

After School

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Volume 13 Issue 4, December, 2011



Education candidates carry Toronto

Manfred Netzel assesses the success of OSSTF-endorsed candidates in the October election Page 4

Calendar

Wednesday, December 7, 2012. Holiday luncheon. Tuckers Restaurant. Warden Avenue and Eglinton. Jim Loftus, 416 447-0811.

ARM's Indoor Golf Training Program

The very successful 10-session indoor golf training program is again scheduled for January 10 to March 13, 2012 at the Metro Golf Dome, 125 Milner Ave., Scarborough. Hopefully, we will have 2 golf pros to assist our 30 or so aspiring professionals. Fees are \$232 for the full 10 sessions and \$29 for single sessions.

To confirm your 10 weeks or single session participation call Jim Loftus by Wednesday, December 27, 2011. 416 447-0811

Wednesday, January 18, 2012. Antiques Show and Luncheon, Tuckers Marketplace, corner of Warden and Eglinton. Three professional appraisers will speak about antiques and then appraise your items (maximum 2 per person). There is no charge for the appraisals and additional info. You have to pay only for lunch. Registration starts at 10:30 and the program begins at 11:00. Jim Loftus, 416 447-0811

Wednesday, February 8, 2012. Valentine's Day Celebration of Love followed by a luncheon. Canadiana Restaurant near the subway at Six Points (Dundas and Bloor). Love poetry introduced and read by Bruce Archer, poet and author (and former English teacher). Members of ARM C12 will also have some of their finest work on hand for a personal look at love and Valentine's Day.

Wednesday, April 18, 2012. E-mail and Social Networking for

Seniors. Learn the ins and outs of computers, smartphones and tablet computers such as the iPad 2. Time and place tba.

Wednesday, May 30, 2012. Annual General Meeting. (Tentative)

ARM 12 Goes to Stratford

Wednesday June 20, 2012, 2 PM matinee for ARM C-12 members and friends. Two selections are offered:

42nd Street – a jubilant backstage musical. The director, Julian Marsh, has doubts about Dorothy Brock, the star of his promising new show "Pretty Lady." A tricky situation develops. Dorothy's admirer is the show's backer. However, events take an unexpected turn when a newcomer, Peggy Sawyer, wins a place in the chorus and in Julian's heart. Tickets: A+ seats: \$100.00. A seats: \$90.00

Wanderlust – A musical based on poems by Robert Service with additional lyrics Morris Panych. While toiling away in his job as bank clerk, aspiring poet, Robert Service, dreams of a new life of romance and adventure in the gold rush of the north. Problem! The object of his affection, Louise, a pretty co-worker is already engaged and her fiancé can be quite a dangerous man. Tickets: A seats: \$90.00 Please reserve your seat ASAP. Call Karma Naike at 416 783-6591. You can write a cheque payable to ARM C-12, post-dated to May 20, 2012, and mail to K. Naike, 980 Briar Hill Ave. Toronto, ON M6B 1M3. Also indicate your choice of presentation. Special access seats will be reserved as needed. Itinerary details will follow.

Editorial Chatter

ED PRESTON IS AN EXCEPTIONALLY TALENTED PHOTOGRAPHER. His artistic sense and his mastery of technique never fail to please, even astonish. His contribution to *After School's* "The Retired Bard" establishes a level to which any photographer would be willing to aspire. We hope you find his work as inspiring as we do.

IAN CAMERON NEVER FAILS to bring a scholarly touch to his book reviews in our "Considered" section. This issue, he takes on a book released before the last federal election, *Harperland* and demonstrates that author Lawrence Martin's arguments are just as true if not more so since the election. The swagger, the curtailing of debate in the legislature demonstrate the author's perspicacity in assessing the Harper style of government.

STEVE FULLER TRIES ON SOME ETHNIC EATING in this issue. Steve is always willing to invite ARM members to join him in the kitchen or in exploring eateries whose menus will entice the palates of our members' cultivated tastes. Steve is a full-time gourmet; accept his challenge and live a little.

PAUL ROOK ONCE AGAIN SEES THE ABSURDITIES in the world around us. This month he emphasizes political hypocrisy. Sometimes amusing, occasionally verging on the splenetic, Rook's attention to the passing scene in popular culture and current politics merits close reading.

ROSEMARIE MOHRING REPORTS on an excellent outing, the Trent River boat trip. The work that goes into planning and executing such an adventure deserves recognition for the commitment, enthusiasm and willingness to innovate that Mohring displays.

