

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

Local Journalism Initiative reporters are
funded by the Government of Canada | **Canada**

Flu shot a life saver

Your ongoing vaccine bravery makes your community healthier

WHILE the flu season is almost upon us, it has been underway for some months in the southern hemisphere. And the case counts so far are remarkable. Although these are the winter months in countries such as Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, very few instances of flu are being reported.

This matches the experience across the globe during 2020, when flu levels hit record lows. Last year, only four cases were reported in Canada during the first week of November. During the same week in 2019, 147 cases had been confirmed.

It's believed the social distancing and mask-wearing measures adopted to combat the COVID-19 epidemic are mainly responsible. However, this huge drop-off in flu numbers, while welcome, also poses some challenges. With so few cases to work with, vaccine manufacturers are unsure exactly which strains of the virus they'll be facing.

To date, two older strains have been identified in the few patients who've fallen ill, and it appears two new ones might also be present. For that reason, while flu vaccines are usually developed to combat either two or three strains, the vaccines this year will be quadrivalent — designed to give protection against four strains.

There is also some uncertainty as to whether, with very few instances of the disease last year, our immunity might have suffered. Might we be more vulnerable than usual, through loss of contact with the virus? Public health experts simply do not know.

Neither is it clear, again because of its relative rarity, whether this year's strain will be more or less virulent.

What can be said with certainty is that it's essential everyone get vaccinated when flu shots become available. With COVID almost certain to persist into the winter months, anyone who doesn't get vaccinated is asking for trouble. A double dose of COVID and flu could be lethal.

Island Health, the health agency for British Columbia's Vancouver Island, has said flu shots will begin around the middle of October. Public health clinics will offer the vaccine, as will pharmacies who've signed on to deliver shots, and also some family physician offices. (Ontario has a similar rollout plan, with supply priority given to hospitals and long-term care homes.)

No doubt some of the same reluctance to get vaccinated we've seen during the COVID outbreak will resurface when the flu vaccine becomes available.

What anyone must remember who refuses a flu shot for reasons of personal choice, is that it's not just about you.

Yes, strictly speaking, you have that right. No one can force a vaccine on you, and no one is proposing to do so.

But as with any infectious disorder, the flu virus needs victims to perpetuate itself. Beyond question, some among us have died of COVID-19 because others refused preventive measures, and helped spread the disease.

And sadly, as with COVID, those who die of flu are likely to be vulnerable elderly folks and residents of long-term care facilities. Surely we owe them every form of help we can offer, personal reservations about vaccination notwithstanding.

The message, then, is clear. With COVID still a real threat, and hospital ICUs overflowing, we cannot allow a second epidemic to fall upon us at the same time.

Every one of us has a public duty to get a flu shot, as soon as the vaccine becomes available.

— An editorial from the *Victoria Times Colonist*
(timescolonist.com)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We need to support mental health for all

NOT ONE of us has walked a perfect life. We all have a story. If you have benefited from a privileged life, do not judge another's circumstance to gain false feelings of superiority.

Many adults have emotional pain locked inside due to a grieving loss, emotional wounds or trauma. Most adults ignore their pain or try to get away from it instead of dealing with it.

Sometimes we aren't even aware that we are hurting, but our actions tell otherwise. We try to erode our spirit by medicating or using alcohol to dull the senses. Or we throw ourselves into a career or consumerism. Or we use eating disorders to hide our inner ache. We need social workers and psychologists in schools to support children because time does not heal all wounds; time allows hurt to fester.

Why is it that we stigmatize mental health yet support those with physical ailments?

Why is it that we can show immense compassion toward a hurting animal yet deny it to our own species?

Jesus was a healer. He showed no prejudice or division for lack of

income, colour of skin or the healing of mental and physical ills.

We can not place a price on a life.

Healing begins when we treat all people equally.

