

# Opinion

## MUSKOKA MOSAIC

### Introducing André Dallaire

BY PAULA BOON

At age 19, André Dallaire left Quebec with a three-month contract to work for a caterer in Ontario. Twenty-six years later, he's still here.

Dallaire grew up in Chicoutimi, the middle child of five. His family raised much of the food they ate. There was a large garden, plus chickens, pigs and cows. "We used to wake up in the morning and pick strawberries from the garden for breakfast," he says. "I miss that lifestyle."

Between the ages of 11 and 14 he worked summers in his aunt's snack bar, peeling potatoes. "I'm still very good at that, very fast," he says with a smile. "Nobody could beat me yet."

Then, for two years, Dallaire had a job at the restaurant his uncle managed. It didn't take long for him to be given the responsibility of running the snack bar there.

His formal education in the kitchen began at age 16. Not a fan of school, Dallaire moved into training for a trade after Grade 10. He thought about carpentry but decided that would involve working with too many other people. "Also, I wanted to travel, so I chose cooking," he says.

Dallaire's first job in Ontario was as assistant cook with a caterer in Temagami. However, after three weeks his boss got rid of the chef and put him in charge. "It was a bit tricky because I didn't speak one word of English and kitchen had some English, some French employees," he

says, but that didn't prove to be too much of a barrier. He was offered a full-time position and stayed with the company until 1987, when he started his own business at the age of 24.

That's when Dallaire got the catering contract for the Scarborough Outdoor Education Centre in Kearney, which he kept until 2005. "I loved it there," he says. "By the end of my stay I knew the bush better than anyone."

Since 1992 he has also been the cook for a summer camp in Minden called Onondaga, which was founded in 1918. "It's one of oldest in Ontario," he says.

It was also in 1992 that Dallaire moved in with his partner, Kathy Roi. They have two children, Annaka, 13, and Jean-Charles, 10. The family lives on 400 acres of land in Kearney. "I like to walk around," he says. "There's a never-ending list of things to do, which is good. When you're busy, you don't worry. There's always a tree to cut."

One thing that keeps Dallaire busy is building or renovating a home every two or three years. He uses pine from his own land to finish most of the buildings, which tend to be made of logs.

"I'm a bit of a risk-taker," he says of this sideline busi-



ness. "I don't believe in the stock market, but property you can walk on and enjoy."

Dallaire says he should sell the places he has built, but he usually rents them out. "You fall in love with them," he explains.

His most recent acquisition is a farm in South River with 4,000 feet on the river. "It's good for paddling," he says. "It used to be the fur trade route from Algonquin Park to Lake Nipissing. There's good fishing there, too."

Dallaire is renovating the main farmhouse, built in 1938, and building various log homes and cottages along the river. "I want to retire there," he says. "I would love to walk down the street and see all the buildings."

One of Dallaire's dreams is to farm on that property. "I'd like to raise my own animals and have a garden, then cater to the people in the log cabins," he says, adding that perhaps he could build a dining hall with 30 seats or so. "I have lots of chef friends and we sometimes talk about this," he says.

Whatever he ends up doing, one thing is certain: Dallaire won't be sitting still. "I was always interested in everything, always interested in a challenge," he says. "As long as it's not the same thing every day, I'm happy."

## LETTERS

### Proroguing Parliament would be the best course of action

The Trudeau Liberals took Canada to the brink of bankruptcy. Mulroney put our finances back on a sound footing with the GST and NAFTA. The Chretien Liberals promised to cancel both, but instead had the good sense to let those measures work to put our financial house in order. Then came the sponsorship scandal in which the public lost confidence in the Liberals because they blew enough money to put an MRI machine in 50 cities across this country.

The people recently installed two back-to-back Conservative minority governments. That has proven to be the right decision. The Harper government has kept the Canadian economy in what is clearly still the best shape of any G8 country. I believe the plan that Flaherty presented last week is right for the times. However the proposal to cancel the subsidy to political parties proves they are not infallible.