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After School Volume 13, Issue 4, December 2011

After School is the official publication of Active Retired Members of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, Chapter 12 Toronto (ARM C12)

Opinions expressed in *After School* are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policies of ARM Chapter 12 or of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

Submissions are always welcome but will not be returned. All submissions are subject to editing for length and style while respecting the author's intentions.

Editorial Team: Ian Cameron, Larry French, Manfred Netzel, Paul Rook, Stephen Fuller, Sally Pengelley, Neil Walker

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ARM golfers help *Swing For Kids*

Over \$10,000 goes to 15 charities

by Jim Loftus

ON JULY 15, 2011, ARM DISTRIBUTED CHEQUES of \$670 to each of the 15 charities listed below. Services provided by the charities range from early childhood education to rehabilitation programs for youth to complete high school graduation and/or post-secondary education following struggles with substance abuse or difficult encounters with the law. The donations derive from the accumulated proceeds of silent auctions, raffles and hole sign sponsorships of the 2009 and 2010 Annual Spring and Fall Golf Tournaments at Rolling Hills Golf Course, Warden Avenue, Gormley.

The tournaments are great sporting and social events for ARM members, family and friends and are generously supported by ARM's friends with Teachers' Life, Educators Financial Group and OTIP/RAEO. The Sheet Metal Workers, Local Union No. 30, Toronto, also generously donates \$500 annually to support ARM's childrens' charities initiative.

The tournaments' \$100 hole sponsorships were generously provided by the sponsors listed below. Numerous auction items and prizes were generously donated by donors also listed below. Without the understanding of and very generous ongoing support by all of the vendors, companies and organizations recognized herein, ARM's moral, social, constitutional and financial commitments to childrens' charities particularly, would not continue to exist. Please do not hesitate to call on the outreaching "salespersons" on ARM's executive for assistance with opportunities to involve your own favourite vendors or business connections as providers of auction items, prizes and/or \$100 hole sponsorships for ARM's May 23 and September 26, 2012 Annual Spring and Fall "SWING FOR KIDS" Golf Tournaments. Don't delay, call us today.

For the tremendous success of the golf tournaments we deeply appreciate the wonderful ongoing encouragement and support of the Club Link Corporation and the Rolling Hills G. C. staff in particular. We are also most wholeheartedly grateful for the great work in planning and conducting the events by Eric Dempster, Chris Tierney, Boris Mischenko, Bob Baudner, Dave McWhirter and Jerry Daca. Should the reader here wish to consider joining the team simply call Jim Loftus at (416) 447 0811 or Eric Dempster at (416) 816 0445; we'd love to help you to help us.

Again, thank you to all of our golfers and donors for contributing towards our very successful Golf Tournaments. We look forward to sharing futures events with you.

The 15 children's charities include:

The Corsage Project
Covenant House
Friends of We Care
Mooreland's
New Visions
Licensed to Learn
Rosalie Hall
Second Base Youth Shelter
Second Chance Scholarship
The 4 Life Foundation

Touchstone Youth Centre
Utica Community Childcare
Yonge Street Mission
Youth Unlimited
Cares, Centre for Addiction Rehab & Employment & Service

Hole sponsors include:

A-1 Fast Lube, Warden Ave
Beaches Fairway Golf, Victoria Park Ave
Bruno's Valu-Mart, Underhill Dr
Collin's Auto Parts, Nugget Ave
Deco Labels & Tags, Greensboro Dr
Deer Creek Golf Club, Ajax
Educators Financial Group, Sheppard Ave E
exp. Construction, Clark Blvd, Brampton
J.G. Cordone Investments Ltd. Eglinton Ave W
Kristapsons Inc. Queen St. E
LaRosa's NoFrills, Lawrence Ave E
Licensed to Learn, Chiswell Crescent
Local 30, Sheet Metal Workers Union, Cosentino Dr
Martino Construction, Connie Cr. Concord
Metro Golf Dome, Milner Ave
OTIP/RAEO, Waterloo, ON
Parkway Honda, Eglinton Ave E
Pro Health & Rehab Ctr. Lawrence Ave E
ReMax R.E. Yonge St., Thornhill
Ridgeway Electric, Rutherford Road
Staples, Ellesmere Road
Teachers Life, The East Mall
Westford Dental, Lawrence Ave E

Auction items & prize donors include:

