

COMMENT

PIPELINE PARADE



CHANTAL HÉBERT

Mulroney's sage advice?

Trudeau wise to avoid leading Energy East file

Once in a blue moon, or maybe a bit more often than that, someone who should know better offers the prime minister of the day some strikingly flawed advice.

Such is the case of Brian Mulroney's recommendation that Justin Trudeau personally take charge of the controversial Energy East pipeline file.

In a speech in Calgary this week, the former Tory prime minister offered his successful negotiation of a watershed free-trade agreement with the U.S. in the late 1980s as the template Trudeau should borrow to advance TransCanada's pipeline plan.

"What we now need for an exceptional, cohesive effort to make the most of our resource base is a similarly clear commitment from the top, led by the prime minister, with a unique, high-quality organizational structure drawing expertise from across Canada, and a genuine partnership that will spearhead expansion of our resources, expedite infrastructure construction and bolster a broader diversification of our resources," he told an Alberta audience.

It should be said at the outset that this advice offered in good faith. At a time when most were still sneering at the notion that Trudeau could become prime minister, Mulroney was talking up his potential.

As opposed to other prominent Energy East backers — such as former Quebec premier Jean Charest who was at one point on contract as a consultant to TransCanada — Mulroney has no financial connection to the project. (He does toil in a law firm which, like its competition, is always on the lookout for more energy industry clients.)

Mulroney is not the first to call on Trudeau to jump in front of the pipeline parade and, given the travails of the National Energy Board in dealing with Energy East, he will not be the last. Last Friday, the three-member NEB panel tasked with vetting the plan to link the oilsands to the Atlantic Coast belatedly recused itself amid enduring questions as to its independence.

In hindsight, that should have happened as soon as news surfaced earlier this summer of private meetings between panel members and parties such as Charest, whose interests were vested in the project.

The next panel will be made up of members hand-picked by the Trudeau government rather than Conservative appointees. That should go some way to restore credibility to the process. Further down the road, it would make a pro-Energy East NEB recommendation harder for Trudeau to dismiss.

But for pipeline proponents, the latest developments also offer an opportunity to once again try to prod Trudeau himself into action. Mulroney, for one, should know better than to fling that particular horse.

The current prime minister does have an enviable amount of political capital. And then, the dynamics of a top-down prime ministerial effort to rally support for a pipeline in the name of nation-building would be more akin to the ill-fated constitutional rounds that took place on Mulroney's watch, than to the trade negotiations that led to the FTA and NAFTA.

If there is one former prime minister who should know the limits of the persuasive powers of a top-down policy consensus, it should be Mulroney. He and his government succeeded twice in securing unanimous provincial support for two successive constitutional accords. But within a year of the negotiation of the Meech Lake accord in 1987, no amount of establishment support from virtually every quarter of Canadian society could salvage the subsequent Charlottetown accord from the fury of voters.

Back when Mulroney and the premiers set out to proactively redress Quebec constitutional grievances, the sovereignty movement was at low ebb. These days it is similarly at a loss for an issue with enough popular traction to restore its momentum.

Anyone who is close to the Quebec scene can testify that a show of federal force on Energy East could be the answer to the sovereignty prayers for optimal conditions for a return to power of a majority Parti Québécois government and — perhaps in time — another shot at referendum.

Chantal Hébert is a national affairs writer. Her column appears in *Torstar* newspapers.

WELLNESS

Getting to the meat of the matter — or not

If you care about reducing our carbon footprint, why not tuck in to Meatless Mondays?



DEIRDRE PIKE

Throwing a dinner party is getting more complicated these days as meeting the needs of each guest's special diet challenges even a seasoned menu planner like me.

I remember hosting food feasts a few decades back and thinking I was pretty progressive offering bacon on the side of the standby Caesar salad and adding a second dish of greens with some nuts on top to take care of the needs of the one or two vegetarians who had somehow made their way into my circle of carnivorous friends. Really hospitable.

Now I'm able to pull together a whole menu without meat if required by law or some other regulatory body. However, if any of the eaters of my last veggie menu had also been intolerant of lactose they would not have been able to tolerate one item we served.

This weekend I have the opportunity to expand my cooking repertoire once again as

Beef takes 28 times more land and 11 times more water to produce than pork or chicken.

I will be cohosting a dinner for TasteBuds, Hamilton's Student Nutrition Collaborative. Each day in this city, more than 30,000 students have access to nutritious snacks and meals in school because of the work of this organization. Each year for a bunch now I have offered to cook dinner for a gaggle of folks in our home as a silent auction item at the annual fundraiser.

This year someone decided my cooking was worth \$1,850!

Also this year, one half of the couple who bought the dinner decided to become vegan. This one person's decision has had a great impact on me beyond the search for recipes that are entirely plant based. No eggs, no milk, no cheese, no butter, and of course, no meat.

I have been seeking advice from a few identified vegans in my office and my ears have been more attuned to conversations about meatless diets.

In fact I was quite struck by a question put forth in some small talk after a meeting at City Hall recently. "Did you know," my companion inquired, "a vegan who drives a Hummer leaves a lighter carbon footprint than a beef eater who drives a Prius?"

I repeated that question and started a few conversations with it over the last week or so only to find out today it's not the truth.

However, like Mark Twain, I refuse to let the truth get in the way of a good story. Although the vehicle comparison doesn't hold water, the fact is, for those of us who do care about reducing our carbon footprints, the best path is not the one without cars but the one with far fewer steaks and hamburgers on it.

