

# Beer at the food bank?

On the front page of the March 20 issue of this newspaper, we ran a photo of Georgetown Bread Basket Food Bank chair Terri Mosher at the food bank, with near-empty shelves in the background.

The story told how the Bread Basket is in desperate need of donations.

After the paper hit the street, we received some comments. The first was from Mosher herself, thanking us for the front page prominence, and bringing the needs of the food bank to the public.

Another reader emailed managing editor John McGhie, saying, "Too bad no one photoshopped the picture on the front of the paper... look what's on the bottom shelves..."

She was referring to some beer cases in the photo— beer cases donated to the food bank by The Beer Store, to be used for storing food donations.

McGhie explained to the reader we do not 'photoshop' photos— altering the image would be an ethical issue. She accused him of being 'defensive,' and said she meant we should have 'cropped it differently.'

We then received a scathing email from a reader who wrote: "Having been in the advertising and promotional field for over 20 years, I was absolutely stunned by the lack of judgement (sic) exercised in this photo."

She suggested "the photographer and anyone else involved in this pic just left their brain at home on vacation." She said the photo could give the impression the food bank is giving out beer, and called it "a very donation limiting concept."

She added the boxes should have been "covered or moved from the photo" and after seeing the beer cases, she would now be 'hesitant' to make any donations.

Being the the photographer— I can say my brain was not 'on vacation'.

Beer cases are the mainstay storage item of every food bank— they are sturdy, stackable and the perfect size.

This reader, with her 20 plus years in the

## Ted Brown



promotional field, was 'stunned' seeing beer cases at the food bank? Puh-leeze.

I've been a news photographer for 30 years and McGhie has been an editor almost as long. We both know what is— and isn't— appropriate in a community newspaper.

Later that same week, we received a couple more emails— this time more questioning, not insulting. The authors all asked, somewhat incredulously, if the food bank was distributing beer after they noticed the boxes in the photo.

McGhie and I had a discussion. Perhaps some folks out there did get the wrong idea. But at the same time, just think about it for a moment— would the Provincial government, with its strict beer and liquor licence laws, allow food banks to indiscriminately hand out beer with a package of pasta?

Not in a million years.

McGhie and I still stand behind the photo. Should I have removed every beer case in sight to alleviate the possibility of offending a sensitive reader? Not likely.

But it's obvious some readers don't know the inner workings of a food bank. Maybe it's time to go that extra step, and drop by the food bank with your donations to see first-hand, what all those faithful volunteers are doing, stacking beer cases filled with food, up to the ceiling, in preparation of distributing them to needy families.

And if you do visit, I'll guarantee one thing— you won't find any beer— just hundreds of beer boxes, packed with food for the needy.

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