competency has been eroded, the patient cannot receive an assisted death. Where is compassion? Where is common sense? Have any patients changed their minds about the requested assisted death?

It is also unacceptable that faith-based, publicly-funded institutions have the right to deny a patient an assisted death on the premises (Ontario Bill 41). In Thunder Bay, St. Joseph's Hospital provides palliative and end-of-life care, and yet it has the power to force a patient to transfer by ambulance to the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre for an assisted death.

How does the right of a religious facility supersede the rights of Canadians to access their Charter and legal right to an assisted death? We are a multi-faith, multicultural society. How is religion allowed to dictate medical care? Religion has no place in medicine. St. Joseph's Hospital must not receive our tax dollars until they allow assisted dying on the premises.

We must let our prime minister, members of Parliament, and members of provincial parliament know that changes must be made to Bill C-14. We have the power of our votes. Change will happen.

Sheila Noyes
THUNDER BAY
Dying with Dignity Canada

Tapestry women build connections, celebrate diversity

BY ROOPA RAKSHIT

BEING part of a community is a basic social need. We need a community to evolve, to nurture, to support one another, and to build solidarity. The community provides the familiarity of common ground and brings people together. When a multitude of communities connect, needless to say, there is the economic expansion, intercultural enrichment, aesthetics, character, and personality.

Thunder Bay is now home to a multi-cultural and multi-linguistic mosaic of communities from various parts of Asia (not a comprehensive list): South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka), Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam), East Asia (China, Japan, Korea), and West Central Asia (Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria).

This diversity is growing, emerging, and evolving.

Laura Fralick and I, along with a group of community volunteers created a platform called The Asian Women's Tapestry to weave cultures, to cultivate friendships across borders and to help make Thunder Bay "home" for new residents.

The Asian Women's Tapestry enhances the development of a network of professionals, academics,



ONE CITY, MANY VOICES

Thunder Bay's Anti-Racism and Respect Committee produces this monthly column to promote greater understanding of race relations in Northwestern Ontario.

and foster personal interests. The group enjoys friendships and camaraderie of non-Asians from other regions of the world with shared pursuits, issues, and challenges.

The group meets monthly in meetings at various locations, homes, and restaurants to bond over delightful Asian snacks, sharing life journeys, experiences, perspectives on transformative professional paths and career choices, and soul-searching life anecdotes. Conversations blend in with high spirits, laughter, and vivacity.

On Saturday, Dec. 15, The Asian Women's Tapestry is hosting an evening of community connections at the Lakehead University Faculty Lounge, 6 p.m. The highlights include a lot of fun activities: cultural extravaganza, door prizes, silent-auctions, 50-50 draws. The Asian cul-



PHOTO SUPPLIED BY ROOPA RAKSHIT

Thunder Bay-Superior North MP Patty Hajdu meets with members of the Asian Women Tapestry. Pictured are, from left, Roopa Rakshit, Laurie Marshall, Meera Pandit, Sutopa Rubaiyat, Patty Hajdu, Chitra Jacob, Anjali Mago, Kholoud Abu Shahla, Zara Karimi, Jerome Padua, Amina Abu-Bakare, and Laura Fralick.

ture further spreads its influence through its cuisines. The evening will have a splendid buffet of multifaceted and spice-infused dishes from Bangladeshi, Chinese, Indian, and Mediterranean cultures.

Thunder Bay-Superior North MP Patty Hajdu, the federal minister of employment, workforce and labour, will be in attendance, along with Shelby Ch'ng, the Northwood ward councillor on Thunder Bay city council. The guests will inspire us with their words about inclusive communities. Another guest speaker, Dreeni Geer, director of Lakehead University's office of human

rights and equity, will share "Gifts from our Mothers" in her talk.

Funds raised from event ticket sales will be donated to Faye Peterson Transition House, Alpha Court, and Precious Bundles, as part of our core principle of giving back. The group requests you to make our efforts go even further through purchasing a membership, which is crucial in celebrating the Asian diversity in our community.

There is an age-old saying that to make friends you must show your friendliness — a prerequisite to building solidarity, fellowships, and affiliations. Thereby building a

strong, diverse and multicultural society. Valuing, appreciating, acknowledging and embracing varied cultural nuances paves the way for nothing but progression — for any society, for any community, for any region, for any country.

The essence is friendship with mutual respect.

Roopa Rakshit is a founding member of The Asian Women's Tapestry. To know more about the group, please write to roopalovesnature@gmail.com. The views and opinions expressed in this column are those of the author.