

OPINION & EDITORIALS



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The CENTRAL NEWSPAPER

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Ward 4 councillor Giberson's loses are mounting...

This week our City Hall columnist Dean Hickey provides readers with a careful look at the recent debate over by-law changes requiring increased separation between social service outlets in Oshawa. This newspaper accepts the need for charities and other agencies to continue to serve those in the community who are most vulnerable, however, the uproar on the part of councillor Giberson and others who attended a recent Special Council meeting was really too much to bear. To listen to the social justice warrior from Ward 4 you might get the impression Oshawa councillors were attempting to eliminate social services altogether. Citing human rights legislation, the Charter, various court challenges, and even case law, the man who put so much into what is now the Back Door Mission left no stone unturned in his effort to discredit any and all who were in opposition to his views. Going as far as to say Oshawa may well become part of further such case law should the bylaw changes be approved as recommended, the good councillor succeeded only in further marginalizing himself from the rest of Council. As it happens his was the only dissenting voice during the final vote. This can be added to his long list of losses so far this term. Remember the downtown murals debate where councillor Giberson went all out to persuade his colleagues to join him in erasing much of Oshawa's artistic history? Readers may recall the debate over Lot 4 – the parking lot on Athol Street that will soon be home to a multi-story complex with residential units, a parking garage, and possibly a clinic – all of which councillor Giberson voted against. Perhaps the best illustration is a report issued by the Integrity Commissioner last September that found the councillor to be in breach of the city's Code of Conduct for gloating on social media about the arrest of a local advocate for the homeless who was before the courts. Clearly the residents of Ward 4 should be taking note of councillor Giberson's self-destructive pattern of bad judgment that continues to be compounded by a degree of incompetence rarely seen in municipal politics. Pity the residents and businesses in Ward 4 should this man ever again be elected to Oshawa Council.

Canadians got the PM they deserve...

During the last federal election, many Canadians mistakenly looked to Mark Carney as the man best suited to steer this country's economy in the right direction. He was presented in a favourable light by the mainstream media as being a much more capable financial manager than the outgoing and fully discredited Justin Trudeau. Fast-forward to today and you will see a Prime Minister who has tripled-down on the failed fiscal and economic policies of his predecessor. At the same time, readers should recall that Carney was in fact a senior economic advisor to Trudeau since 2020. Added to this is the sobering fact that 13 of Trudeau's cabinet ministers now occupy positions within Carney's leadership team. We know there will be no budget anytime soon, despite Carney's campaign promise to operate his government on the basis of a costed economic platform. As has been widely reported, Canada's budget watchdog continues to urge the government to release an update on their current finances, as credibility with investors continues to weaken. We've all read or heard of the Trudeau-Carney Liberal plan to spend many billions on military equipment, transportation, housing, and various infrastructure projects – as our economic output is continues to shrink. The federal deficit, already at historic Liberal-driven highs, is now forecast by economists to go into orbit. Yves Giroux, the parliamentary budget officer, has been blunt in his assessment of the Liberal's approach, saying "There's a lot of question marks on the government's fiscal plan... A budget would've been very helpful in clearing up the uncertainty and providing more detail." The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce has estimated the deficit may rise as high as three per cent of GDP, somewhere in the range of \$90-billion – which is more than double what the Liberals 'projected' in December. To put it all in perspective, Ottawa was spending over \$60-billion more than it received in revenue as of March 2024, and the situation has only gotten worse. Canadians are paying \$1-billion in debt interest every week, and that is no way to run a country.

"Jaws" was a once in a lifetime movie...

Stephen Spielberg's unforgettable film "Jaws" found its way onto the big screen no less than a half-century ago, on June 20, 1975, grossing a record \$7.9-million soon afterwards. Although the internet is now filled with behind-the-scenes photographs showing various stages of filming and prop creation, the big pale-coloured fish with monster-like teeth still has the capacity to make our flesh creep with excitement. It can even fill us with that sense of terror many theatre-goers experienced in the days when hundreds gathered in a dark room – to scream in unison during some very unforgettable moments. Based on the 1974 novel by Peter Benchley, it stars Roy Scheider as police chief Martin Brody, who, with the help of a marine biologist (Richard Dreyfuss) and a professional shark hunter (Robert Shaw), hunts a man-eating great white shark that attacks beachgoers at a New England summer resort town. The film made such a lasting impression that barley any visit to a local beach has been the same since, and who among us hasn't at some point mentioned "Jaws" when looking out over vast expanses of deep blue water, or perhaps hummed that familiar repetitious tune as though danger were about to appear? Remember the battery-operated shark made by the Ideal Toy Company – the one with its mouth full of objects we as kids had to remove without triggering the teeth to close, or those famous movie posters that have become collector items? The images are unforgettable and will certainly last for generations. The making of the movie certainly had its challenges though, including a budget that nearly tripled to \$9-million and a shoot that went from 55 to 159 days. An Associated Press article from the time, on the subject of Spielberg's budding career put it this way, "It is news when a 26-year-old film director goes \$2 million over budget and two and a half months over schedule and manages to avoid getting fired." Steven Spielberg has never since found himself under such financial pressure while movie-making. Both the film and the genius behind it have stood the test of time.

