



UPFRONT

with **Mike Wallace, MP**



A Publication of Mike Wallace, Member of Parliament for Burlington

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Happy Canada Day

As we approach another Canada Day celebration, it is important that we take a step back and reflect on how fortunate we are to live in this country. It is easy to take it for granted, however in reality we should be thankful each and every day for the privileges we enjoy. I ask that we all remember our past and celebrate our present, and at the same time continue to build an even better Canada.

I invite you, your family and friends to join us at Spencer Smith Park on July 1st, Canada Day.

The celebration in the park is a full day event, including great entertainment, games for the kids and fireworks at dusk.

This year has a particular significance as we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Canadian Navy. Burlington is blessed with a beautiful monument in Spencer Smith Park that pays tribute to the men and women who have served this country with bravery and distinction in the Navy and Merchant Marine. Canada Day would be

a great time for you to stop by the monument and take a moment to pay tribute to our sailors from the past and those who are currently serving to preserve our safety and freedom.

Wherever you are celebrating on July 1st, my family, staff and I would like to wish you and your family a very happy and safe Canada Day.

Mike

Pearson Community Co-op Nursery School - Supporting our Athletes



Mike joined the students and teachers at Pearson Nursery School during the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games for their celebration. Each student was presented with a Canadian flag to participate in the festivities. In turn, Mike was given the Olympic banner that they worked so hard on (pictured in the group photo). It was a memorable day in support of our athletes and our country.



Community Group Profiles

Summit Housing & Outreach Programs



Summit Housing & Outreach Programs is a charitable non-profit organization governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and is funded by the Mississauga Halton Local Health Integration Network and the Ministry of Health & Long Term Care. Summit provides a wide range of supportive housing and outreach case management programs throughout the region of Halton for people



The Summit staff celebrate years of service at the Employee Recognition luncheon, held in honour of those who have dedicated 5, 10, 15 and 20 years to their community through this invaluable organization.

challenged by serious mental illnesses.

In 1981 the Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital recognized the urgent need for supportive housing in Burlington for people diagnosed with a serious mental illness. At that time, individuals were being discharged into the community even though they had nowhere to live. This recognition acted as the catalyst for the development of a supportive housing program and the first home, which accommodated five people and was opened in Burlington. Summit now provides services to approximately 375 people throughout Halton and 158 of these individuals reside in Burlington. Summit provides the following programs:

- **Residential:** Provides flexible rehabilitative support services to people living in four owned houses (2 in Burlington) and in subsidized rental units allocated to Summit by the Region of Halton (24 units in Burlington). Sincere thanks go to the Region of Halton for recognizing that many people coping with a mental illness are, through no fault of their own, at risk of becoming homeless and require decent and affordable supportive housing.
- **Outreach Case Management:** Provides case-management services on a flexible basis to people living in their own homes in the community.

- **Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACTT):** Provides intensive and clinical outreach case management services. ACT Teams are commonly described as “hospitals without walls”.
- **Halton Homes Program:** Provides a range of affordable housing options coupled with comprehensive supports (41 units in Burlington). This program is a partnership initiative between Summit (lead agency) and five community agencies.

In 2011 Summit Housing & Outreach Services will celebrate 30 years of providing recovery oriented client centered programs. Staff and board members continually work to improve the services offered by Summit and every effort is made to operate programs that are sensitive to the varying needs of the people they serve.

Referrals are accepted from Community agencies, hospitals, medical or mental health professionals and self-referrals. Please visit our website www.summit-housing.ca for additional information and referral forms. To make a referral or to obtain more facts please call 905-333-4814 Ext. 10. You may also contact us by email at info@summit-housing.ca and fax 905-333-6782.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are the views of Summit Housing & Outreach Programs and do not necessarily reflect those of the Mississauga Halton LHIN or the Government of Ontario.