Club Link, Warden Ave
Cresthaven Golf Club, Markham Road
Discount Pool & Spa, Ellesmere Road
Food Basics, York Mills Road
High Street Fish&Chips, Underhill Dr
Home Hardware, Parkway Mall
Jason Jackson Mens Wear, Parkway Mall
Longo's, York Mills Road
Marks Work Wearhouse, Eglinton Ave, E
Marks Work Wearhouse, Sheppard Ave, E
Metro, Parkway Plaza
Oakridge Golf Club, Port Perry
OTIP/RAEO, Waterloo
Starbucks, Victoria Pk. Ave
Starbucks, York Mills Road
Tucker's Restaurant, Warden Ave
Wal Mart, Eglinton Ave, E
Wal Mart, Kennedy Road
Watts Restaurant, Eglinton Square

Education candidates carry Toronto

Endorsed candidate Laurel Broten is new Minister of Education

By Manfred Netzel, President, ARM Chapter 12

NOW THAT THE DUST HAS SETTLED after the October 6th provincial election, it is time to review and assess the significance of our involvement in the process, both individually and collectively. Of course, tangible results will only be truly measurable after the new term of office for the Liberal minority government has begun and we have seen some major pieces of legislation proposed or some budgets have been presented by the Treasurer Dwight Duncan.

On the surface, we were 100 per cent successful in endorsing and financially supporting 16 Liberal and NDP candidates in Toronto that were subsequently elected or re-elected. That's a better batting average than the World Series winners from St. Louis could ever have hoped for! In fact, one of those endorsed Liberals, Laurel Broten from Etobicoke-Lakeshore, is now the new Education Minister for Ontario. As I know Broten personally from my encounters with her at school commencements and other events in the West End, I hope she will accept our invitation to the ARM Chapter 12 Annual General Meeting as a keynote speaker next spring.

Our chapter's involvement was not unique although limited to decisions made by the District 12 Executive. Many of our members volunteered countless hours and made donations to local candidates and their parties. Some did not follow the suggested direction of both OSSTF and ARM Chapter 12, instead supporting the candidates and parties of their personal choice. In a strong democracy and pluralistic political system, there is nothing wrong with that.

The truly worrisome fact is that voter turnout in this election was at the lowest level (49.2%) in modern Ontario history, a trend that sees no end in sight especially with young voters. As retirees, we cannot and should not follow that same path despite the temptations of political disengagement constantly challenging us; for example, increased leisure time, relatively secure indexed pension provisions and the

sometimes self-serving actions of our politicians at all levels of government.

I recently attended a regularly-scheduled meeting of ARM Provincial Council, where the elected representatives from every OSSTF ARM Chapter across Ontario share information about activities, initiatives and developments in their local areas as well as coordinating efforts with Provincial OSSTF Executive and Staff to promote and enhance the profile of several thousand ARM members within the Federation. A major part of the agenda was to identify and review our efforts in the provincial election. The level and extent to which our fellow ARM colleagues were involved was amazing. ARM members' participation in the election

ranged from acting as campaign managers to actually being the candidate in Simcoe-Grey. Some local ARM Chapters even tried to calculate the number of hours contributed by their members and found several hundred as quite conservative. Generally, we all agreed that the level of engagement by ARM members across the province was probably the highest it has ever been.

Certainly there are flaws in our current electoral system of first-past-the-post voting, under-representation of large urban ridings versus rural areas, and the benefits (or not) of strategic voting. This might help explain the outcome whereby the narrow difference in popular vote between the Liberals and Conservatives (37.6% vs 35.4%) nevertheless saw an actual difference of 16 more seats for Dalton McGuinty.

Even federally, the recently increased redistribution of seats also seems to have benefitted certain suburban areas of certain provinces to the detriment of large urban centres that have often been less supportive of the current Harper Government. These are clearly topics for future discussion in this newsletter. There is no doubt in my mind, however, that retiree organizations like ARM must continue to be active players in the political game in order to have any say in how the game is played.

The level and extent to which our fellow ARM colleagues were involved was amazing

“Evict Ford, Save Democracy”

OSSTF District 12 members march in solidarity with Occupy protesters

By Manfred Netzel

THE LARGEST RALLY AND MARCH in support of the Occupy movement in Canada thus far, took place in downtown Toronto on Saturday, November 19th.

Over one thousand participants from the labour movement, social justice groups and the general public joined the 500 residents of



CAW economist Jim Stanford congratulated ARM on its showing at the Occupy Toronto march on City Hall

St. James Park in a rally and march through the streets of the city, ending up in Nathan Phillips Square.

The theme and rallying cry of the assembled was “*Evict Ford, Save Democracy*,” referring to

the delivered eviction order initiated by the mayor and upheld by the courts on November 21st.

