

forum

Approving MS 'fix' is the right thing to do

Canadians with MS are being denied treatment here at home. There are 47 countries that recognize Chronic Cerebro-Spinal Venous Insufficiency (CCSVI) as a true entity. Canada has one of the highest rates of MS in the world and Jeanette Elliot of the Barrie MS branch can tell you the total annual cost of health care and lost productivity associated with MS in Canada is estimated to be about \$950 million.

Barrie cardiovascular surgeon Dr. Sandy MacDonald recently presented his findings to the Subcommittee on Neurological Disease of the Standing Committee on Health in Ottawa. Last year, my Liberal colleague MP Kristy Duncan and I encouraged Parliament to develop a national strategy on the brain and form this committee. Dr. MacDonald told us his office continues to receive 1,000 requests a week for this procedure and he is at a loss to understand why the Ontario government rejects this inexpensive and simple surgical treatment. They are allowing so



Patrick Brown
PARLIAMENT HILL

many to suffer needlessly and MS patients diagnosed with CCSVI are travelling to other countries at great financial cost.

I know Dr. MacDonald to be a man of complete integrity. I believe in his work and know he would never perform an unsafe procedure. He is driven to help his patients. Their personal stories speak volumes. Let me share just a few of their stories with you:

- Lianne Webb, a 48 year old woman from Hillsdale, started suffering severe migraine headaches in her mid-20s, began to lose control of her right arm and leg, and struggled daily with chronic bouts of fatigue. Webb was diagnosed with MS in 1992.

After 18 long years of living with this disease that had so profoundly affected her and her family, she went to see Dr. Mac-

Donald. Through imaging, he saw the blockages in her jugulars and diagnosed CCSVI. He treated her with balloon angioplasty on Feb. 11 of this year. She has described the procedure as simple, painless and only lasting an hour, including her recovery time. Webb said she no longer has symptoms, her fatigue is gone and she stopped taking the medication. She is working full-time, she is golfing again and walks the course, she goes horseback riding at least twice a week and she now finds it hard to even sit down and relax. She can't wait to try so many new things. Webb has her life back.

- Steven Garvie, a 53-year-old Barrie man, was diagnosed with Secondary Progressive MS about 10 years ago. He was unable to walk without the use of an aid, a rollator or an electric wheelchair.

He was living in supportive housing for the physically disabled and was attended to by caregivers every day. They helped him shower, cook his supper, feed him, and clean up after. The agony of Garvie's

daily life was almost too much to bear. He was constantly haunted by the thoughts of what his disease was putting his three daughters through. He took anti-depressants and admitted to our committee he tried to commit suicide.

He had almost given up. That is until he went to see Dr. MacDonald.

Garvie has CCSVI and on Jan. 29 of this year, he was treated with balloon angioplasty. He says he went into the procedure with the hope of just stopping the progression. He was not prepared for the amazing results. Garvie was so proud to tell us he no longer needs the caregivers. He left his housing unit three months ago. He now showers on his own, cooks his own meals, feeds himself and cleans up after. He has his life back.

The Ontario Ministry of Health will not authorize physicians like Dr. MacDonald from treating CCSVI in MS patients. The Ontario Health Technology Advisory Committee (OHTAC) ruled in May that the treatment is too experimental and larger

population studies are required. While I understand the need to collect more scientific data, Dr. MacDonald and I know the cost of doing science must not be at the cost of wasted lives.

Clearly, the Ontario Health Ministry does not understand the urgency of the situation.

Barb Farrell in our community is an appalling example of someone scheduled for treatment by Dr. MacDonald only to have it cancelled just days before. Farrell cannot wait for the province to drag its feet for years to have broad population studies.

She is too weak to travel to another country.

Farrell desperately wants and needs this procedure. She is almost out of time.

Sixteen hundred cases have been treated successfully internationally and Dr. MacDonald has already treated six patients in Barrie. Yesterday, our committee heard from Italy's Dr. Paolo Zamboni, Poland's Dr. Marian Simka and Toronto's Dr. Robert Maggiano. All three experts were unequivocal in

their conviction that this treatment offers incredible and exciting new medical opportunities for MS patients.

The MS Society released \$2.4 million last week for studies to support this case. The Canadian Institute of Health Research (CHIR) has begged for research studies providing further clarity. The federal government added \$16 million to the CIHR budget for clinical research.

The federal health minister has convened a national conference of the top academics, provincial officials, doctors and researchers to discuss CCSVI in MS patients.

This is not a partisan issue; it is about doing the right thing.

I commend Barrie MPP Aileen Carroll for writing the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

We need more members of the provincial Liberal government to follow Aileen's example and demand this treatment be allowed by their government.

Patrick Brown is the MP for Barrie

LETTER OF THE DAY



Examiner Files

Barrie council has deferred a decision regarding a proposed ban on the GO train whistle at three south-end crossings. One reader says the whistles shouldn't be silenced due to safety reasons.

Don't silence whistles

Personally, I think that banning the GO train whistle is dumb.

How can we compromise safety of more than 100,000 residents in the city of Barrie for a mere 500 to 1,000 residents who find the whistle annoying?

The reason the engineer blows the horn is to warn pedestrians and motorists travelling around the area that the train he is operating is carrying hundreds of passengers, and is approaching the level crossing.

In other words, he blows it for everyone's safety.

City council has spent more than \$200,000 already on looking into the ban, and that cost is still going to go up. There still has to be upgrades to all three crossings, trees have to be removed to improve the sight-line, pavement markings have to be painted on the road, and snow removal every winter.

That cost will be passed along directly to the taxpayers of the city. Furthermore, the city must assume liability to all injuries, or deaths, that happen along the route the GO train takes in

E-POLL

This week's question:

Surveillance cameras could be installed in downtown Barrie. What do you think?