Karen Rooney
THUNDER BAY

Pharmaceuticals profit from pandemic

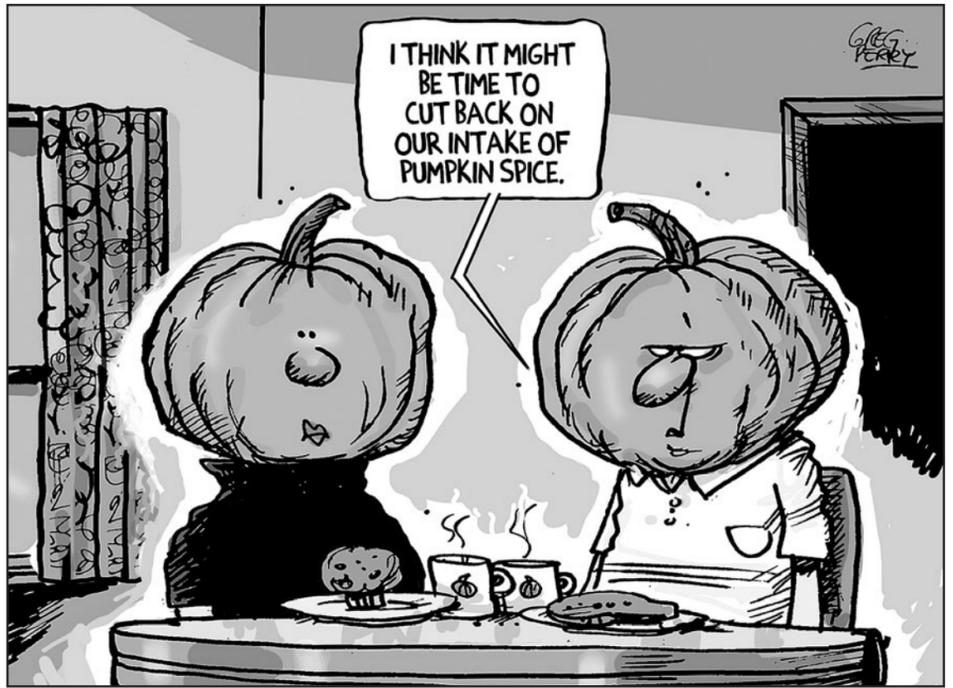
SO LET me get this straight. Millions of people got the Covid jab thinking it would prevent them from the virus. The vaccinated can still catch Covid and still spread Covid. But the vaccinated can eat in the restaurant but the unvaccinated can't.

Now the drug companies want to vaccinate young people even though there is a risk to young boys of getting myocarditis.

At the same time, doctors who have had success treating Covid patients with ivermectin (for people) are fired. It would be too bad to spoil a profitable pandemic with a cheap effective drug like ivermectin.

Karl Friesen
SIOUX LOOKOUT

(Editor's note: Ivermectin has not been approved for treatment of COVID-19 in the U.S. or Canada.)



Reconciliation is a process

BY TIFFANY MILLER

I AM A person of Metis and mixed European ancestry. At Confederation College, I am an Indigenous library liaison at the Paterson Library and an instructor in the Aboriginal Community Advocacy Program.

The first federal Truth and Reconciliation Day has just passed, on Sept. 30, and some people will not think about truth and reconciliation or the 94 calls to action again until next year. But every day, Indigenous people are aware that in the last seven years only 13 of the 94 calls to action have been completed. Additionally, of the 71 that remain: 29 are in progress, 32 are in the proposal phase and 20 have not been started.

Since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015, many political and educational organizations have started the process of "decolonizing." To understand "decolonization" you must first understand that the land we know as Canada was formed by colonialism.

The Oxford dictionary defines colonialism as "a policy or practice of acquiring full or partial control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it." By that definition, decolonizing would mean returning the land to First Nations to govern, giving them self-determination over their culture, economy and government and I do not see that mentioned in anyone's decolonization strategies.

Regardless of what the colonial structures are doing or not doing, each one of us has the power to create change and reconciliation, starting with the relationships and conversations we have in our homes, workplace and community.

One person alone may not be able to make large sociological shifts in ideology or mobilize the

We should all do our part in the journey of decolonization



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.

government to end the 45 long-term drinking water advisories that are still in effect in 35 communities, but you can start healing our community one day and one person at a time.

It starts with relationship building, creating a community of support, listening with an open mind and heart, and having a respectful curiosity.

Own your ignorance and be open to learn. We can educate ourselves and lead efforts to educate others by investigating with positive intentions. Have the humility and courage to stumble along the way.

Make safe spaces for people to heal and grow. Make efforts to ensure that everyone is included and there is equitable representation.

Understand that your Indigenous coworkers are grieving every time there is another news story. Give them the space and resources to take care of themselves.

Don't be afraid to ask Indigenous people questions. (Learn how offering tobacco respects cus-

toms when seeking insight.)

Allow Indigenous voices to lead the conversation, and stand beside First Nations people in urging government to take action. By participating in meaningful allyship, we can and speak truth to power.

