sly avoided, ignored and conveniently forgotten
w to properly merge the Hamilton community
whole after the traumatic experience of amalga-

the forced merger in 2001, the so-called "new"
amilton has remained a conglomeration of six
unicipalities. Politicians have refused to under-
s, let along adapt to the new status.
is the annual and emotional venting session,
is replaced any professional discussion about
o retain the area-rating tax system. Local politi-
e over the years revealed their true ignorance,
erate condemnation of the many diverse sec-
he Hamilton community. Because of parochial
nterests, our elected officials remain stridently
nt to residents living outside their wards. They
ther badger, blame, and bluster against a col-
r group of residents and score political points,
ch out to help or offer solutions.
indifference has created what is fast becoming a
community.
other amalga-
cities, such as
and Sudbury,
er the last eight
rced themselves
me their distance
into the family
milton, for some
takes great com-
olating its subur-
l and urban folks
h other.
vitriolic com-
bout urban, suburban and rural communities
public display yet again this week as politicians
whether or not the area-rating tax system should
or be replaced by a more modern urban-rural sys-
t surprisingly, the vote to delay taking any action
ax system was split along rural-urban lines.
Comments, which have become all-too-common
his term of council, degenerate into a poor vers-
attack, with the suburbs accused of not paying
r share in tax money. In return, suburban coun-
ccuse the old city of Hamilton of ignorance, a
of corruption", and incompetence.
e point this week, combustible Ward 4 councillor
rulla, who oversees one of the poorest areas of the
asted he should introduce a motion to separate
e rest of the city. The suburban politicians, only
ingly, immediately approved the mock motion.
t's not just the myopic vision our politicians con-
express. It's also about crass politics.
n councillors continue to fume over what they
a city governance structure that is decidedly
nocratic" for them.
y see this every time they are outvoted by their
an colleagues. Urban councillors repeatedly point
e Hamilton Mountain needs at least one more
lor to represent the growing population. Scott
represents about 60,000 people, nearly double the
uents that Dave Mitchell represents in both
Creek and Glanbrook.
pite the stumbling attempts by recent mayors,
ng Mayor Fred Eisenberger, a former alderman
e old city of Hamilton, to knit together the dis-
attitudes, emotions and beliefs among his 15 col-
s, Hamilton continues to bumble along with the
at the separate areas of the city will fly apart leav-
enter that cannot hold.
orry about the unity of this community," said
erger, who put forth a motion to delay debate over
ting until after the 2010 election. But fear of not
something is not a political option.
til there is some political leadership in this com-
y, Hamilton will continue to remain a municipality
at war with itself, divided by fear, hatred and igno-

THE ISSUE

Area-rating debate put off once again

OUR VIEW

Urban-rural split creating dysfunctional community

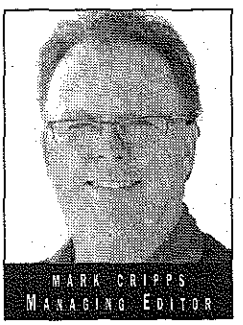
TALES FROM THE CRYPT

Racism rears its ugly head once again

One step forward, two steps back. Incidents like the racist threat against lawyer and Settlement and Immigration Services Organization (SISO) board chair Hussein Hamdani leave me wondering what the hell is wrong with some people.

Last week, some puerile moron crawled out of his/her prehistoric cave and left a racist message taped to a van outside the SISO office.

The hate message was scrawled on a page of the Hamilton Spectator, where Hamdani writes a freelance column. His eyes were X-ed out, and the incident is now being investigated by the Hamilton Police hate crimes unit.



MARK CRIPPS
MANAGING EDITOR

I hope they find the person who did this. I'd really like to get a gander at what someone of this misguided ilk looks like.

The note attached to the column contained numerous swear words and attacks against immigrants.

Ironically, Hamdani's column was about Remembrance Day, and he paid tribute to the country's "willingness to stand up to protect human rights, freedom and justice remains one Canada's defining characteristics in the eyes of the world."

That someone would warp that tribute to Canada's war veterans into an attack against immigrants leaves no doubt as to the culprit's mental capacity.

Hussein Hamdani is a shining example of how immigrants are making a positive contribution to our society.

Not only does he volunteer at SISO, a model agency that assists newcomers adapt and succeed in Canada, but he also has a law degree, and sits on several local, provincial and national boards of directors and executive committees. At the national level he serves on the Government of Canada Roundtable on Security, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and is Vice-Chair of North American Spiritual Revival Committee. Provincially he serves with the Special Investigations Unit, the Muslim Youth of North America Advisory Committee and is an executive member of the Ontario Bar Association's Information Technology and E-Commerce Committee.

As if that wasn't enough, he also serves as the secretary for the board of the Dundurn Community Legal Clinic, the Mayor of Burlington's Inclusivity Committee, Hamilton's Centre for Civic Inclusion, Hamilton Chief of Police's Advisory Committee, Hamilton Immigration Strategy Committee, and Hamilton Muslim, Arab and Jewish Dialogue Committee.

Few of us can boast a resume with such community involvement. I feel privileged to have a person of this character and commitment as a fellow Canadian.

It seems that incidents abroad tend to bring out the worst in people. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 saw numerous incidents of racism committed in Hamilton, including an arson that destroyed the Hindu Samaj Temple.

I would suspect the murder spree in Texas a few weeks back, in which an American soldier is accused of killing 13 people, has been misconstrued by those looking for a convenient platform to unfurl their flags of hatred. Nidal Malik Hasan, who stands accused in the bloody rampage, may claim to be Muslim, but his actions do not represent that faith.

People tend to fear what they do not understand, or refuse to embrace.

That leads to generalizations, and can be converted into a dangerous weapon in the hands of racists.

I am shocked and angered by the attack on Hamdani, and I pray this is an isolated incident.

Every day we continue to move forward in creating an inclusive society in Canada. The vast majority of Canada's immigrants are helping to build this country. They are not extremists, or radicals. They came to Canada to escape chaos and zealotry.

The vast majority of Canadians are tolerant and accepting of diversity.

Let's not let the knuckleheads spoil the wonderful country we are building together.

AGREE? DISAGREE? HAVE WE MISSED SOMETHING?
SHARE YOUR VIEWS IN A LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA, AN OPINION, OR A NEW PERSPECTIVE TO SHARE WITH THE COMMUNITY?
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