Burlington Co-operative Toy Library



The Burlington Co-operative Toy Library and Drop-in Centre has been engaging parents, caregivers and their children since the International Year of the Child in 1979. The Toy Library was a project of the local Jaycees group at the time, with the goal to provide a community space for parents and caregivers to connect and support one another while interacting with their children in a safe stimulating atmosphere.

The Toy Library has found its way through a number of transitions over the years, yet it maintains the original objectives of its founders - a bright, stimulating place with many new friends to make. It is a great spot to meet up with friends for a regular play-date. The Library also hosts several special events and a community open house each year.

When people first come into the library they find three rooms packed full of toys. The “castle room” includes a large assortment of shelf toys and large motor activities and ride-on toys. The dramatic play room provides the opportunity for dress-up and dramatic play with costumes, a kitchen centre and musical instruments. The third toy room focuses on babies and toddlers. The library also has a large collection of books, games, puzzles and DVDs to play with on site or to borrow for two weeks at a time.

The co-operative nature of the Library means that there is a membership which is \$35 a year per family. It is reasonably priced - less than a dollar a visit if you stop by at least once a week. All of the membership proceeds go directly into new toy acquisition and facility costs. New members are always welcome and



volunteer opportunities are available for anyone who would like to contribute to sustaining this important resource for the families in our community.

The Toy Library and Drop-in Centre is for children aged 0-6 and operates Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. during the school year. It is located 2258 Parkways Drive in the St. Stephens United Church and the entrance is at the back of the building.

If you would like more information about the Toy Library and Drop-In Centre, please email burltoylibrary@gmail.com or call 905-336-7617.

Proud to be Canadian!

Display this flag in your home or car leading up to Canada Day and show that you are truly *proud to be Canadian!*

How Government Works: The Speaker of the House of Commons

The Speakership is rooted in history, going back hundreds of years in Great Britain. In Canada, we boast two Speakers, one who sits in the House of Commons and another who sits in the Senate. The Speaker of the Senate will be discussed in the next issue of Upfront.

The Speaker of the House of Commons is elected by secret ballot by the House itself after each general election. The Speaker is the presiding officer of the lower house and he or she must be a Member of Parliament. The role of the Speaker is an important one as he or she controls the House of Commons staff, is expected to be impartial, non-partisan and firm in enforcing the rules, acts as a liaison with the Senate and the Crown and they decide all questions of procedure and order.

The Speaker is bound by duty to decide all questions of procedure. Since the early days of representative democracy in this country, Speakers' rulings have helped shape the way in which the House conducts its business. Successive Speakers have been called upon to decide how rules should apply and, through rulings, have either settled issues or encouraged the House, the Government or the Board of Internal Economy (which the Speaker is the Chair of), to take steps

to resolve them. Prior to 1965, the rulings of the Speaker were subject to an appeal and could be overturned by the House. Since then, Members have not been allowed to question a decision of the Chair.

It is interesting to note that until recently, the Commons' Speaker was, by custom, chosen from among the members of the party in power, however, in 1985 the Commons adopted a new system whereby any member, except the minister of the Crown, party leaders and anyone holding an office within the House, may stand for election as Speaker. Since election of the Speaker was introduced, a Speaker can be re-elected.

In the House, the Speaker is generally in the Chair at specific times; at the opening of the sitting and during Members' Statements, Question Period and Routine Proceedings. The remaining time in the Chair is shared by Deputy Speakers and other Presiding officers who support the Speaker in the Chamber in presiding over the business of the House, to take the Chair when the House sits as committee of the Whole and, on occasion, to chair legislative committees.

With all Parliamentary customs, the Speaker



also keeps with tradition. The Speaker wears a black silk robe with a white tab collar and, when parading into and out of the House of Commons Chamber, wears cotton gloves and a tri-cornered hat. As a sign of respect for the office, Members of Parliament bow to the Speaker's Chair whenever entering or leaving the Chamber, or when crossing in front of the Chair during a sitting. Everyone in the Chamber rises when the Speaker's Parade enters or leaves the House.