Canada is now in danger of becoming the newest banana republic with a coalition led by a prime minister who clearly does not have the voters' confidence. The recent volatility of oil prices has proven that his key proposal, the carbon tax, would indeed have cost every taxpayer, but would have been completely ineffective.

Which one of our partners in NATO or the G8 is going to trust a government

in which the balance of power is held by two other parties: one of which wants to immediately abandon our NATO partners, and the other whose reason for being is to destroy the country? The coalition claims to have a pact for 18 months. Which party has kept their promises? That pact could unravel at the first disagreement.

Clearly the best course is to prorogue the Parliament until after the new US president is in place. That would provide a measure of stability to what is now a very shaky world. It would provide time for Canadians to think. Harper could then propose a new budget with the information that the next month will unveil. Parliament can then vote to show what the real issue is. If the government falls at that time, then call a spring election. That would give the current government two months in power, not two weeks. It would give the Liberals a chance to have a proper leadership convention. The extra \$30 billion that the coalition would throw at the economy, after a two-day analysis, is questionable. It is 100 times more than the \$300 million cost of an election. Let the people decide. At this juncture, all of our politicians have lost our confidence.

Hugh Holland  
Huntsville

### Federal events 'disturbing'

The following is a copy of a letter sent to the governor general.

The recent events occasioned in our Parliament by the three non-governing parties in our political system is, at the very least, totally disturbing to me as a Canadian citizen.

I did not vote for a coalition, I would not endorse a coalition if given the opportunity and there is no way would I support a coalition.

Once one gets beyond the minutiae and superfluous rhetoric of the Liberals, NDP

and Bloc, this action is nothing more than a blatant attempt to commandeer the governing of our great nation.

I would urge you, please, do not sanction the overthrow of the Canadian Parliament by opportunists who could not earn the respect or support of enough Canadians during the recent election. If need be, call another election and force these three to stand before the electorate to be openly judged in a true democratic process.

Brian Verbonac  
Huntsville

### Harper deserves to lose power

The Liberal, New Democratic and Bloc parties are asking our governor general to allow them to form a government. They claim that, due to recent inaction by the Conservatives on economic issues, the current government has lost the confidence of a majority of the members of the House.

Stephen Harper and other Conservatives are labeling this attempt to change the government as "undemocratic."

Perhaps Mr. Harper and his advisors should pick up a copy of "Parliamentary Democracies for Dummies."

In Canada, and all other parliamentary democracies around the world, there is no direct vote for prime minister. The prime

minister is the person who has the support of the majority of the elected members of the House of Commons.

This kind of immediate accountability to the house is the beauty of parliamentary democracies such as ours. It prevents long deadlocks and delays when a particular government goes bad.

As the prime minister of a minority government, Mr. Harper should have worked co-operatively with the other parties to keep the confidence of the House. Instead, he faces the prospect of losing the government — and rightfully so.

Cheryl Stamper  
Emsdale

### Arguments for bailing out auto makers are 'shortsighted'

Re: Demise of the 'big three' would hurt all of us, letter to the editor, Huntsville Forester, Nov. 26.

Hugh Holland raises some of the shortsighted arguments in favour of bailing out the big three auto manufacturers.

No, Holland, this is not a case of schadenfreude — of pleasure derived because the big guy is falling.

If Ford falls it might take my pension and benefits with it. If GM falls it may affect Holland likewise. There will be no joy in Mudville if one of the big players strikes out. Ditto for Chrysler employees. Chrysler has fallen before, and picked itself up. Actually it was Lee Iacocca (the incomparable auto professional) who picked it up. He did not subscribe to Holland's supposition that Americans want and need big cars. The big three persuaded America to buy big because big cars brought in big profits. While chairman at Ford, Iacocca launched the Mustang, the Pinto and Fiesta; small cars that sold like hot cakes. In the '80s he took over as chair of the then-bankrupt Chrysler Corporation and introduced the small cars

Omni and Horizon; 600,000 units sold in the first year. His mini-van has maintained strong sales these past 25 years.

