

Timmy and Mickey? It's not news

Sometimes I'm embarrassed being a member of the Fourth Estate.

In our fast-paced, gotta-know-now, gotta-know-everything-let's-all-Twitter-world, good news stories have gone the way of the dodo and have been replaced with sound bites, 10-second clips and stories that are anything but newsworthy.

Take last month. Tim Hortons— that bastion of Canadiana— announced it was raising prices. The good folks at Timmy's (and I'm not knocking them) didn't even indicate what items would be going up in price, only that a price hike was coming.

That announcement made it to every newspaper, and radio and TV newscast that day.

Why?

So what if Tim Hortons (*Memo to Tim Hortons heavy thinkers: Put the apostrophe back in Hortons*) bumped the price of a cup of java a nickel.

Would it warrant a "news" story if Coffee Time did the same? What if Zellers hiked the price of diapers, would that make the 6 p.m. news?

No and no.

George Carlin (perhaps the most sensible human being born in the past 100 years) once railed about the media making Mickey Mouse's birthday a news story.

He wondered how the rest of the world could take the U.S. seriously when valuable time was spent "informing our citizens about the age of an imaginary rodent!"

I'm not saying that a price hike at Tim's doesn't deserve publication— it does. But by Tim Hortons— not our daily news outlets.

The prevalence of so-called entertainment "news" shows has also helped set journalism back a few decades. Shows like *Entertainment Tonight*, *Inside Edition*, *TMZ*, etc. are little more than migraines waiting to happen.

"Stories" consist of five-second sound bites and zip across the screen in rapid-fire succession.

John McGhie



Give me a well-researched *60 Minutes* or *Fifth Estate* piece any day.

Unfortunately, I don't hold out hope for an improvement in the art of journalism in the near future.

A couple weeks ago a college journalism student called me as part of a class project in which they had to pick a town/city— she picked Georgetown— and present to the class what challenges that municipality was facing.

At least I *think* that's what the project was about.

Her questions were horribly disjointed, she obviously had done zero research on the town and when I mentioned the words "Halton Hills" I swear I could hear her circuits overloading trying to figure out where that was in relationship to Georgetown.

When she veered into a question about the federal election campaign I told her her question wasn't making much sense and she replied, "Well, just tell me about any smaller campaigns in town."

Smaller campaigns?

Although she had "heard" something about there being a federal election a couple weeks earlier, she was so uninformed about the election and the issues of the day it was frightening.

I expect her future in journalism may involve selling papers, not writing for one.

Then again, after seeing some of the NDP candidates elected in Quebec, perhaps there's a future for her in politics.



Penne for your thoughts?

Michael Batinic (left) and Adamo Biello of St. Brigid Catholic Elementary School in Georgetown South were big fans of the school's recent Family Pasta Night. The community event was used in part to raise funds for the Grade 8 class to help cover costs for graduation gowns and a class trip.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

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ATHLETES of the week

Acton High School



Abbie Jolly



Justin Corbett

Christ the King



Jillian Borsuk



Shana Toale

G.D.H.S



Kiki Izzard



Stephanie Brown

Acton High School Athletes of the Week are Abbie Jolly and Justin Corbett.

Jolly paired up with fellow Grade 10 student Natalie Shortt to be the youngest team to compete in the Halton senior championships, at which they finished fourth and qualified for the Golden Horseshoe tourney. Corbett, a Grade 11 student, and partner Lucinda Kollenhoven qualified for the regional tournament.

Georgetown District High School Athletes of the Week are Stephanie Brown and Kiki Izzard. Brown leads by example on the Rebel junior girls' soccer field, while Grade 12 student Izzard has switched to defence and played a strong game for the senior girls' soccer Rebels in their season-opening victory over Bishop Reding.

Christ the King Athletes of the Week are Shana Toale and Jillian Borsuk. Both members of the Jags' senior girls' rugby squad, each showed strong leadership qualities and had three tries at a pre-season tournament at Bishop Reding last week, in which CtK posted a 2-1 record. Toale, a Grade 11 student, plays the scrum half position while Borsuk, in Grade 12, is a flanker.

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