

Preserving the past

In the Dec. 18 edition of *The Gemini*, we ran a story regarding a Glen Williams resident who distributed a flyer imploring Canadians to not forsake Christmas and other traditional holidays. In essence, the flyer said that welcoming those of different backgrounds to the community was fine, but Canadian traditions should not be sacrificed in good-intentioned acts of inclusion.

The author of the flyer, Steve Edgar, phoned *The Gemini* and during an interview recently, made his concerns known.

Personally, I can't say I disagree with a lot of the points Mr. Edgar makes in his flyer. While Canada, and certainly the Greater Toronto Area, is one of the most culturally diverse areas in the world, Canada was largely settled by Europeans with a Christian background. That means that Christian holidays would become predominant.

The View From Here

With
Jamie Harrison



That is not to say that we should ignore the holidays of those who do not share Christian beliefs or traditions. I have Jewish friends who celebrate Chanukah and I recently attended at Diwali party, the Hindu Festival of Lights celebrating the Hindu New Year. It was a wonderful evening hosted by a close friend who is of East Indian heritage. I look forward to attending it every year.

Canada is looked on as a country that allows people of many different heritages to celebrate their respective holidays in their own way. I think it is important, in protecting the rights of others, that we don't get caught up in the self-loathing that seems to permeate current thinking.

And I say this as a white, male of Anglo-Saxon background and a Christian heritage.

New Year's? Ba, humbug!

I recently heard someone say that it usually takes a few decades to work up a good Christmas malaise. Personally, I don't think that's ever going to happen for me. I like the holiday too much for that. New Year's; now that's another story ...

First; I can't get excited about turning the pages on a calendar. I don't celebrate when I turn the page from January to February (well, maybe I get a little giddy at the approaching spring, which leads to the approaching summer). I figure I don't celebrate Leap Years, which happen every four years, so why would I get excited about an event that happens every year and doesn't seem to have any real significance.

Some seem to see New Year's Eve as a money making venture. Nightclub owners routinely charge exorbitant fees to attend what would be the same club the other 364 days of the year. Attendees are promised party favours, champagne at midnight, sometimes a free buffet and a generally festive atmosphere. The first hint should be that a "free buffet" should cost about \$20-40 less than the \$20-40 average admission charge.

I recently saw a sign at one local watering hole which guaranteed couples "preferred seating" for the paltry sum of \$140. I'm assuming that preferred seating means a booth. I just have a problem with being asked to pay \$140 to get into a bar, never mind other incidental fees.

If the bar owner can lure in enough people at such outrageous prices, then more power to him or her. After all, he or she is in business to make money.

The other thing I have a problem with is the notion that, on New Year's Eve, men dressed in tuxedos and women in ball gowns glide effortlessly across the dance floor in some luxuriously well-appointed ballroom.

Maybe it's the circles I hang around in, but I have yet to see that happen. In my experience, just wearing a pressed pair of pants which aren't jeans is considered a step up.

Jamie Harrison is a reporter with *The Georgetown Gemini*.



ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND: POWER recognized the efforts of those committed to saving the environment in Georgetown at their AGM, recently at GDHS. Among those recognized were current and former directors, as well as Rita Landry and Diane van de Valk. Back row, from left: David Noble, Barb Halsall, Susan Cox, Ruth French, and Bill Gassner. Centre row, from left: Jean Hilborn, Dee Rockley, Donna Robin, Marjorie Kirkwood and Diane van de Valk. Front row, from left: Paul Hynds and Chris Rumley. (photo submitted)

Your LETTERS

Editorial position was correct

To the Editor,
I was very happy to read your earlier editorial, "Whose conflict and whose interest?", regarding the conflict of interest complaint filed in June by the Taxpayers Coalition of Burlington, Inc., against five Halton trustees including our own Ethel Gardiner.

I emphatically agree with the editorial position that you present in this column. As you state, Ethel openly "declared a conflict of interest on the line dealing with staff compensation, but voted on the entire budget package." Indeed, so she should have done. Again, to quote a part of your editorial, "If our trustee can't speak for her constituents and can't vote on a budget, why have a trustee?"

As a parent and a taxpayer, I feel honoured to be represented in this public office of trustee by Ethel

Gardiner. I do not know a person more honest or with greater integrity than Ethel. Throughout her long and dedicated teaching career, she was an exemplary teacher who always put her students and their best interests first. She was known for the way in which she challenged each and every student to do his or her best, especially in her caring and skilled work with special education students. With her encouragement, hundreds of students over the years worked to achieve results above and beyond any original goals.

These very qualities in Ethel, along with her long experience and understanding of the educational system, resulted in so many of us flocking to the polls to elect Ethel as our trustee. We could not have made a better choice.

The best interests of our sons and daughters, our students, will always be first and foremost on Ethel Gardiner's agenda.

Ethel was elected with an overwhelming majority over her opponents and with good reason. How soon we forget!

Indeed, "whose conflict and whose interest?"

*Ann Tapp-Gatto,
Mullen Place*

Make smoking illegal

To the Editor,
I'd like to reply to comments made in Jamie Harrison's column (*The View From Here*, Dec. 18).

Instead of making available space on (Georgetown District) high school property for student smok-

ers, why not just make it illegal for students under 18 to smoke?

It is already against the law to sell cigarettes to under-18s. This would be a much better way to cut down on teenage smokers, and therefore, reduce medical expenses in the future.

Name Withheld By Request

Gemini Letters To The Editor Policy

The Georgetown Gemini is pleased to and encourages members of the public to write letters to the editor.

The Gemini reserves the right to edit for length, slander, libel and accuracy.

Letters must be signed and bear the author's phone number. Requests of anonymity will be respected.

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