Mr. Peter Milliken, currently the Speaker of the House was elected in January 2001 and is the MP for Kingston and the Islands. On October 12, 2009, he also became the longest serving Speaker of the House of Commons in Canadian history.

Refugee Reform – Proposed Changes to the Current System

Canada's refugee system is critical, providing asylum to citizens of other countries who are at risk for a number of reasons. There is no question our refugee program is one of the most generous in the world but it is also very complicated. Recently, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada announced some proposed changes to the refugee system to simplify the application and decision process. The public has been asking for improvements for many years and I will highlight the changes being proposed.

Let me provide a brief overview of the current refugee system to better illustrate the proposed changes. The current and future refugee program operates on two streams. The first stream, which receives minimal public attention, is our refugee resettlement program. In this program, Canada accepts refugees that are referred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. These individuals and families are determined to be refugees before being accepted and arriving in Canada. In 2009, the resettlement program accepted just over 12,400 refugees. This system is not expected to change, however, a streamlined asylum system will enable more UN refugees to come to Canada.

The second stream is the asylum program, which is the system by which anyone who arrives in Canada can make a refugee claim at any port of

entry or Immigration office. Through this system, Canada received 33,000 refugee claims last year. That is nearly three times the number of people received under the resettlement program. Virtually all claims must be considered, there are no annual targets and there are a series of appeal processes available to all claimants. It is the asylum program that most Canadians are familiar with and it is the area that the proposed changes are focused.

The current system takes up to 19 months for the refugee claimant to receive their initial hearing. There are a number of appeal processes which can take an additional 3 years. If the claimant is declined, and once all of the appeal avenues have been exhausted, it can take 3 years for them to be removed from Canada. This is a very long and expensive process with refugee claimants being in Canada up to 7 years from the beginning of the process.

If the proposed changes are adopted, the refugee claimant would receive their first interview within 8 days, a hearing within 60 days, a reduction in the number of appeal processes available, and a final decision would be rendered within 20 months. If a claimant is declined at their final appeal they are to be removed from Canada within one year. These changes streamline the process, improve the timeframes by which an applicant will receive their final results and lower the costs of the

refugee asylum system.

In addition, the changes will allow the Department of Citizenship and Immigration to identify safe countries of origin which will limit any applicant to the initial hearing and one appeal to the federal court if they are turned down. A safe country of origin would not normally produce refugees, have a robust human rights record and strong state protection. This is key to the new initiative as it will reduce the current abuse of the thousands of refugee claims that are illegitimate. Since the current system allows full access to the appeal system for all applications, the new measures will help to alleviate the significant backlog.

The proposed reforms are balanced and fair. If adopted, these changes will result in a faster and more efficient in-Canada asylum system with increased assistance to refugees resettled from abroad. It would also ensure that the asylum system, and its resources, remain focused on protecting those fleeing persecution. People who need Canada's protection will get it faster. Those trying to misuse the system to jump the immigration queue will be removed faster, ensuring that Canada's generosity is not abused. These changes are well overdue.

Mike

Mike would like to hear from you!

Please take a few moments to share your thoughts on our Government's effort to reform the Refugee System.

Is the Government on the right track with the proposed changes?

Yes No Not Sure

Is Mike on the right track?

Yes No Not Sure

Comments: _____

IMPORTANT INFORMATION & UPDATES

S.A.L.T. Receives Funding from the New Horizons for Seniors Grant Program

Earlier this year, Mike presented \$25,000 to the Burlington S.A.L.T. Council (Seniors and Law-enforcement Together) to assist with their "Web of Life Project". The organization received the funding through the New Horizons for Seniors Grant for Community Participation and Leadership. This support will allow the Burlington S.A.L.T. Council to translate their brochures and presentations into the 5 most prevalent languages spoken in Halton. It will enable them to reach out to isolated seniors in order to help educate them on their rights and advise them on how to access the assistance they may need due to language barriers.



