

Ted's now an official geek

There are days I get some really interesting mail.

Recently, Managing Editor Cynthia Gamble was sorting through the mail as she usually does, and turned up a large envelope for me. Smiling, she called fellow worker Stuart Johnston over to look.

Sharing a chuckle, they both delivered this large piece of mail to my desk with broad smiles on their faces, and demanded I open it immediately.

Addressed to "Mr. Ted Brown, Geek-to-be," in care of the newspaper, I checked the return address.

Hmmm, I thought to myself, "Tilley Endurables" was the place of origin.

It suddenly all came back. I had written a column some time ago about trying on a hat while on holidays in Tobermory, and the hat mentioned was a Tilley. My daughter had said I looked like a "geek" wearing it.

"Oh gawd!" I thought to myself, "They're going to take me to court for slandering their fine name. My career is finished!"

A notation on the front of the envelope said there was a letter inside, so I cautiously opened it and pulled out the contents.

A catalog and two letters greeted me.

The first note, hand written on Tilley stationery, soon dashed any fears of legal action.

It read, "Dear Ted, I enjoyed your story about the hat and decided we couldn't have you walking around unhatted."

The good-natured letter-writer went on to tell me of receiving a copy of the column, and invited me to peruse the catalog and visit any Tilley store, to pick up a hat and pair of pants.

It was signed "Alex Tilley." I was totally blown away. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever imagine my column would make its way to the president of the Tilley company. And more surprising, he took time from his busy schedule to respond. But after thumbing through the catalog, and reading

A TED BIT

By TED BROWN



some of his quotations, it was obvious he enjoys a chuckle, just like the next person.

The other letter was the copy Alex Tilley had received.

It read, "Dear Alex, just a quick note to apprise you of a family situation written about in our local newspaper. It is self-explanatory. As the 'proud' owner of a Tilley hat, I was incensed at the comment of a teenager, who obviously has no regard for that classy piece of necessary apparel. Yours, in haste, Peter..."

The author's last name was torn off.

I confess, it was a most pleasant and totally unexpected turn of events.

Of course, the whole situation immediately started creating problems in the office.

Co-worker Stuart just bought a brand-new Honda Civic.

"Ted," he said, "you don't suppose I could write a column about Honda cars and get my car payments deferred?"

I told him it was doubtful.

Cynthia got into the act as well.

"If you're going to write about something like that again," she said, "at least mention my name so I can get in on the action."

"Nope," I replied, "You'll just have to write it yourself." (I admit this is a pretty rash statement to make to the person who edits my writing. But then again, I've got ethics.)

And yet another woman in the office thought it would be a great idea for me to write a story with her

fantasizing about the all male "Chippendales," but I quickly quashed that one.

Even wife Cathy had a word about it, suggesting I find an angle on BMW cars for a column, but I declined.

No sir, this was a one-time deal. I wrote the story for fun, nothing more.

Since then, I myself have become the 'proud' owner of a Tilley hat and with that ownership comes some grave responsibilities.

From now on, I've got to be a serious, well-read sophisticated, scholarly type, to be sure I can pull off the correct image when I get my hands on that lost map to the Bongo Wongo treasure. It would be embarrassing to lose my cool at the vital moment.

And I must remain on guard. If not, under duress, I could fail to conduct myself in a proper and professional manner, when that damsel in distress happens along, (you remember, blonde, mid-20's, ever grateful....)

No sir, a big responsibility goes with wearing a Tilley hat.

But I'll give it my best, and do them proud... even if my daughter won't stand near me anymore and thinks I look like a "geek."

My sincere thanks goes out to Mr. Alex Tilley of Tilley Endurables, for his great sense of humor and, of course, to "Peter..." whoever he is, for sharing my column (and the fun) with Alex.

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