We can support our friends and coworkers in exercising their agency, fighting for their rights, position and place.

We can take leadership in planning truth and reconciliation activities, honouring residential school survivors and speaking out against injustices in our spaces and communities.

I feel like the biggest barrier that keeps people from starting this process is fear of making a mistake or "doing it wrong," but I would argue that there is no "right way."

Reconciliation is a process not a destination.

The only thing that we can do wrong is to do nothing.

As my favourite sociology researcher Brene Brown says: "Nobody is safe until we are all safe."

While I work through the uncomfortability of stepping out of my own comfort zone, breaking trail and creating a spaces where everyone has the same consideration and opportunities, I will continue to "be awkward, brave and kind."

I hope you will join me.

Tiffany Miller is the Indigenous library liaison at the Paterson Library and an instructor in the Aboriginal Community Advocacy Program at Confederation College. The views and opinions expressed in this column are those of the author.

Ford can learn from O'Toole

BY JAY GOLDBERG

THE Conservative Party's defeat in the recent federal election offers important lessons for Ontario Premier Doug Ford.

Conservative Leader Erin O'Toole chose to abandon core principles to try to win an election. Long-standing stances on carbon taxes, balanced budgets and broad-based tax relief crumbled in the face of focus-group gurus.

Politicians have been trying to sell voters on the idea of a carbon tax for years. Proponents claim that a carbon tax is the key to fighting climate change. But those politicians are wrong. Higher prices don't mean lower emissions.

In British Columbia, 13 years of carbon taxes have failed to stop emissions from going up. B.C. has the highest carbon tax in Canada, but emissions in the province rose by 11 per cent between 2015 and 2019, according to the province's own numbers.

Carbon taxes simply don't work. Ford has stood against carbon taxes throughout his political career. O'Toole, on the other hand, decided to flip-flop on carbon taxes to try to win an election.

His decision was a huge mistake. Voters consistently said the high cost of living was the number one election issue. But those who worried about skyrocketing living costs weren't able to turn to the blue team for relief, as Conservatives were promising a carbon tax of their own.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer expects the carbon tax to cost the average Ontario family over



COMMENTARY

\$600 a year by 2022.

Ford ran hard against carbon taxes and won a majority just three short years ago.

Lesson one for Ford: don't back down on carbon taxes. As Ontarians grow more and more concerned about the cost of living, he needs to be able to point out that the Trudeau government's carbon tax agenda is hindering affordability.

O'Toole also gave up on trying to be fiscally prudent. He merely promised to balance the budget within a decade, with no reductions in government spending. His forecasts also relied on very optimistic economic growth numbers without accounting for the risk of recessions.

Canadian taxpayers are already paying \$22 billion this year in interest on the national debt. Interest payments are expected to double within the next five years, forcing the government to spend tens of billions of dollars on interest payments rather than health care or tax relief.

Voters were unimpressed by O'Toole's lack of urgency in dealing with Canada's growing debt crisis. Many saw little difference between the Liberals and Conservatives.

As Ontario's debt grows larger

and larger, Ford should remember that he was elected on a plan to fix the province's finances after a decade of Liberal deficits. Ontario's debt is set to hit \$450 billion next year, with the province spending more on debt interest payments than post-secondary education.

The status quo is simply unacceptable. Ford needs to offer a clear plan to Ontarians, laying out how and when he will balance the budget, and he needs to be bold.

Lesson two: offer a responsible fiscal agenda that can appeal to common sense Ontarians who worry about racking up debt and interest payments for their kids and grandkids.

O'Toole also failed to include any kind of tax relief in his platform. O'Toole's gimmicky one-month GST holiday simply wasn't enough to motivate voters. Ford won on a tax-cut platform in 2018 — including cutting gas taxes and income taxes — but he has yet to deliver on those pledges.

Lesson three: promising to cut taxes helped Ford win in 2018, and it was a key reason why O'Toole lost the federal election. If Ford wants to avoid O'Toole's fate, it's time for him to bring home the goods.

On everything from carbon taxes to deficits to tax relief, O'Toole disappointed hardworking taxpayers looking for change. Ford would be wise to avoid those mistakes.

Jay Goldberg is interim Ontario director of the Canadian Taxpayer Federation. Column courtesy of Troy Media (troymedia.com).

Write to us: Letters to the editor are most welcome. Those kept to 300 words or less have priority.

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.