Among the many who turned out were members of the OSSTF Provincial Executive, District 12 STBU and OTBU, and a good presence from ARM Chapter 12. Although we had no banners or signs, both active



ARM members demonstrate solidarity with Occupy Toronto. (L to R) Ian Cameron, Larry French, President Manfred Netzel, Neil Walker. The statue is of Robert Gourlay, a 19th century fighter for fair land distribution

and retired teachers showed their support by chanting, conversing with the regular Occupy protesters, and encouraging interested by-standers to join the parade.

The networking and public signs of solidarity by us and our public and private sector colleagues will hopefully bear fruit as we confront the economic and social hardships facing us in 2012.

Cruising Down the River on a Thursday Afternoon...

Sailing, sampling wine and exploring

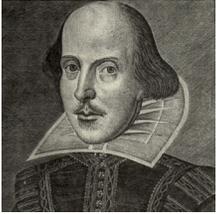
By Rosemarie Mohring

IT WAS A BALMY DAY, OCTOBER 13TH when 20 ARM members set sail along the Trent-Severn Waterway past Trent University. Colourful Fall trees lined the banks. At the same time, we enjoyed a delicious turkey with all the trimmings luncheon served on board along with a cash bar.

The federal government, in all its wisdom, had tried to spoil our itinerary by cutting funding for heritage homes, thus forcing historic Hutchinson House in Peterborough to close. However, we were able to

substitute a visit to the Canoe Museum, with a guided tour, well worth the drive to Peterborough. To top off the day, we stopped en route at the Archibald Orchard and Winery to buy goodies from their gift shop and enjoy sampling their wines. An edifying experience!

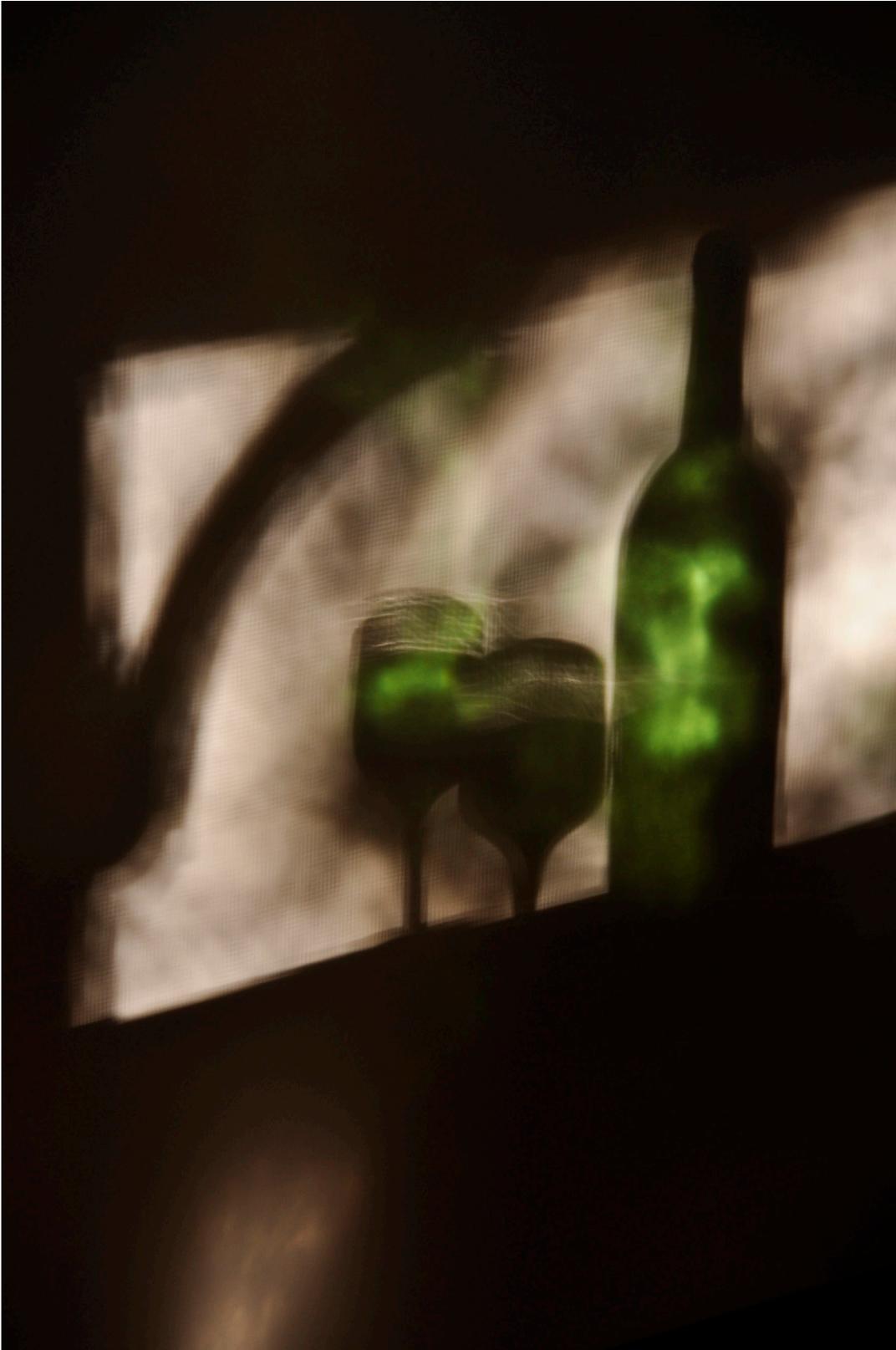
Please watch this spot in our next newsletter when we will let you know about our next October outing which might include a boat trip along the Otonabee River, or a train ride along the Niagara Escarpment or up through the Caledon Hills, replete with an elegant luncheon.



