

"A nation may lose its liberties in a day, and not miss them for a century."  
— Baron de Montesquieu, 1689-1755

## THE WINDSOR STAR

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### OPINION

## Tory spending Leaving no stone unturned

Quibble if you will with the choices the Conservative government made in slashing spending this week but don't quibble with the process of regularly reviewing programs for relevance and cost-effectiveness. If more governments did it, we'd all be paying lower taxes and bureaucratic spending could be checked before it spiralled out of control.

The Tories cut \$1 billion in spending by eliminating a host of programs cherished by the ousted Liberals and will use a \$13.2 billion budget surplus — which is \$5.2 billion higher than forecast — toward paying down Canada's \$481 billion debt. This is responsible although some of that money should be used to lower this country's excessive tax burden.

The government has come under fire for slashing programs cherished by the ousted Grits, and there is little doubt the Tories took partisan delight in putting their own stamp on government programs that had taken root during more than a decade of uninterrupted Liberal rule. But the review process the Conservatives undertook to find these savings is one that governments of all stripes, including municipal and provincial governments, should undertake on a regular if not annual basis because bureaucratic programs have a tendency toward inefficiency.

Rather than endeavour to find savings, program administrators often struggle to spend their budgeted money to ensure their budgets aren't slashed in following years. The only way to leash those bureaucratic beasts is to monitor them closely and regularly and follow the Conservative's example.

## Regional policing

Last month, Leamington police Chief Dean Gow expressed hope that his department would have its full complement of officers by the new year. At the time the town was short three experienced officers, and Gow said one of the reasons is officers are moving from one department to another more than they used to, and that can make it difficult to keep experienced personnel.

If that's the case, here's something for Leamington and other local municipalities to think about — a regional police force. Today, there's a disparate approach to policing with a mix of OPP and municipal forces that sometimes lack the specialized services they need to deal with crimes and emergencies. The city has its own force armed with the skills to deal with all major problems.

Based on an economy of scale, a regional police force would provide a better co-ordination of services and the opportunity for improved protection. Other benefits would include less administrative duplication and more sharing of information and equipment. A larger force would also provide an opportunity for greater job satisfaction and more promotion possibilities — something that might help prevent the staffing problems Leamington is experiencing.

Ten years ago (prior to the most recent round of amalgamation), the then-chiefs of the 10 area departments called on the province to introduce a regional force: "The increasing demands for services and the multitude of diverse requirements for service delivery necessitate a fully integrated police service, capable of supplying all manner of service. In order to best meet these new demands, we feel that the amalgamation of all police services in Essex County would be in the best interest of the population." It was good advice then, and even better advice today.



## Homemade bioterror

### GUEST COLUMN

By MARTIN SCHRAM

There was no sudden explosion, no siren, no news bulletin, no screams for help.

Just people, one by one, quietly calling the doctor or going to the hospital, suffering intestinal distress. So it took a while before officials realized this was something bigger: All who were sick had recently eaten fresh leafy greens. This was food poisoning. But it would be one full year before public health officials would finally understand that it was a bioterror attack.

We are not talking here of the September 2006 crisis of E. coli bacteria contamination that started in bagged fresh spinach crisis and swept across America. This case occurred in September 1984 when "bioterrorism" was not even in the news media lexicon. It was America's first documented bioterror attack.

It occurred in a small Oregon town with an unusual name: The Dalles. And it was perpetrated by a most unusual terrorist band: The cult of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh — the high priest with the long flowing beard and passions that included buying Rolls Royces. The Bhagwan's bunch had moved into The Dalles in a most unsteady way — setting up a compound (in which it would later be discovered a large cache of weapons) and holding a press conference. They were seeking to take over the town in what you might think was a usual democratic way — by winning the municipal election.

But they chose an electoral strategy so unusual that even Washington political consultants haven't suggested it: To reduce the election turnout so cult members could outnumber local vot-

ers, the Bhagwan's followers went to the local restaurants and surreptitiously sprayed salmonella bacteria on the salad bars. In less than a week, 751 townspeople were diagnosed with salmonella poisoning.

"The hospital at that time had 125 beds and every single bed was filled with victims," said Jeannie Senior, a reporter with The Oregonian, in Portland, who had written extensively about the cult and its compound. (She was interviewed for the 2003 PBS documentary series "Avoiding Armageddon," on which I was managing editor.) It is important today to remember how even sharp-eyed public health experts can take a wrong turn. For the federal, state and local public health officials initially concluded that The Dalles had been hit by accidental food poisoning.

### 'Would never say it'

"It was immensely frustrating to talk to the health officials who came into the area to study the outbreak," recalls The Oregonian's Senior. She said she repeatedly tried to get officials from the Centers for Disease Control and state epidemiology experts to at least say, "This could have been deliberately caused" — but, she said, "They would never say it."

The officials blamed it on cross contamination caused by food handlers and left town. But in the fall of 1985, officials obtained a vial of salmonella from a Rajneesh medical lab. It was identical to the bacteria that struck The Dalles.

In 1986, two cult leaders pleaded no contest to charges including attempted murder. They received 20-year sentences, served just four and were released for good behaviour. They then fled to Europe. The Bhagwan also fled there after receiving a 10-year suspended sentence and paying \$400,000 in fines. The bioterror attack at The Dalles, as

"Avoiding Armageddon" researcher Ted Leventhal noted in 2003, revealed poor investigative techniques at all levels and among all agencies. Information was not shared between scientists and law enforcement, which made it difficult to establish that a crime had been committed — that it was a germ attack, not a natural disease outbreak.