But that was then. Today, Chrysler is owned by Cerberus Capital Management. Cerberus was the Greek mythological three-headed dog that guarded the gates of Hades, the abode for the dead. A fitting metaphor! Besides managing Chrysler, Cerberus is involved in pharmaceuticals, paper products, grocery stores, car rentals, the Bushmaster and Remington firearms firms, apparel and TV stations.

For eight years Mercedes Benz tried to turn Chrysler into a paying proposition only to lose billions. Now this equity management company with questionable automotive experience also has its hand out for a bailout, but no apparent plan on how or where it will apply the taxpayer dollars.

To argue that we should hand over the money because if one of the big three fails, one supplier after another will fail, is flawed. Yes, some will fail, but others will pick up the pieces.

One needs but look to the UK. It once

had a large auto-manufacturing base in Europe. Poor management, declining quality and a militant union ensured its demise. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher very, very reluctantly agreed to a multi-billion dollar bailout demanded by the opposition and corporations. It lasted only a few years. By 1985 British Leyland Motors, the last of the British auto manufacturers, went belly-up and a lot of good money went with it.

There was temporary pain, but soon more efficient producers filled the vacuum. Ford bought Jaguar and Land Rover, GM Vauxall, BMW took Austin/Rover, the Mini car and Rolls Royce. Honda, Toyota and others moved in and built plants there.

Toyota's Burnaston plant now exports cars, even to Japan.

In 2007 the UK produced a record 1,534,567 cars, of which 1,185,459 were exported.

Before we rush to bail out the present faltering auto industry, we should all stop for a moment and note the handwriting on the wall. The message is clear: oil is a finite product.

Most recent estimates of world proven reserves of oil are 1.3 trillion barrels, good for less than 35 years at the present rate of consumption and population growth. Just 35 years to consume what has taken nature millions of years to produce. What then?

Scientists at the London-based Oil Depletion Analysis Centre, believe that "global production of oil is set to peak in the next four to five years before entering a steep decline which will have massive consequences for the world economy and the way that we live our lives."

At some point we will have to face the inescapable fact that the Pied Piper has to be paid. At some point we have to accept that reality and give up our profligate dependence on oil by investing what resources we have into clean, renewable energy. If we don't, then great harm will be inflicted on our children and our children's children.

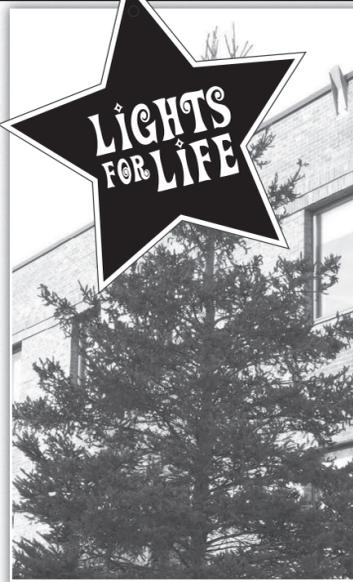
The harm has already begun.

Harry Wahl  
Huntsville

— See more letters on page A17



# HEALTHCARE HEROES



**You are invited to Honour  
Your Loved Ones**

The Annual Lights for Life program is underway. On Mon., Dec. 8 at 7 p.m., Huntsville Hospital will light up the Lillian Manning spruce tree to celebrate all those people who have been honoured by their loved ones.

Parking will be complimentary that evening. Sing along to holiday music in the winter air and then enjoy refreshments inside the lobby where the Huntsville Hospital Auxiliary has placed a tree covered with Lights for Life stars.

If you missed your Lights for Life form in the Weekender, you can call or visit the Foundation to make your donation.

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