Too much like Big Brother
Yes, if it keeps us safe
Why not already?

Last week's question:

Is there too much city road construction happening at once, and should the work be staggered?

Yes: 64%

No: 36%

www.thebarrieexaminer.com

Barrie if the whistle is silenced, whether it was or wasn't a result of the whistle being banned. I think that the safety is our

No. 1 concern here. A crossing could malfunction at any time, bad weather could limit people's sight of the railroad tracks, and the visually impaired in the area. Need I say any more?

What will happen when the train is going 40-50 km/h in the spring of 2011? The second GO train stop will be opened and operational at the former Allandale station. Because of this, trains will be travelling at almost double their current speed through the city.

Take a second and think about this my fellow city residents and city council. Do we really know what we're getting into just to satisfy some people who dislike the sound of the horn?

Personally, I think that the train tracks have been there for decades, before the majority of the residents lived in that area. There was always the possibility of trains using those tracks once again, so I say, the tracks were there first. You don't like it? Move.

Matthew Henderson
Barrie

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Barb Farrell's story must be told

(Re: 'Hanging on to hope' in the June 12 edition of the Examiner)

Thank you for covering the story of Barb Farrell.

There are many of us from around the world who are writing e-mails and sending letters to government officials asking for compassionate treatment for Barb.

Please continue to cover this important story.

Pam Woods
Port Orchard, Wash.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Lady Gaga not Madonna

(Re: Lady Gaga's new video)

Lady Gaga is a repulsive image that all people of good will should strive to avoid.

Her most recent pornographic music video — which features highly sexualized images coupled with Catholic religious symbols — betrays her as nothing more than a mediocre Madonna wannabe.

In the video, she squirms around half-naked with half-naked guys while abusing Catholic symbols.

It is clear the singer has now become the new poster girl for American decadence and Catholic bashing which she perversely fobs off to the world as "creative art."

When asked in a recent interview by Larry King if she

was considering having children some day, she answered, "Not right now because it would destroy my creativeness."

She seems oblivious to the fact that there is nothing more creative for a woman than to have a child.

Sadly, fame, fortune and false idolatry have become the heartbeat of American culture.

These things seem more important to the masses than life itself.

But in the end, they are all only illusions that will wither and fade.

In the end, "the first will be last and the last will be first."

Janine Colbert
Barrie

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

What's the point of long-gun registry?

If the objective of the long-gun registry is to prevent gun crime, there is no logical way it can succeed.

If a gun is not registered, the registry has no useful information for that specific gun that can be used by police. If a gun is registered, the police have no proactive means to prevent it from being used in a crime.

Even without the registry, there is a federal licensing system that serves as a preventative measure to keep Joe-Gang Banger from easily getting a

gun.

Also, gun owners are required by law to keep their firearms securely in their possession under lock and key to prevent them from being stolen.

The original objective of the registry was to make long-gun ownership a hassle, so that no decent-minded citizen would be willing to take up the hobby.

Recently, however, Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff has announced that he would work to make the registry less of a hassle for gun owners.

This begs the question, since the long-gun registry cannot prevent gun crimes and there is already an existing federal law regulating ownership and possession of firearms — why bother keeping the registry at all?

By promising to make gun registration less of a hassle, Ignatieff and the Liberals are only promising to make it easier for people to own guns.

Nick Lui
Calgary, Alta.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thanks for making Camp Day a success

Thank you for your support of Tim Hortons Camp Day, when more than 3,500 Tim Hortons stores in Canada and the United States donated their entire coffee sales, in addition to funds raised through other Camp Day events and activities, to the Tim Horton Children's Foundation.

That special day raised an unbelievable \$9.7 million (Cdn.).

We are extremely grateful for

the support and generosity of our customers, store owners, staff, special guests and media who participated in Camp Day 2010.

The funds raised on Camp Day this year will help more than 14,000 deserving children to one of six Tim Horton Children's Foundation camps — all expenses paid.

The experience is designed to build self-confidence, self-

esteem, leadership skills and provide campers with a positive view of their true potential.

On behalf of Tim Hortons, the Tim Horton Children's Foundation and the thousands of children you have helped send to camp this year, thank you very much.

Bill Moir
Tim Horton Children's Foundation

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Now is the time for change of councillor in Ward 9

(Re: 'Prince fits in Ward 9' in the June 11 edition of the Examiner)

In response to Scott Gorry's letter, it is clear that Mr. Gorry is a friend of Andrew Prince. That's fine. Mr. Gorry supports Mr. Prince's record on council, which he is entitled to.

However, let me set the record straight. I have met Mr. Prince on a few occasions and as a resident of Ward 9, I follow his work as my councillor closely.

I respectfully disagree with Mr. Gorry on the quality of Andrew Prince's work as my representative. I believe the Mr. Prince, along with the rest of

council, has not done a good job of managing the city and our finances. It's time for a change. I do not support any specific candidate for council at this time.

When it is time to cast my vote, I will make my decision.

For the record, I voted for Mr. Prince last time. I gave him a chance and he failed.

I believe that all elected representatives must be held to a higher standard. That includes our mayor and councillors.

I have faith that Barrie city police laid the charges against Mr. Prince with sufficient evidence. Like it or not, our councillors are public figures and are held to a higher level of account-

ability that most people. As it should be.

As for Mr. Prince's record on council, you feel he has done a good job. You are entitled to that opinion. However, I beg to differ. We can do much better.

Al Thomas
Barrie



Letters: We want to hear your opinions. Send your letters to: news@thebarrieexaminer.com Make sure to provide us with your name and city or town.