

The Chronicle Journal

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE NORTHWEST

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

Hilda Caverly,
Publisher, General Manager and Director of Finance

Frank Augruso
Advertising and
Sales Manager

Greg Giddens
Managing
Editor

Robin Williams
Press
Foreman

www.chroniclejournal.com

Republicans should listen to Republicans

Mythbusting Michigan report on voting fraud provides a 30-minute path back to reality

DONALD Trump says fraud is the only reason he lost the 2020 election. Some even think Mr. Trump will be reinstated once the truth comes out. Anyone who finds this narrative at all appealing should take 30 minutes to read the investigative report posted last week by Michigan Republicans. It's only 35 pages.

The report is from the GOP state Senate's Oversight Committee, which synthesized testimony from about 90 people, plus thousands of pages of subpoenaed documents. The committee's chair, Ed McBroom, was a Trump delegate at the 2016 GOP national convention, and in 2019 he was a guest at the White House, looking on while Mr. Trump signed an executive order.

While the report identifies "clear weaknesses in our elections system that require legislative remedy," it is unsparing about misinformation and innuendo. As Democrats regained power after the 2016 election, Mr. McBroom writes, "they were quick to utilize all of it to spend two years chasing every conspiracy and specious allegation." He adds: "I pray my own party will not repeat this mistake for the next four years."

The committee investigated 200 alleged dead voters. Only two problems were found. One was "a clerical error" involving a father and son with the same name. The other was an absentee ballot submitted by a 92-year-old, who then died four days before the election. That bad ballot should not have slipped through, though the report says 3,500 similar votes were caught.

Detroit's counting center received deliveries of ballots at 3:30 a.m. and 4:30 a.m., but the inquiry found no evidence of fraud. A purportedly suspicious picture "was a photo of a WXYZ-TV photographer hauling his equipment." Also, look at the numbers: Voter turnout in Wayne County (Detroit) was up only 11.4 per cent last year, compared with 15.4 per cent in the rest of Michigan, which hardly sounds like a dump of fake ballots. President Trump received a higher share of Wayne County's vote in 2020 than in 2016.

Many claims seem to stem from confusion by observers. Workers at Detroit's counting center didn't need to examine ballot signatures, the report says, because that task had been done elsewhere. Detroit's tabulators weren't connected to the internet, but they were on a local network, which "would create the same icon."

If it looked as if some ballots were being fed through a scanner more than once, here's a boring reason: "Ballots go through the tabulator so quickly that a simple jam or other error necessitates the entire bundle being restarted." Double counting would be obvious, as "the pollbook would show that many more votes were cast than the number of people obtaining a ballot."

Antrim County's error last year in misreporting its unofficial vote tallies was explained only days later, yet two months ago Mr. Trump was cheering a "bombshell" legal demand for another audit. A judge has since rejected that. The committee's inquiry backed up the benign story: The county clerk's computer "was not updated" to reflect late changes to the ballot in certain areas, so the data "did not transfer into their respective spreadsheet columns correctly."

The printouts from the tabulators were accurate, however, as validated in "a complete hand recount." The committee says it's "appalled at what can only be deduced as a willful ignorance or avoidance of this proof." It suggests Michigan's Attorney General consider "investigating those who have been utilizing misleading and false information about Antrim County to raise money or publicity for their own ends."

The report also gives recommendations for reform. It says officials should be barred from sending unsolicited absentee ballot applications. It calls for clarifying "the rights and duties of challengers and poll watchers." It suggests that ballot drop boxes be closed earlier than 8 p.m. on Election Day, so that collecting their contents does not push the counting "so long into the night."

Mr. Trump's response was predictable. He called the inquiry "a cover up," while repeating the same nonsense about Detroit and Antrim County. Apparently Mr. Trump didn't actually read the report, but other Republicans should give it a look. The GOP could make real gains in Michigan next year, including replacing Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. But it won't happen if the party spends the next year peering down a rabbit hole of 2020 conspiracy theories.

