

## ALLYSON BEAUREGARD

*Pontiac Journal du Pontiac*

This succinct editorial outlined the country's need for clear policy on physician-assisted dying. It was a breeze to read with no unnecessary words or awkward phrasing. Kudos.

## GREG HORN

*Iori:wase*

The alleged failure of the Conservatives to serve the First Nations community was a popular topic among editorials last year but none argued the case more persuasively than Greg Horn. He clearly documented, what he believed to be, the Harper government's more grievous failings and ended by calling on new Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to do a better job.

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## The post-Harper era starts now

GREG HORN  
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IORI:WASE

Ding-dong the witch is dead might be a tune many people were singing Monday night as the results came in for the federal election and it soon became apparent that the nine-year reign of Stephen Harper was over. For Native people this was a nine-year reign of terror – with the Conservative government consistently in attack mode on Indigenous peoples and communities.

We only need to remember as far back as two years ago to the failed First Nations Education Act or to Harper's refusal to call a National Public Inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls to see how Harper and his Conservative government felt about Indigenous peoples and their issues. Remember back during the Swine Flu outbreak in 2009 when the federal government sent body bags instead of medication to several northern Manitoba reserves.

Native people across Canada were so fed up with Harper and his government that many took to the polls with the aim of voting the Conservatives out of office. There was a concerted effort to "Rock the Indigenous Vote" during this year's 78-day election campaign.

Both the Liberals and the NDP had promised to call a National Public Inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, as well

as implement the recommendations made earlier this year by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission – promises that resonated with First Nations voters.

As the campaign dragged on, Harper and his Conservatives made misstep after misstep, on which Justin Trudeau and the Liberal party capitalized. It would seem that voters across the country were both shocked and appalled by the Post Media newspapers (National Post, Montreal Gazette, Sun newspapers) as well as the Globe and Mail which were ordered to endorse the Conservatives last Friday. Voters were even more appalled the following day when many of those same newspapers printed full-page Conservative advertisements on their front pages!

The front page of any newspaper should be reserved for the news of the day and not be used as a full page of advertising – political or otherwise. The public saw it for what it was – an attempt to buy votes by the Conservative party.

With a clear mandate and a majority government Prime Minister Elect Justin Trudeau has a tall order on his hands. He ran on a platform of change and he needs to deliver on some promises he made during his campaign. As the Opposition Party, the Liberals under Trudeau called for the full implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He has also said a Liberal government will call a public inquiry into MMIW.

"Today, we recognized the meaningful work carried out by the



Truth and Reconciliation Commission in documenting the impacts of the Residential Schools system on First Nations, Inuit and Metis Peoples in Canada," Trudeau said in June. "By recording the experiences of thousands of survivors, the TRC has ensured that all Canadians gain a deeper understanding of this dark chapter in our collective history, and of the devastating and lasting legacy it has left on Aboriginal Peoples' communities, cultures, languages, health, education and welfare."

Trudeau also said, "On behalf of

the Liberal Party of Canada, Parliament, Parliament, Parliament, unwavering support of recommendations, and Government of Canada immediate action to implement. As leaders and legislators have a responsibility to act on what occurred has been. Now we must all of important work of going forward."

Mr. Trudeau, it's time money where your

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## BERYL WAJSMAN

*The Suburban (City Edition)*

Great example of crusading journalism. This editorial defends anglophone rights in Quebec by exposing the notion that the French language is somehow threatened. Passionate and readable.

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Volume 3 Issue 15 - Kent

### Editorial

Your opinion counts!  
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#### 1 "Living with Dignity" deserves a dignified re-design

Two years after the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in Rodriguez, a British Columbia woman suffering from a terminal illness was not permitted to have a doctor help her commit suicide. The Supreme Court of Canada unanimously ruled, February 6, that competent adults with grievous and irremediable medical conditions can ask a doctor to help them die.

The ban on doctor-assisted suicide will be struck down in 12 months if the government doesn't amend legislation to respond to the ruling, the court's exemption for physicians will stand.

The situation has left politicians facing a tough legal and moral issue they have avoided in the past. It isn't an easy issue, especially for the Conservatives; many MPs in Harper's caucus believe assisted suicide is an affront to the sanctity of life. (Although the campaign to permit euthanasia is led by a Conservative MP, Stephen Fletcher).

The Harper government is left with two options since it is unlikely they will bypass the Supreme Court's ruling; they can respond to the issue now or wait until after the election. Either option is a tough choice: confronting and debating the issue now could expose divisions among their ranks before the election, but waiting could force election candidates to respond to questions they will struggle to answer during the election period.

Justin Trudeau's Liberals want the outlines of a new law governing doctor-assisted dying drafted by mid-summer, but Justice Minister Peter Mackay has said the government will take its time to thoroughly study the details of the ruling and examine how other jurisdictions, like Quebec, have dealt with the issue.