I only have 215 words left so if you're in love with your steak like I am, please keep read-

ing. This is not about prohibition and there are some things we could learn together. Beef takes 28 times more land and 11 times more water to produce than pork or chicken. Couldn't we choose an alternative to beef once in a while? What about trying out Meatless Mondays?

I've learned if a four-person family skips meat and cheese one day a week, it's like taking your car off the road for five weeks and if a four-person family skipped steak once a week, it'd be like taking your car off the road for nearly three months. (Insert jokes about who can afford steak here.)

I learned a lot from an interview I heard this week with Wayne Pacelle, the CEO of the Humane Society of the United States. His approach is one of "progress not perfection." He knows 95 per cent of North Americans eat meat and most of us will stick with that for the rest of our lives. Still, he encourages us to, "be aspirational," and strive to "do as much as we reasonably can within the context and set of choices we have."

That kind of positive attitude invites us to a conversation, not a battering from the good guys against the bad guys.

All of this has led me to commit to going one day a week without meat and choosing away from beef more often. It's not just about being more hospitable at our dining tables, but about being better guests at the table we call Earth.

Deirdre Pike is a freelance columnist for The Hamilton Spectator. While she supports Meatless Mondays, Deirdre is going back to a part of her Catholic tradition that has always encouraged meatless Fridays. You can reach her at dpiketeatthespec@gmail.com or on Twitter @deirdrepik.

FLIGHTS OF TIME

We live with our parents, even when we don't

The wind moves and has impact, yet it cannot be seen



THOMAS FROESE

ABOARD KLM FLIGHT 535 TO UGANDA — I've always envied people who could watch their mothers grow old.

My mother, I've shared previously, passed on when I was in kindergarten. I hadn't seen her for two years prior to that.

Funny to think of it here, half asleep at 40,000 feet.

My mother was a nurse. But her first love was journalism. It's there, in her writings and old photos, her with a camera slung around her neck.

So if you've ever enjoyed my musings in this space, you can thank my mother as much as anyone. My plan as a youth was to study theology. Instead, I fell into journalism, was baptized in its inky waters and sent into its muddy world.

My mother has also been in my travel life. My first flight was with her, in-utero, when she flew from her marriage and Canada back to her home in Berlin.

Even this landed in the papers. The old Toronto Telegram published my father's efforts to salvage the family. With a Cold War backdrop, Ottawa was also involved.

"One man's fight for his two children," was the Telly's front-page headline one summer day. My father won custody in a West Berlin court before he was given, for his safety, a military police escort to Berlin's airport and eventual return to Canada with his children. My second international flight followed, this time in the opposite direction. It was 1968. I was barely three.

I've since flown at least 150 international flights covering, to my best estimates, 721,971 km. That's like flying around the planet 18

Yes, we live with our parents even when we don't, with memories and mysteries buried deep in our DNA.



A photo from Sana'a, Yemen, showing that while we don't see the wind, we see the effects of it. It's a reflection of how our lives can be greatly affected by our parents even when they're unseen, writes columnist Thomas Froese.

times.

Many of these trips have involved working alongside Save the Mothers, the vision of my wife, who, as it happens, has a striking resemblance to my mother. A few are from a previous writing life, when I was a reporter for a paper owned by Sun Media, a news organization that, interestingly enough, was birthed from the ashes of the Telegram.

The circles seem to never end. I can tell you that I've occasionally dreamt of my mother, that we've had lunch in some obscure but pleasant restaurant, talking and laughing and enjoying each other as mother and son are apt to do.

(The Jungians and Freudians would have their explanations. Mine is that I've never, to conscience memory, anyway, heard my mother say that she's proud of me, like in these dreams.)

Yes, we live with our parents even when we don't, with memories and mysteries buried deep in our DNA. Even decisions for roads (or skies) travelled are not exclusively ours.

My three children have seen their own share of airports and airplanes, having flown back-and-forth over the Atlantic their entire young lives. "They've had more experiences than most adults," is how Irena, my friend from the Les Châtes Y's whirlpool, put it before we all flew off.

What's different is that after living much of the past 15 years abroad — four in Yemen, 11

in Uganda — this family flight is our last as incoming foreign residents. Grandparents are aging. High school nears. The children need deeper Canadian roots. In 2017, my family transitions back to Canada full time.

We'll miss it all fiercely, the offering of ourselves, the warmth and beauty of place and people, the running barefoot in the grass.

It will be bittersweet, this long goodbye to Africa. Even so, this remarkable window of time, like a mother, has left its mark — a fine, celebratory mark — on each of us.

You've never seen my mother. Her name is Hannelore. But if she were a photograph (I doubt she'd mind the imperfect comparison), she'd be the one you see pictured here.

When we finished in Yemen, this photo was a gift from Gabriel, a Canadian anthropologist friend we knew in Sana'a, where the photo was shot. He'd be pleased to know, after these years, it's still in my workspace.

There it is, the wind. Do you see it? No, of course not. Nobody can. All anyone can see is the effects of the wind. It's striking photo showing much more. But that wind, that spirit. It's a gift. From Gabriel. Yes, Gabriel, the same name as that powerful archangel.

Maybe this isn't by chance either.

Thomas Froese writes about news, travel and life. Find him at www.thomasfroese.com and www.dailypad.net

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