The Retired Bard

Ed Preston, photographer

By Larry French



ED PRESTON DISCOVERED photography during a year away from teaching in 1968 – 1969. We are much the richer for his achievements in this medium.

Preston has exhibited his work in a number of venues. His most recent show was part of the Beach Studio Tour and Open House in late October.

To the left, *Reflections* is a photograph of shadows cast by the sun on a white background. Preston used a Nikon D90 camera with an 18-200 millimeter zoom lens.

On the opposite page is a photograph of a spiral staircase at the Art Gallery of Ontario. To create this shot, Preston laid his camera, a Canon G12, on its back and used a timed delay shutter release to take the shot. The texturing in the final photograph is deliberately introduced visual noise.

Camera club, anyone?

Seeing Preston's outstanding work suggests an ARM innovation – a camera club. If you are interested in such an activity, please get in touch with Neil Walker, armc12nw@gmail.com.



Spiral staircase at the Art Gallery of Ontario

Halloween 2010

It was such a small thing.
Metal. But not shiny, although stainless.
About 2 inches wide and ½ inch deep
But thin and very very sharp.
Its sister cut my thumb when I first tried it out.

But now it is so far out of sight, no one will ever see it.
A wicked one will feel it perhaps.

So much more difficult than it used to be.

But patience is my virtue.

They are evil, the ones who paint their faces.

It was so easy, after all.

Undoing the seam of the chocolate bar with a sharp blade.

I took a week to perfect my technique.
In our little town, I was only 10 when I first tried the
apple route to teaching the evil ones.

I saw her in school two days later with stitches in her lip.
Her tongue hurt her she said.

They blamed an old man two blocks from our house.

Smile. Two with one blade.

I always gave lots to the UNICEF boxes. It was the least
I could do.

--- Anonymous

Considered

Harperland: The Politics of Control

Lawrence Martin. Toronto: Penguin (Canada), 2010. 301 pages

By Ian Cameron

WHILE LOOKING FOR A BOOK ON FEDERAL POLITICS on my favourite website (torontopubliclibrary.ca) the following summary of *Harperland* caught my eye:

After four years in power, Stephen Harper's governance comes under the microscope of prominent Globe and Mail columnist Lawrence Martin. Focusing on the growth of executive power under Harper and drawing on interviews with prominent insiders, Martin probes the smearing of opponents, the silencing of the public and diplomatic service, the secrecy, the prerogations, the unprecedented centralizing of power, and the attempted muzzling of the media.

He examines controversies such as the existence of a secret dirty tricks handbook, the Chuck Cadman affair, campaign financing, the dismissing of nuclear power head Linda Keen, the Afghan detainees cover-up, the turning of access-to-information laws into barricades to information, and more – and lets readers draw their conclusions. Tough but balanced, *Harperland* offers a clear picture of a skilled politician at a crucial point in Canadian politics.

I put the book on hold. But once I picked it up and began reading it, I found it to be even more interesting than I supposed from reading the summary. In today's sound-bite news world, the book is History. It is interesting, though, to review the past to see if Martin's premonitions are borne out in Harper's current governance.