The government must not dodge the issue; it needs to be confronted in a timely manner so the population, especially suffering patients, are not left in legal limbo once the year passes. If Parliament misses the deadline, the only guidance for doctors would be the limits set out by the court and the colleges that regulate doctors. Waiting for the current law to be voided would leave a wide-open regime, without appropriate safeguards the country expects; 84% of Canadians support physician-assisted death with appropriate caveats.

If Harper acts before an election, some speculate he will respond to the concerns of social conservatives in his base by placing tight restrictions in the law. This unfortunately could be the case if he tries to satisfy both sides of the coin.

Although conditions are needed to prevent abuses and to protect the vulnerable, the government mustn't draft legislation that is overly restrictive to prevent the exemption from being used. Why? Because that's not what Canadians want; Canadians want



**ENJOYING THE FRESH AIR** – While it was too cold to play outside first thing in the morning, students and teachers at Dr. S.E. McDowell School in Shawville were full swing into winter carnival activities by 11 a.m., February 27. Activities included a javelin throw, a running backwards relay, snow tie-tac-toe, sliding and, pictured here, a spoon and ball slalom race. Staff served pancakes at lunch.

#### Dispatches from the 148

by Fred Ryan, Publisher

##### Public art? Yes, here!

With Pontiac's reputation for having so many artists and such a vibrant community of artists, why is there so little public art around us?

No one will pay for its creation, is the easiest answer. That's why we don't have monuments or monumental buildings – cathedrals, for example – it doesn't explain why there is so little smaller public art: murals, mainly, but progressive public buildings, parks and gardens, beaches, public forests – locales for public art which in other regions tourists and helps create a positive, happy, and productive population.

The great murals of the world attract thousands of tourists, and, for those in Mexico City, for example, visitors come from Europe, Asia, the US, and our own cities. Look at the guest books! These murals deserve their notoriety – they are beautiful, awe inspiring, stimulating.

They were not expensive to create, given the conditions of the times. The painters were paid "plumber's wages", according to the Mexican

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They were not expensive to create, given the conditions of the times. The painters were paid "plumber's wages", according to the Mexican

enough to cover their costs and to hire the assistants they needed. The artists benefited by selling their working sketches, usually bound and auctioned, and in commissioned works, the result of art lovers seeing the abilities and imagination of the artists up on the great walls. The muralists went on to great careers, based on the public acclaim (or notoriety) they won from their murals.

In exchange for funding this public art, the governments, businesses, and taxpayers created a huge draw for tourists and

retires.

Before anyone points to the few murals already around the region, many on empty walls and over parking lots, it is crucial to note that successful murals are works of art: not only well-executed, but done with imagination and creativity and – here it is – vision. More murals depicting old cars on an old Main Street will hardly draw a pedestrian's eyes, let alone bring in tourists. More clichés from the log drives and the felling of Pontiac's great forests will remain clichés, and attract no one.

The successful public art is very well done and carefully designed; they challenge conventional views of history, even of geography. The Mexican muralists gained world renown not by repeating grade-school history images but by challenging our view of the coming of the Europeans and the despoliation that caused.

There are enough New Age murals of flowers and blinding light, too, or conventional views of the big shots of our history (without, of course, their wars and obvious vices). Tourists can see this stuff in their own hometowns and schools.

Imagine a movement of public-artists committed to re-visit our past, re-visit our founders and leaders – all in dramatic, beautiful and instructive public art. The inevitable controversy will attract even more visitors. Imagine art showing what

First Nations people did to help Europeans survive here, rather than the other way around. Imagine public art celebrating the miles of old growth forest, drinkable rivers, waters full of fish, and forests with their wildlife – not to ignore the hardships and the poverty then, but all designed to, first, and finally, tell the truth about our history and second to show us something of the great social and economic forces at work that created our nation, for better or worse. Something that really reflects us!

That would put Pontiac in the news and would bring visitors. We can do this. It could help create a wiser population, too, and that couldn't be a bad thing either, would it?

Allyson Beauregard, Editor

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### EDITORIALS

## The Suburban

QUEBEC'S LARGEST ENGLISH WEEKLY NEWSPAPER  
ESTABLISHED 1963 - VOL. XLIX, NO. VXXXVIII

#### M. Couillard, where is your voice?

A leader of a 'distinct society' should act with distinction

It is always dangerous when political leaders use demagoguery to set up false enemies just to rally votes. We saw it during the Marois administration. Words and actions of nullification and interposition against minority language rights had ugly consequences.

Society is a top down process. What leaders say are magnified by what people do. So when the PQ government continued the big lie rhetoric of French being threatened, the need to limit English again and let the OQLF storm troopers run rampant, people got hurt.