Darlene Cox, Chair Oakville S.A.L.T., Paul Roche, Secretary Burlington S.A.L.T., Const. Wendy Moraghan, Elder Services Co-ordinator, Léony deGraaf, Chair Burlington S.A.L.T., Mike Wallace MP, Gary Crowell, Chief of Halton Police

Upcoming Events

Canada Day at Spencer Smith Park

Thursday, July 1, 2010

Please join Mike at Spencer Smith Park for activities throughout the day, including the Canadian Citizenship Ceremony and fireworks at dusk.

Fall Town Hall Meeting

Thursday, October 14, 2010

7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Burlington Central Library - Centennial Hall
Details to follow in the Burlington Post.

1st Annual Pre-retirement Information Session

Fall 2010 – Details to follow in the next Upfront and the Burlington Post

Are you planning to retire soon? If so, this session is for you!

A representative from Service Canada will provide participants with the information they need to know from the Federal Government when planning for retirement.

From Mike's Mailbox

Q: I am a Permanent Resident and I just realized that my PR Card has expired. I have booked a trip that I have already paid for. Is it possible to get a new PR Card in time?

(Please note: if you are a Canadian Citizen this information does not apply to you. This information is for people who maintain their citizenship abroad and are legal Permanent Residents of Canada.)

A: One of the primary topics that our office assists constituents with are matters concerning Citizenship and Immigration.

Specifically, we have found that many Permanent Residents are unaware of the fact that PR Cards have an expiry date, which is five years from the date of issue. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) does not issue reminder notices so it is up to you to remember and submit an application.

We recommend applying for a new card prior to expiry so that you are not caught in an emergency situation without valid travel identification.

However, if you find yourself in a situation with booked travel that is fully paid for and an expired PR Card, there is a possibility that you could receive a new card in time.

A complete application kit for the card is available at our office in the Burlington Mall. It is possible to print the application from the website, however, there are two parts to the application that are non-printable forms. You can request to have those forms mailed to you but it could take a few

weeks – time you may not have. Therefore, we recommend that you stop by and visit us to avoid further delay.

The application fee can be paid at your banking institution using the fees receipt enclosed with the kit or you can provide credit card information on the application directly. When you get your photos taken, make sure that you ask for citizenship photos as they are a different size than standard passport photos. Our office can look over your completed application to make sure that it is filled in properly and that everything necessary is included. We can make copies of the requested documents while you are here as well (see the Document Checklist in the application kit).

With the completed application, you must include proof of travel which clearly shows the date of departure and that the trip has been paid for in full. This package should be sent express post to the processing centre. Ensure that you mark the outside of the envelope "URGENT – Paid Travel". If you provide our office with the postal tracking number we can follow up with the processing centre on your behalf. It is important to note that without the tracking number the package cannot be located due to the volume of mail they receive.

While they cannot guarantee the processing time, CIC makes every effort to issue the card in time to travel. Even with expedited processing, it could still take approximately 2 to 3 weeks from the time you mail your application to the time you are called to pick up your new card at the Hamilton CIC Office. If you believe there is a possibility you will not have your PR Card in time for travel, please contact our Burlington office so that we can discuss other available options with you.

Attention Permanent Residents:

Do you know when your PR Card is due to expire?

Check the back of your card to make sure that it is up to date. Please visit www.cic.gc.ca or stop by Mike's office to get an application.

Planning a trip to Ottawa this summer?

Please contact Mike's Ottawa office for information about tours of Parliament Hill. Question Period passes are available on request when Parliament resumes in the fall.

No Postage
Required

Mike Wallace, MP Burlington
115 East Block
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

UPFRONT
with Mike Wallace, MP

Mike Wallace
MP Burlington

www.mikewallacemp.ca

Parliament Hill Office:
115 East Block
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
Tel: 613-995-0881
Fax: 613-995-1091
wallace.m@parl.gc.ca

Constituency Office:
Burlington Mall, Suite 209
777 Guelph Line
Burlington, ON L7R 3N2
Tel: 905-639-5757
Fax: 905-639-6031
wallam1@parl.gc.ca