Executive power has been further centralized under Harper. There is a fixation on controlling the message that gets out to the public. The PMO (the political arm of government – the Prime Minister's Office) vets all communication. MEPs (message event proposals must be submitted to the PMO.) Perhaps the most ludicrous example of this mentioned by Martin was that a Parks Canada paper on the mating habits of black bears had to be vetted by the PMO. Political dynamite! The

PMO leans on the Privy Council, the bureaucratic arm of government, so that no sensitive issues are aired, and so that government actions like those taken on the economy receive good coverage. I remember taking a train to Montreal and seeing a federal action billboard at every train station on the way advertising the government economic action plan. I believe it had an up arrow. Kevin Page's parliamentary budget office, whose mandate is supplying factual information to parliamentarians on income and expenditures and projected deficits *et cetera* had its budget cut in half. The office's projected deficit did not agree with Flaherty's

**Twice, Harper
prorogued
(padlocked)
parliament
when the wrong
message was
getting out**

projections. Departments are in separate silos so that only the PM and close advisors have the overview but no one in each department does. At meetings with the media only chosen reporters can ask questions. In addition, access to public documents has been delayed. When these public documents are finally released, they invariably have large sections blacked out. In the interests of national security, so goes the spin, large sections of fact are too sensitive for the public to see. Has the Harper government been effective in the

past in centralizing power and controlling the message? Yes.

A further important conclusion of Martin is that the Harper government has a disdain for parliamentary democracy. The House of Commons is just a place where you appear strong by out-shouting and intimidating your opponents. It is a place for wedge politics, not compromise. Shield information and counter attack. Attack the person, not the issues. Smear Jack Layton with "Taliban Jack" and failure "to support our troops" for his questioning of our continuing involvement in Afghanistan. Dion, not a bully, but a gentleman is skewered by TV ads and a deliberate TV replay of one of his difficulties answering an obscure question (Bully Boy v Mr. Bean). Back pack boy. Ignatieff (the nobleman v the doberman). Twice,

Harper prorogued (padlocked) parliament when the wrong message was getting out. One of our respected diplomats, Richard Colvin, was testifying that Canada may have been complicit in the torture of Afghan detainees ... a war crime. The attempt was made to reframe the debate: the opposition was disloyal. Avoid the truth, spin the truth, massage the truth, or lie if necessary. It seems that the end justifies the means. From a message control point of view and to get the right public spin it was more important for Harper to attend the winter games and appear as the champion of Haitian disaster relief. It is perhaps coincidental that the U.S. gave Canada back \$4 billion of the \$5 billion taken when the U.S. over-ruled the free trade tribunal on soft wood lumber duties at the same time that Canada pledged troops for Afghanistan. Was this quid pro quo?

Martin points out that though parliament is seen as a side show, a real concern of the Harper government in its desire to destroy the Liberal brand name is to focus on the politics and machinery of government rather than on policy. Load the Senate. Control the Supreme Court. Control or subvert sub-committees (the Conservatives now control all but 3 of 22 permanent House committees). The secret handbook advised the chairs of committees on "how to unleash chaos while chairing a parliamentary committee."

The book is not without humour. Bernier, whom Harper fired, is described as "all hat and no cattle." Reagan was reported as "owning more horses than books." Boudria is called "binder boy." Peter MacKay thought "Mozambique was a calypso band." Harper's only trip abroad was up to the time "to Montana." Emerson: "It's like our China policy is made in Tibet." Reporters referred to peace, order, and hood government. I suppose reporters have to take refuge in humour when they are denied access to information.

But is the Harper government following the same path today? I must say yes. Two new judges have been appointed to the Supreme Court, one a bureaucrat with Conservative ties. Where is the transparency in their appointment? The public is being told in a time of so-called fiscal austerity that we need more seats in parliament to represent a growing population. But the electoral boundaries of these new seats are not determined by God. Will their distribution be planned

to return a Conservative majority in Ottawa? The militarization of Canada continues. The F 35 is an attack aircraft, more suitable for carrying out U.S. foreign policy than defending our extensive coastline. And what will the cost be? \$30 billion? \$70 billion? Your guess is as good as mine. Maybe we should be producing our own aircraft as do France, Germany, and Sweden, countries that value their sovereignty. New ships. But Quebec did not get much of the multi-billion dollar contract. Nuclear-powered submarines at \$3B. each? Prisons are being expanded. Facts show that incarceration does not lower the rate of crime. If this were so, the U.S.A. would be the safest place on earth. But the facts do not matter here. Then there is the matter of climate change. The American consultant Frank Luntz's advice to Harper in 2006 to "keep the public confused about the state of climate science" appears still to be government

At meetings with the media only chosen reporters can ask questions

policy. Controlling the message on the environment is called "manufacturing the message of science." The Conservative campaign financing during the last election (the in-out issue) is still being investigated. Our budget deficit is still going up. The date for a balancing of the accounts has been further delayed by Finance Minister Flaherty. I remember

the Conservative government saying that we were not in a recession and did not need deficit spending. In the twitterverse the NDP's Pat Martin has expressed his outrage at the Conservative use of closure on the spring federal budget. "This is a fuddle duddle disgrace ... closure again. And on the Budget! There's not a democracy in the world that would tolerate this jackboot s---." And then there is the appeal to patriotism, the last refuge of the scoundrel. Martin's book is an important one to read at this political juncture for Canada. Martin quotes Jack Layton saying that he had lost respect for Harper and the Conservatives. He quotes Ed Broadbent saying 'there is a touch of evil there.'