They got hurt because other people – the haters – thought they had carte blanche. So we saw STM ticket takers refusing service in English, paramedics pretending not to understand an English phrase; security officials being unresponsive to English calls and even store clerks mouthing "Ici en Français." Lives, literally, were at stake in some situations.

The Marois government finally resigned in the OQLF when Quebec faced worldwide embarrassment because of "Pastagate" and "Spooagate." It was unfortunate that they did not resign in the inspectors when it was clear they were going far beyond the law as provided for in Bill 101.

Many of you, our readers, often feel that there is no point in fighting anymore. That you've heard all this before. While understandable, your pessimism would be wrong. We here at The Suburban led the fight against the Payette Plan that called for language testing for journalists and accreditation by the government. We stood alone, but won the fight. Payette was scrapped. We helped lead the fight against Bill 14, the proposed expansion of Bill 101. Even the PQ listened. Before the Bill was scrapped, our editor worked with lawyers and activists who collectively received the co-operation of Minister Diane De Courcy to eliminate the worst parts of that odious law even before it was set aside.

But the situation here in the past few months is perhaps more troubling than those fronts never breached even by the most extreme cultural nationalists. Attacks on media, elected officials and warnings from medical institutions, all about the use of English. These areas are specifically excluded even by Bill 101.

M. Couillard, you were given the confidence of the suffrage of a million and a half non-francophone Quebecers to send out the right messages. Messages of respect and tolerance. So why are you not standing with the right messages, as it leads the fight to protect the Pontiac Journal from OQLF demands that it segregate English and French editorial content in its pages? Media is exempted from the application of Bill 101 except for size of fonts in ads.

Why have you not spoken out against former Bloc MP now Longueuil Mayor Ste-Hilare as he tries to impose a French-only policy in city council through elected bodies are exempted in Bill 101 as well? Why were you silent when she organized dozens of people to come to the last council meeting to verbally abuse councillor Robert Myles who had the audacity to simultaneously translate his French comments into English for the benefit of his mostly English constituents?

Why were you silent when the Montreal Heart Institute posted warnings on its website last week telling Montrealers that if they wanted service in English they should go to another institution? Yes the MHJ corrected itself hours later, but what an opportunity you had to repeat not only the words of the law, but the words you spoke when you said that, "Hospitals are for healing not for politics."

M. Couillard, just as Mme. Marois' words hurt, your lack of words hurt as well. They are a subliminal invitation to prejudice, discrimination and lawlessness. At a time when we are witnessing the American South divest itself of the last vestiges of exclusiveness and intolerance, do you not understand that there is only a fine line between the segregation of people by color and the segregation of people by ideas and language? As the leader of a distinct society M. Couillard, it is time to act with distinction.

### LAUGHS

WHAT THEY SAY PEOPLE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND  
WHAT THEY WERE DOING WHEN THEY VOTED NO IN THAT GREEK REFERENDUM.

THAT KINDA EXPLAINS THE PEOPLE WHO VOTED YES IN YOURS.

Prof. Jon Bradley  
Montreal

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Quebec has narrow historical view in education

For those of us familiar with the double-speak of the MELS (pushing for generic education, July 8), the assertion that everything taught within the Quebec History program must be strictly from the point of view of Quebec history comes as no surprise.

For example, where else would one find more time devoted in the official secondary history curriculum to the rebellions of 1837-1838 than World Wars I and II combined? Also, all Quebec students are steeped in the glory of the Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms but are ignorant regarding the Canadian and/or United Nations Charters, especially that annoying little UN article that states language of instruction in education is a parental decision. And, where else could one find a right historical lies than in the official text book (Panorama) where the bold faced statement is made that "Quebec is still not reintegrated into the Canadian constitution."

The secondary program in Quebec is a narrow view of provincial history based on a grand narrative of oppression and bondage. Naturally, it is French Quebecers who have been held hostage and only by the strength of their will against the British, the Church, and anyone else who dares to question the new authority has progress been made. Every historical event that might somehow tarnish

this myopic view must be ignored. Others, no matter what events occurred, cannot be permitted to take on the mantle of the oppressed or downtrodden; that accolade is reserved for only French Quebecers!

Unfortunately, major historical calamities such as Residential Schools, the Armenian Genocide, and/or the Holocaust do not fit into the contemporary Quebec world view of how events transpired. In the minds of our educational policy planners, as these still reverberating world events did not directly impact French Canada, they can obviously be of no consequence.

Prof. Jon Bradley  
Montreal

Longueuil blues

There will be no English in Longueuil city hall. There's just French and that is all. Madame St-Hilare wants it so, so that the way it's gonna go. One lone anglophone speaking my tongue is much lower down the rung. Will we ever get respect? Probably never I suspect. Just a little kindness goes a long, long way; but that seems like hokey here today. That's the way it goes with these pointless fights.

Brian Echarberry  
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MORE LETTERS NEXT PAGE

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