

No politics

We admire the Georgetown Lions Club's attempts to keep politics out of the Santa Claus parade on Saturday, but those attempts weren't entirely successful.

The citizens group POWER (Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources) and a pro-life group were permitted to have floats in the parade despite an advertisement in the local press by the Lions Club that no political or protest groups would be allowed to enter floats in the parade.

The advertisement was a bold step and we're sure the citizens appreciated it.

Nevertheless, the floats were there.

This time around, however, POWER did come up with a better float. Last year the group marched along the street with a gallows-type float with a green garbage bag swinging from the end of a rope.

Parade chairman Mark Rush called that float "objectionable."

We agree.

And, although there was no direct attempt by pro-choice groups to enter a float this year, the Lions Club did suggest that because that group isn't based on religion it wouldn't be allowed to enter a float.

Pro-life groups are fundamentally based on religion, Mr. Rush said.

The parade should be an all-or-nothing event when it comes to protest groups.

And for the kids - and the parade is for children - it should be nothing, when it comes to political or protest groups.

POWER, pro-life and pro-choice groups have many venues, including fall fair parades, to push their causes.

The Santa Claus parade is a time to recall Canada's religious roots and to help children explore the magic of Christmas.

It really shouldn't be used to advance the goals and objectives of political or interest groups - no matter how noble or outrageous the cause.

Up on the roof



Brian MacLeod
Editor's Notebook

If you haven't taken a sojourn down to the John Elliott Theatre yet to catch the Globe's production of Fiddler on the Roof you're missing out. While both the Globe and the Georgetown Little Theatre have always given us first-class theatre, this ambitious production works in almost every way.

True, it's a good story to start with and that always helps, but the cast and production crew of this play has pulled it off with pizzazz. At times, you'll forget you're sitting in a seat in a little theatre - and you'll be drawn into the story line.

Those who know the story of Fiddler on the Roof would settle into their seats knowing that in order to pull it off, the Globe would have to come up with a good lead character for Tevye.

After Topol established the character so well in the epic movie, the part was hard to duplicate. But Joe Delguidice waddles through "If I were a Rich Man" with character.

There are still tickets left for performances tonight (Wednesday) and Thursday and a few singles left for Friday and Saturday. Take a look. It's worth it.

Okay, anyone who didn't enjoy that 43-40 thriller at the SkyDome on Sunday has ice in their veins.

As a long-suffering Montreal Allouette fan, I was rooting for the underdog - Saskatchewan. Even if you turned on the tube and your favorite team wasn't playing Sunday, you couldn't help but feel the pulse of what had to be one of the best pigskin games on the tube this decade.

So, all you CFL doomsayers can take a hike. (pun intended).

The special relationship that Canada shares with the United States is becoming even more important to Canadians as the days pass. So we've tried to do something to bring the American way of thinking and their understanding of issues home to Canadians.

Thomson News Service has assigned reporter Kevin Bell to the Washington Bureau. He will write with Canadians in mind.

Thomson Newspapers searched long and hard for a reporter capable of helping Canadians understand the way Americans understand and approach issues.

You can find him today on Page 2.

Taking aim at illegal drugs

Derek Nelson

Queen's Park
Thomson News Service



TORONTO-From a distance, the Ontario government's anti-drug strategy looks like a live-and-let-die approach.

That's probably being unduly harsh, but by emphasizing prevention and early intervention - with law enforcement a distant second, and treatment nowhere in sight - that is the impression left with observers here.

And it might well be the right attitude.

Provincial drug czar Ken Black announced the two-year, \$22.4-million program here this week. He's keeping another \$14.6 million in reserve for further demands on his purse over that time frame.

Schools will get \$5.2 million to train teachers to promote "healthy lifestyles," starting in Grade 1. (Is there any social problem left that schools aren't being called upon to "solve"?)

Another \$5.6 million will be spent doubling the size of the Ontario Provincial Police's drug-enforcement units.