Perhaps, as Frank Graves suggests, it is time to sharpen the lines of debate in this "culture war."

Cosmopolitanism versus Parochialism.

Secularism versus moralism.

Tolerance versus Racism and Homophobia.

Democracy versus Autocracy.

And the most important debate in the economic war. The 99 per cent versus the 1 per cent.



Curmudgeon's Corner

Ford and Harper – curmudgeon fodder

Poor Stephen and Rob, so well understood

By Paul Rook

The political circus continues in Ford's Toronto. Let's start with the three elderly Toronto Zoo elephants that it was agreed should be moved to a warmer climate. Council chose a non accredited PAWS reserve in California and this led to the Association of Zoos and Aquariums threatening to pull Toronto Zoo's accreditation. Another example of Council refusing to listen to the experts, rushing ahead and ending up in another fine mess, as happened with the rushed cancellation of Transit City.

Rob Ford came in saying he would eliminate the gravy at City Hall. Funny that he missed the big gravy stain in his own office. Charging four times as much as other councilors for business cards and then having them produced by your own business, as Ford did, certainly seems like gravy to me. Why wasn't more made of this issue as it goes to the heart of what Ford opposes, not to mention being a moral conflict of interest issue. Why didn't his holier than thou right wing supporters say something? Is it because their heroes can do no wrong?

News Flash: 6,400 tickets have been issued to panhandlers in Toronto since 2000 and 6,388 have not been paid. Didn't the politicians who created the Safe Streets Act have the basic common sense (I couldn't resist using this phrase as it was the Harris Government's.) to realize that fining people who have no money wouldn't work?

Now on to Ottawa. Members of the Harper Government took part in an event issuing statements

against bullying. What bothers me is that these are the same people who bully opposition politicians through attack ads and threaten and attack any civil servant who attempts to talk about the real facts on issues such as climate change or torture of Afghan detainees. Obviously, taking hypocrisy to a whole new level is one of the Harper's Government's greatest achievements.

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Which brings us to the attack on the two NDP MPs who went to Washington to present a different viewpoint on energy, the oil sands and the Keystone Pipeline. Harper cabinet ministers used words such as treacherous to describe their actions. Therefore, I can only assume that it was also treacherous when Opposition Leader Harper went on Fox News to denounce the Martin Government's refusal to join in the Iraq invasion in 2003. This is just another example of the Harper Government's taking political dialogue in Canada to new lows.

Finally we have the issue of MP Pat Martin's use of the F word in his angry tweet. Initially, he was dumped on. Then a few media types picked up on the real issue which is that the Harper Government is using closure and severely restricting debate on all its legislation. In this case it took a rant to wake up the media. Did they miss this because they are afraid of this Government, ignorant of the dangers to democracy of this trend or in bed with the Harper Government? No matter what the reason is, they are missing one of the prime roles of the fourth estate: to speak truth to power.



Steve Fuller's Toronto

Borscht for winter comfort

Let's try a new approach and dine together in less well-known cuisines -- Peruvian might be a good start

THIS ISSUE'S COLUMN is a two-part effort.

1. Some recipes ideal for the winter, easy to make and delicious. These are classic fare from Eastern Europe.
2. A new direction (I hope) for this feature piece

1. Winter soup recipes (from *The Art of Jewish Cooking* by Jenny Grossinger)

One of the larger ethnic groups in the GTA is the Jewish community. The diaspora produced two main groups, the Jews of Europe (Ashkenazi) and the Jews of Africa and the mid-east (Sephardi). The latter group is/was established mostly in the mid-east Arab countries; they speak a Spanish-based language called Ladino. The former group is from Europe—both the Western countries and the Slavic countries—and speaks Yiddish, based on an archaic language (Old High German). Each of these languages is infused with vocabularies, accents and sounds from the countries in which they're used. The cuisine is simple and rustic.