Today, public health detectives moved with impressive swiftness to pin down the origin of the contaminated spinach — the Natural Selection organic farm in Salinas, Calif. But only after it caused at least 114 people in 21 states to become ill, 18 with kidney failure, and the death of one Wisconsin woman.

### Packing plants

It turns out that this summer Food and Drug Administration officials had detected a pattern of E. coli bacteria on Salinas Valley produce and had been inspecting packing plants there since August. Still the crisis occurred, on their watch, as they watched.

No one has suggested that there is a terror component to this latest crisis. But we remember that micro-terror case of two decades ago — and so we must rule nothing in or out. We are more wary and more vigilant than before.

But on the front lines, we are still understaffed. And understaffed FDA inspectors are a weak link in a food chain that is wrapped around our homeland security. We have just witnessed a demonstration of how terrorists might use our food conveyor belt to spread their deliberate contamination from coast to coast.

Even while we think our food detectives are on the case, eyes wide open.

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## Bringing the world to our door

### GUEST COLUMN

By REMO MANCINI

Venice, the famous, and in my view, still important and beautiful "city state" offers us many lessons about local regional economic development. From the 9th to the 12th century, Venice developed into a powerful and worldly city state. For centuries, it wielded influence far greater than its size.



Remo Mancini

By capitalizing on its strategic position at the head of the Adriatic, Venetian naval and commercial forces became almost invulnerable. The Venetians shared a global vision and the city became a flourishing centre of the trade between Western Europe and the rest of the world (especially the Byzantine Empire and the Islamic world).

Strategies building on your location and natural core strengths remain timeless.

Essex County and Windsor could not be better or more centrally situated for trade and commerce within North

America and beyond. We have numerous natural core strengths yet to be fully appreciated, developed and exploited. And, like Venice, if we properly and carefully continue re-inventing ourselves, build on our core strengths, wisely take advantage our geographic location, our citizens can prosper well into the future.

Some 30 months ago, the city of Windsor and county of Essex launched a bold and necessary mission, a process to create a true regional approach to economic development. This mission, to be led by a newly appointed regional board, will soon be put into the field for refinement and implementation.

We must ask ourselves, what are our core strengths? How can we build upon, diversify and leverage these advantages?

The facts are on our side. We are more worldly than many, including ourselves, give us credit for. No region of our size has a better art gallery or symphony orchestra. When the new Windsor Casino entertainment facility is completed that facility will host entertainment usually reserved for big cities.

I know of no other region large or small that has such an outstanding outdoor sculpture garden. Our waterfront both in Essex County and Windsor is spectacular in its beauty. We are a fast developing wine region. Our uni-

versity and community college ensure we are a centre of learning and knowledge. All of the above and much more make Essex County and Windsor a wonderful place to invest, live and visit. And my advice is — speak up for Essex County and Windsor every chance you get.

Our geographic location right on the Canada-U.S. border, and right next door to one of the richest regions in the world, southeast Michigan, which is home to more than four million people, is an unparalleled commercial advantage.

### Quality of life

Surrounded by the Great Lakes, one of the great natural resources of the world, and having the Detroit River flow past our shores is both a commercial and quality of life advantage that most regions can only dream about. We must focus more intently on how to take greater commercial advantage of this waterway.

Please don't get me wrong, I know our regional economy has been hurt, and I know we have economic challenges — big ones.

However, the focus of this article is not about the past but how to grasp and manage the future. Like Venice, we must change in order to prosper. Change does not mean getting rid of everything we have. So we must nurture and expand our core assets, and

continue all efforts to keep Windsor and Essex County as "Canada's Automotive Capitol." Maximize our transportation system, better employ our airport and preserve our status as the No. 1 border crossing point in North America. Utilize Casino Windsor to expand other parts of our tourism base, carefully use our waterfront to improve our quality of life. Encourage our political institutions and leaders to support and market our fast expanding wine industry and make sure our university gets a full-fledged medical school. As well, our commercial fishing and agri-food industries are important and we must better understand and promote their public policy needs.

Our region is home to lush and productive farmland including the highest concentration of greenhouse farming in North America. Agriculture is a big part our life and our region is better off for it. We must support and sustain our farmers, their craft and their continued existence and success.

We need to advise, inform and convince federal and provincial policymakers that supporting the tool and die and mould industries are in Canada's interest. As we know, a significant percentage of this industry is right here in Essex County and Windsor, providing highly skilled and well-paying jobs.

The World Bank projects that between 2000 and 2010 the world economy

will grow from \$30 trillion to \$40 trillion. This growth will be led by a knowledge economy and driven by innovation, new technologies, new ideas and concepts. Globalization and the formation of trading blocks will continue whether we like it or not — everyone wants in on the action.

The new board of directors of the Windsor Development Commission is moving forward carefully, thoughtfully and with great urgency as we rebuild and re-tool from the bottom-up this vital community instrument. We have met as a board five times since being appointed in July. We have committees established and working. A nationwide search to select a CEO for our organization is underway. We are already receiving input and will be meeting with community organizations, political and industry leaders as well as our fellow citizens.

Our goal is to ensure that we as a community fully understand the challenges we face, and more importantly to marshal all our resources for the debate, planning and actions necessary to secure our continued position as a prosperous and important region on the world stage.

Remo Mancini I.C.D.D is a former Ontario Cabinet Minister and senior corporate executive. He sits on both private sector and not-for-profit boards.