— An editorial from the Wall Street Journal (www.wsj.com), via The Associated Press

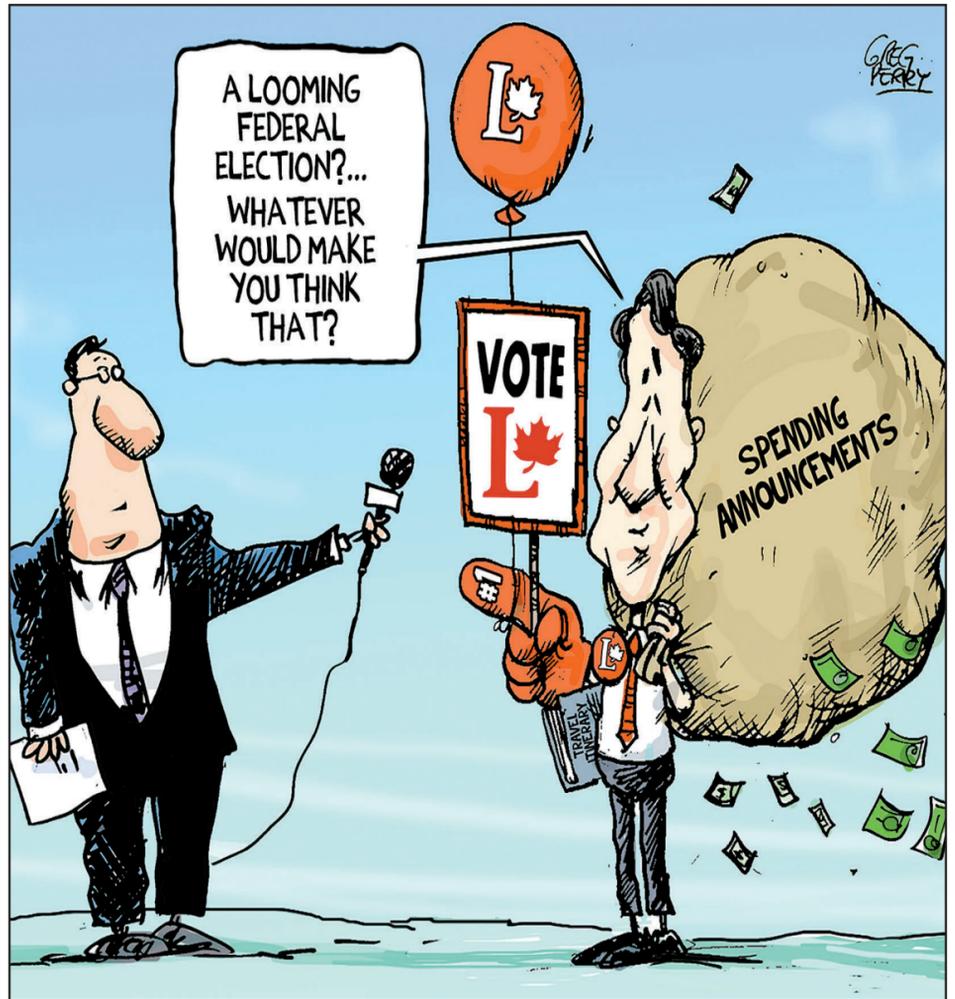
Diversity of views

We take pride in our letters section as a forum for sharing diverse views. We know there are a wide range of opinions on a variety of topics and believe strongly that our community is best served when all opinions are exposed, considered and discussed.

Letters kept to 300 words have priority and may be edited for space, style, accuracy and clarity. Letters must be the original work of the author and be exclusive to The Chronicle-Journal. Please cite page and date for articles mentioned. Letters may appear on our website. There is no restriction on the frequency of letters.

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

Please include your full name, address and day telephone number. Only names and hometowns will be published.



Microaggressions are a big deal

BY SERENA DYKSTRA

THESE are some things people have said to me once they discover I am an Indigenous person: "Don't you go to school for free?"; "Must be nice to not pay taxes!" I have also been congratulated for "making it this far in life" because many other "Native people" do not. These are examples of microaggressions, and they are often considered minor.

As a mixed-race Indigenous woman, I've also routinely been told I "don't look Indigenous" or I'm "not like other Indigenous people" because I was born with my father's last name and skin tone instead of my mother's. This is also an example of a microaggression.

Derald Wing Sue, author of the 2010 book, *Microaggressions in Everyday Life*, and professor of psychology at Columbia University's graduate school of education, defines microaggressions as "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group membership."

Microaggressions can be based on many factors, such as gender, 2SLGBTQIA identity, and ability. A person can experience multiple types of microaggressions, due to the intersectionality of their identities. Racial microaggressions include the following:

- Assuming a racialized person was born elsewhere (this includes asking questions like "Where are you really from?" or telling them they speak English well).
- Attributing a certain level of intelligence to a racialized person, based on their race.
- Using statements of colour-blindness such as "I don't see colour" or "We're all the same."
- Assuming a person is more likely to be involved in a criminal activity based on their race (including holding a purse closer to your body or crossing the street when a person of a certain race is approaching you).
- Denying one's own racism using statements like, "I have Native friends, so I'm not racist."
- Rejecting that race plays a role in people's success in life; including saying things like "I believe the most qualified person should get the job."