Nothing additional will go for treating existing addicts. Black

noted that studies in the U.S. indicate about 85 per cent of those treated return to using drugs.

"The question is, should we continue to spend millions and millions of dollars on treatment programs that we're not sure work?" he asked. He softened that later, but his first comments - and the funding allocation - ring more true.

Still, this rather contradicts other aspects of government policy.

On driving while impaired, for example, one of the favorite "punishments" nowadays is to insist the guilty party take mandatory drug rehabilitation classes, or (which is the same thing) allow them to stay out of jail if they take the treatment.

And if it is good enough for alcohol, why isn't it good enough for other drugs?

The answer, of course, is that drinking and driving treatment is a con, not taken seriously either by most of the people forced to enrol, or by the clinicians who have to deal with those involuntarily attending. Those supposedly being treated don't want to be there.

WITHOUT BARS

It is like a three-month sentence without bars (literally), then a person is free to return to the old ways.

The same is true of a lot of treatment programs for other drugs, too. People often enter them as a choice of lesser evils - lose your job or enrol, go to jail or join, the marriage is over if you don't go, and so on.

Drug treatment only works if,

first, the people who are trying to break the habit genuinely seek freedom by making the required changes in lifestyle and, second, if they can get external support to carry them through the bumpy parts.

Nobody appears to have found a magic formula to make that easy or predictable.

In that context, Black's comments make a lot sense.

If treatment is downplayed, then community involvement is stressed as a means of prevention. About \$9.2 million will be allocated in this regard, some of it for training and technical support and some for test projects.

The jargon surrounding this aspect of the package was smothering - "joining with communities to identify several locations that are considered particularly vulnerable to the negative impacts of illegal drug use" - and without detail (do they mean street youth, Toronto's public housing projects that have been in the news recently, what?) and seems aimed to short-circuiting people's entry into the drug world by catching them early.

Maybe it will work, maybe not. What makes this observer a little dubious is that it requires rather extraordinary people to sway the minds and emotions of those sinking into the drug world from their chosen path. Most social workers and social work programs just don't have it.

Still, it is probably worth the effort to find out. Hopefully, those who'll be evaluating success or failure will do so with an eagle eye.



Can Santa bring the mail?

Vic Parsons

Ottawa Bureau
Thomson News Service



mittee called upon Canada Post to explore alternatives to the community mailboxes, including a revival of door-to-door maildrops in some areas.

The new committee, headed by Alan Marchment, who rose to postal stardom with his 1985 review of Canada Post's services, heard complaints of obvious inequity when it gathered information earlier this year from consumer and labor groups, mailers and other interested parties.

In at least one suburb, the committee was told, homes on one side of the street received door-to-door service, while unfortunates on the other side had to make do with community mailboxes. Unfair, critics protested.

MINOR INVESTMENT

Elaborating on the review committee report, Marchment said about 807,000 points of call could be made for an estimated annual cost of \$42 million. "This is really a minor investment when you think of the size and spending of Canada Post," he said.

Marchment's figure is a far cry from the \$1.3 billion, over five years, that Canada Post tossed out as the cost of "universal" door-to-

door delivery. But that figure was a farcical red-herring to begin with. No one in his right mind would ever suggest that posties should trudge to every isolated trapper's cabin and wind-battered igloo across the country.

Indeed, while recommending another look at door-to-door delivery, Marchment said it's not for everyone. The costs would be too high and can't be afforded at this time.

Door-to-door maildrops were a gift suggestion for cities and towns from the committee, but what can Santa give the rural parts of the country?

The report says 319 communities have been affected to date by the rural conversion program. The committee says in some cases, where retail outlets have taken over from rural post offices, equal or better service has been established.

But in 66 communities, post office closures have meant reduced service, with customers having to drive up to 58 km to pick up their mail. The committee declared itself to be "deeply concerned" that these changes are continuing.