Cabbage borscht (hot)

- 2 lbs brisket or short ribs (better) (opt.)
- 2 quarts water or stock
- 2 onions, diced
- 3 cups tinned, diced tomatoes
- 3 lbs coarsely shredded cabbage
- 2 tsp salt
- ½ tsp pepper
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 2 TBSP sugar
- 3 TBSP seedless raisins (opt.)

1. Combine meat and water in a deep sauce pan, bring to a boil and skim

2. Add onions and tomatoes with their juice
3. Cover and simmer 1 hour. Add the rest of the ingredients and cook 20 minutes more. Quantities may be multiplied. Can be frozen. Serves 6-8

Beet borscht (hot or cold)

For hot borscht use the same ingredients as above, but replace the cabbage with 10 large beets, peeled and diced.

For a cold borscht, omit the meat and serve the borscht from the refrigerator. Mix with sour cream or Balkan-style (Greek) yoghurt with a large, skinned boiled hot potato; take a soup spoon, cut off a piece of the potato and fill the rest of the spoon with borscht. Makes about 2 quarts.

Schav (spinach) borscht (cold)

- 1 lb schav (sorrel leaves) or spinach, washed and shredded
- 2 onions, minced
- 2 quarts water or vegetable stock
- 2 tsp salt
- 4 TBSP sugar
- 1 TBSP lemon juice
- 2 eggs
- hot boiled peeled potatoes

1. Combine the schav, onion, water and salt in a saucepan.
2. Bring to a boil and simmer 45 minutes.
3. Add lemon juice and sugar. Cook 10 minutes more

Continued on next page

PUT AN RESP UNDER THE TREE

Every year at this time grandparents everywhere are faced with the same dilemma: what to get the grandkids for the holidays...

Chances are they have enough socks and sweaters... and gift cards can be a little impersonal. However, there's one gift that never goes out of style, and one size fits all...

"And that's the gift of education", says Educators Financial Group Certified Financial Planner Jim Wanamaker. "A Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) is one of the best gifts any child could receive!"

So why is Jim such a big fan of RESPs?

"Well, whether you have grandchildren, have a grandchild on the way, or are simply a proud (great) aunt, or (great) uncle – there are many reasons for taking advantage of an RESP."

Here are just some of those advantages:

THE GOVERNMENT WILL CHIP IN 20%: Thanks to the CESG (Canada Education Savings Grant), you'll receive 20% (\$500 maximum) of your investment for a contribution of \$2,500 per calendar year with a lifetime maximum of \$7,200.

EARN ADDITIONAL RETURN: If you put the contribution and grant proceeds into a conservative investment with the potential to generate another 2-5%, that can translate into a sizable 22-25% return on your investment.

INVESTMENT IS TAX SHELTERED: Contribute up to \$50,000 per child over the life of the plan. The investment will then grow, sheltered from tax. When the money is withdrawn, the CESG money and earned investment income is taxed in the hands of the child, at the child's tax rate, possibly zero in some cases.

RESP DEADLINE IS DECEMBER 31ST

A great legacy for grandparents...

By contributing to your grandchild's RESP, you'll also be assisting your children to pay down their mortgage or take care of other financial needs. An RESP is a gift that is more valuable than any toy you could ever give your grandchild – and that's the kind of legacy that will last a lifetime.

To learn about RESPs, go to www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca and check out our recorded webinar, "Why RESPs Deserve a lot of R-E-S-P-E-C-T" – or give us a call at **1.800.263.9541**.

One focus, many solutions.



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and add seasoning to taste.

4. Beat the eggs in a bowl. Add a ladle of soup and mix to temper the eggs and prevent curdling. Chill and serve with potatoes. Makes 1½ quarts.

2. A new direction

My idea is to have lunch or dinner at an ethnic restaurant with perhaps an accompanying stroll through the neighbourhood. I would search out a restaurant--(Afghanistan to Zaire)--and make arrangements. Part of the adventure would be that this would probably be my first time at the restaurant, so, from a culinary standpoint, the quality of the cuisine might be variable. The restaurants need not be large or fancy, so the particular restaurant might not be furnished in luxurious manner. This is about food, not surroundings.

If there is a response, timing and frequency will be decided by consultation among the participants. Common cuisines (such as Chinese – except for Szechuan and Fukien – Sushi, Northern Italian and Italian) would not necessarily be chosen. These cuisines are already well known in Toronto. The point of our exploration should make for a very different culinary experience. Of course, spouses and partners are welcome. You pay for your own food, booze and tip.

Personally, my first choice would be "Cucina Donna Luz", a Peruvian restaurant with an added Mexican menu near St. Clair and Bathurst. But as a group, we are always open to suggestions. Anyone ready to try this new direction? Contact me through armc12nw@gmail.com