Perpetrators of microaggressions may often be unaware that they have engaged in a behaviour that threatens and demeans a recipient of such a communication. Unfortunately, these behaviours



ONE CITY, MANY VOICES

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

are all too common and are often deemed as social norms. But ill intentions are not required to cause harm to a recipient. Saying you were only joking or "didn't mean it that way" does not reduce the impact of a microaggression. Words spoken unintentionally still carry weight.

Recipients of microaggressions may also not confront perpetrators for fear of being labelled as angry, paranoid, oversensitive or "too politically correct." In that moment, the recipient is left feeling alone in their experience, feeling the sting of exclusion. These feelings are further compounded when witnesses to microaggressions remain silent.

Issues in Canada and around the world regarding police brutality, anti-Black violence and anti-Indigenous violence are nothing new. Many Canadians are aware of these issues. Violence is an obvious form of racism. But microaggressions tend to go unnoticed. There seems to be an unwillingness to recognize that racism is pervasive in the Canadian national identity. So, when people say "I didn't realize that was a problem" or "I didn't mean anything by it," it's because white supremacy is so ubiquitous here that people don't even recognize it as an issue.

As a society, we often believe that racism shows up in a particular way and microaggressions are often thought to be insignificant or even innocent. But the "micro" part of microaggressions doesn't mean that the effects are small. It just means that they happen on the "micro" level — interpersonally as opposed to systemically. Microaggressions are still blatant, still injurious, and still racist.

You might now be wondering what you can do to address microaggressions in your life. When we think about addressing

racism and other forms of discrimination, we might think about holding a sign, walking in solidarity at a march or attending a sit-in at a peaceful protest. Though these are all important ways of affecting social change, it's always much easier to be a face in a crowd than to address discrimination, racism and microaggressions while we sit amongst our colleagues in a meeting, while we're out with our friends or around the dinner table with our family.

We must make a more conscious effort to speak with full awareness and intention. I encourage you to be an ally against microaggressions and not settle for the status quo of everyday behaviours toward marginalized individuals. Thinking about how words matter might be a start.

Naming microaggressions in the moment goes a long way to support the recipient. By naming the act, we are validating that the microaggression and discrimination actually happened. This helps to validate the recipient's experience, and more importantly, their feelings. It also helps to ensure the recipient feels supported, instead of isolated and alone.

Once the microaggression is made visible to the perpetrator, shift the focus from what the person intended to the impact. You cannot prove intention. By focusing on the impact of the microaggression, you can help the perpetrator understand what happened and how they may have caused pain. Further conversations with the perpetrator are also helpful. Changing our behaviour often happens over time, not in an instant.

And yes, it is exhausting. It is frustrating. But we must continue to stand up and show up, especially in our everyday interactions where "micro" forms of racism are so pervasive. Don't permit your friends, colleagues, professors, family, or anyone else to fall victim to their own biases anymore. Call them out on it. Being an ally is more than simply attending a large protest or gathering. It's about showing up for the people in your life, every day.

Serena Dykstra is of Anishnaabe and Cree descent, with connections to both Marten Falls First Nation and Waskaganish First Nation. She is the equity and human rights advisor at Confederation College. The views and opinions expressed in this column are those of the author.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

City should act to reduce fire risk

(Re: "Cities Face Growing Fire Risk — column, July 10)

IMUST applaud Ian Pattison for bringing this serious problem to light. The risk of forest fires spreading to cities has deeply concerned me for a long time.

If you view any map, you can immediately see that my home (near the corner of Balmoral and Forest streets) is almost at the centre of this city. Thus, I should theoretically have no fear of wildfire. However, this is not the case. It is very possible for a wildfire to follow the Neebing Flood channel from the west side of this city, then past the Chapple's

golf course, and then right up to my front door.

All over this city, there are heavily wooded areas loaded with tinder-dry underbrush and fire susceptible, dangerous species of trees. These areas desperately need to be cleaned out. Also, it would be a great idea to clear a fire-free buffer zone around the city.

If our city council is set on spending money, then I beg the City to spend it to make this city safer. Canada does not need another city burnt to the ground.

Barry Wallden
THUNDER BAY