The CENTRAL NEWSPAPER welcomes your submissions and letters

As The CENTRAL works to provide an interesting and accurate reflection of the communities that make up Durham Region through our weekly news pages, we invite local citizens to participate in the conversation through submissions and letters to the editor. We truly appreciate and support your efforts to make The CENTRAL your own. Letters and submissions are welcome at newspaper@ocentral.com

A Conservative Approach to Fixing Canada's Immigration Crisis

By Patrick Keeney

Canada is undergoing one of the most far-reaching demographic experiments in the Western world. In 2023 we admitted 1.25 million newcomers – a historic high – pushing our population past 40 million. Immigration now accounts for 98 percent of national population growth, driven by deliberate Liberal policy under former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Despite growing public concern, the much-touted "cutbacks" Trudeau announced just before his departure in January set a target of 395,000 new permanent residents for 2025 – plus an astounding 673,000 temporary foreign workers, seasonal workers and international students. Pledges to "stabilize" population growth have done almost nothing, widening the gap between policy and public sentiment.

The consequences are severe. Housing affordability has deteriorated further in cities like Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal, where average home prices exceed \$700,000 and one-bedroom rents surpass \$2,500. Public services – including healthcare, transit and education – are overwhelmed. Wait times for healthcare are increasing, infrastructure is under pressure and the quality of life is declining.

Canada is under worsening economic pressure, with growth largely an illusion. While GDP rises, GDP per capita is falling, which means Canadians are getting poorer. Productivity stagnates, capital investment declines, inflation eats away at everything and low-wage migration intensifies the problem.

Yet politically, immigration remains a nearly-taboo subject, reflecting a broader elite consensus that regards immigration as an unquestionable good. The "progressive" left brands any dissent as xenophobia or racism, while the corporate sector promotes immigration as an economic driver, downplaying its social costs.

Even conservatives, eager to defend the working class, are hesitant to challenge the idea that openness to the world equates to moral superiority. Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre campaigned vigorously on housing and inflation in the recent federal election but steered clear of immigration.

This silence exposes a moral and philosophical tension rooted in competing visions of human belonging: liberal universalism versus conservative particularism.

The Liberal Universalist Vision

The dominant worldview among Canada's elites – government, universities, media, NGOs and most corporations – is liberal universalism (which can also be described as cosmopolitanism or globalism). In this perspective, individuals are viewed as rights-bearing abstractions, essentially interchangeable with one another, unmoored from history, culture or place. Nations are mere legal constructs, and loyalty to one's own is regarded not as a virtue but as a form of chauvinism to be overcome.

This outlook – predominant across most of the Western world – underpins the Liberals' immigration policy, in which Canada is viewed, as Trudeau famously put it, as a "post-national state" with a duty to welcome vast numbers of newcomers.

To implement this moral vision, universalism's followers construct intricate legal and bureaucratic systems – human rights commissions, diversity protocols, equity audits – aimed not merely at protecting individuals but at reshaping them. In the process, universalism disconnects moral reasoning from the lived inheritance of tradition, custom and personal experience.

Under universalism, loyalty to family, community or nation is redefined as bias, and belonging recast as exclusion, inverting what for nearly two millennia was viewed as the natural "order of love" (ordo amoris). Liberalism – initially a promise of freedom – coupled with universalism risks leaving the individual orphaned in a world where compassion is borderless yet impersonal. As Patrick Deneen observes in *Why Liberalism Failed*, this has fostered "an order of atomized individualism ultimately hostile to the ties that bind human beings to one another."

The Conservative Counterpoint

In contrast, the conservative tradition views human beings not as abstract agents but as embodied and rooted, shaped by the specific loyalties cultivated in family, community and nation. From this perspective, love of one's own is the essential foundation of social cohesion, and moral obligation radiates outward from the near to the far.

The late British philosopher Sir Roger Scruton articulated this view through his concept of oikophilia – the love of home. For Scruton, the nation transcends a mere contractual arrangement or administrative convenience; it is a moral community unified by shared history, culture and mutual obligation. "The nation-state is a home," Scruton wrote, "the source of our sense of belonging." He cautioned that the abstract rights promoted by universalist ideologies are a poor substitute for the tangible duties of citizenship.

The distinguished philosopher Bernard Williams – no conservative, but a deeply humane thinker – also recognized the limits of abstract moral universalism. In *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, Williams rejected moral theories that ignore the situated nature of human life, writing, "We are located beings, and our obligations are shaped by that fact."

This sensibility has long been intuited in literature. In *Bleak House*, Charles Dickens satirized the dislocation of moral concern through the character of Mrs. Jellyby, whose "telescopic philanthropy" was focused earnestly on distant Africans while her own children languished in squalor. G.K. Chesterton, with characteristic wit, captured the same irony in verse:

The chapels and the villas where
I learned with little labour
The way to love my fellow man
And hate my next-door neighbour.

Today, this tradition finds political expression in U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance who, in his recent speech at the Munich Security Conference, argued that "a country that does not prioritize its own citizens is a failed country." In this view, to love rightly is not to love indiscriminately, but to honour the hierarchy of moral obligation grounded in nearness, kinship and civic belonging.

Canada's Crisis of Meaning

Canada's immigration crisis is, at heart, a philosophical reckoning. Liberal universalism envisions a borderless world of rights-bearing individuals, each equally entitled to any land. But real nations are not abstractions – they are moral communities, held together by shared affections, memory and obligation.

Globalist elites dismiss public unease as xenophobia, yet this unrest is better read as a plea for rootedness, a desire to restore a moral order that prizes kinship, culture and civic loyalty over the disembodied ideals of universalism.

Canada now stands at a crossroads: it can abandon its inherited identity, shaped by generations of civic loyalty, cultural tradition and ordered liberty, for a borderless, "post-national" ideal, or it can renew the bonds that have long sustained a just and compassionate society, restoring the ordo amoris – the rightful ordering of love.