

THE FREE PRESS MAIL BAG

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STREETWISDOM

Do you support Prince George City Council's decision to increase municipal taxes?



Tannis Nyberg
"I think it's terrible. No one wants to pay more taxes."



Brad Ellis
"An increase doesn't really affect me directly. But considering this is a growing community with more development, I suppose it's alright."



Mavis Kearns
"I think it's getting out of hand."



Vic Aubichon
"It seems to be going up each year and it's all a little too much. 'Things are costing us so much, maybe we should rethink what we're spending.'"

Keep church and state separate

Editor:

In response to the letter from Lori Wolfe concerning my objection to the nativity scene being placed in front of the municipal buildings, I would like to point out that Ms. Wolfe has missed the point entirely.

She is obviously trying to defend her religious beliefs, when in fact they were not attacked in the first place. My point was, and still is, that not all of us are Christians and the church and state must be kept separate.

"The basic principle of democracy is that government recognizes the rights of all."

Ms. Wolfe mentions that she saw a lovely Menorah while visiting Vancouver. I assume that this Menorah was placed on private property, not municipal.

The nativity scene is the true meaning of Christmas only to those who harbour that belief, and

I acknowledge their right to display it — on church or private property.

The basic principle of democracy is that government by the people recognizes the rights of all.

Ray Jeanotte

PM's behaviour unacceptable

Editor:

I could hardly believe my eyes when watching the T.V. report of our Prime Minister attacking an unemployed protester. He barged into the crowd choking the protester (who didn't even fight back) pushing him into the hands of the RCMP who knocked his tooth out. The media suggested a security problem. The problem is controlling this Liberal Prime Minister.

If anyone of us carried on in this fashion, we'd be sure to spend 30 days in jail for assault.

Surely, the unemployed have a right to protect the Liberal governments proposal to punish the unemployed for their mismanagement of the economy through cuts to U.I. After all there is not fairness when 66,000 profitable corporations paid no income tax last year. We sure miss Gardiner and Oberle as our MPs. They'd have spoke up.

The Prime Minister's arrogant, insulting and abusive behavior should not be tolerated.

Ernest J. Waddington

City should keep up Nativity scene

Editor:

This letter is in response to Mr. Ray Jeannotte's recent comments in this paper regarding the Nativity Scene at City Hall.

He stated that he is in strong objection to the city displaying the Nativity Scene at Christmas.

First, I would like to take this opportunity to thank those responsible for setting up the display.

Mr. Jeannotte, even though you choose not to believe in what Christmas means, does not change the fact that Jesus Christ was born.

▼ Health Care

Government has priorities wrong

Editor:

It has frequently been reported in newspapers across the province, how the Employment Security Agreement (ESA) has richly enhanced the unionized hospital workers, to the detriment of patient services.

The ESA was an agreement negotiated by the provincial government, the employer, and the unions to ensure restructuring of the Provincial Health Care System took place in a collaborating manner. The decision was made to decrease the number of acute care beds, and, in the move toward "Closer to Home" care, transfer these savings to community services. PGRH has lost 51 acute care beds in this restructuring. With the loss of beds, nursing positions were lost also. Through the auspices of the ESA, these nurses either accessed early retirement, relocation to vacant positions in other communities, or were placed in current nursing position in other communities, or were placed in current nursing position vacancies already in the facility. Contrary to popular belief, no nurse has been collecting wages while sitting at home.

Employers agreed at the onset there would be no increase in workload. Few nurses, if any, at Prince George Regional Hospital, would say that their workload has not increased over the lifetime of the ESA. Patients are usually only admitted to the hospital when acutely ill, and are discharged in rapid succession.

As commonly referred to, the ESA is not a "sweetheart deal." Many benefits that had been previously negotiated and signed, on behalf of union members, in all three unions, were forfeited to smoothly implement the proposed changes of the provincial health care system. During the same time as unionized workers had the ESA, an agreement was struck between BCMA and the provincial government, that saw wages for physicians increase by an average of 22 per cent.

Without the ESA, further nursing expertise would have been lost, and patient care would have suffered more, as is currently the case in Alberta, Ontario, and other provinces.

All Canadians deserve equal access to health services, no matter where they live. If the federal government would admit that only 2 per cent of the National Debt is due to social services, (including health care), while the corporate tax breaks and high interest rates account for 94 per cent of the debt and the transfer payments were rescinded, maybe safe quality health care and services could be provided to patients in their home communities.

As concerned health care professionals and taxpayers, we would like to say, if we as Canadians continue in our complacency, we may see, in the very near future, that the Health Care System, we so strongly value, is no more. Wake up and smell the coffee!

Birthe Cisecki

Jan Harcus

Rita Sweeney

the Bible through your unbelief.

I hope and pray that the City of Prince George will never cease to put up the Nativity Scene, which represents the reason for Christmas.

Sincerely,

Leola E. Romanuk

Write On!

Letters to the editor are welcome but The Free Press reserves the right to edit for brevity, clarity and legality. All letters should be 250 words, preferably typewritten, and include the name, address and phone number of the letter writer (for verification purposes only).

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