

## Put giving on your Christmas list

Christmas is a time of plenty – decorations, lights, extravagances, food, gifts – all shared with family and friends. We rejoice in our good fortune.

Yet, there are many who don't have the means, financially or emotionally, or the families and friends with whom they can share. They become disheartened.

This cycle of the holidays is as old as the holiday itself. For it was amid wealth the story of Christmas tells of an infant, full of future potential, born in a stable.

While kings of the time were said to honour the newborn by bringing expensive gifts, a holiday song relates how a young boy's drumming was most precious.

Other holiday music recounts the stories of the needy Maria's bird singing the first nightingale's song and the shoes a poor boy gifts to his dying mother, as well as dreams of sugarplum fairies, and we must remember the true meaning of the holidays.

The Dec. 24 visit by Santa delivers not just toys and gifts, but joy, and that's what makes the visit so special.

Most of us have the memory of not the most expensive or brightest gift we ever saw under the tree, but the one we really wanted, big or small, expensive or not, the one that had captured our mind, heart or both.

Parents well know the search for the perfect gift, that special toy, and yet, also know how often it's an obscure item that brings the most joy to their child.

It is the joy of knowing someone cares, of feeling special for a moment, of being meaningful to someone that is the joy bestowed – and in turn received by giving.

Many are struggling to keep jobs and pay bills not just those in need for a variety of unfortunate circumstances – but many more who are simply falling behind in our struggling economy.

As we celebrate Christmas with our families and friends, let's remember the most joy comes from sharing, giving, helping and that a gift does not need to be shiny and bright or big and bold to hold meaning.

If we each were to reflect on something that is precious to us, it would likely be a kind word or small gesture that comes to mind.

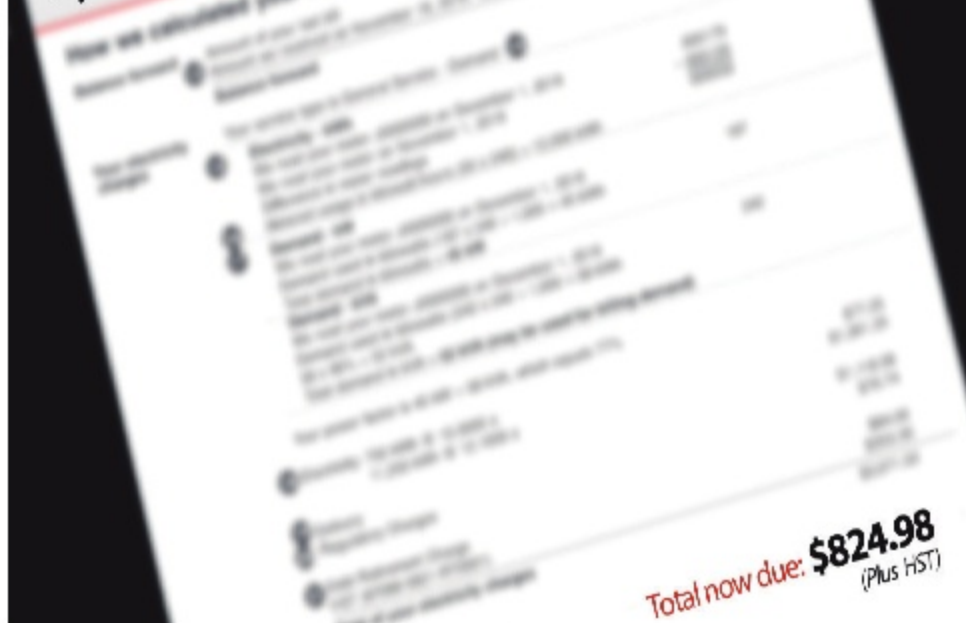
Some of our most treasured belongings are a drawing from a child, a keepsake from a shared memory or a token of someone's esteem.

### The Independent & Free Press

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## "Clarity"

### Ontario hydro bill



## Letters to the editor

### Council ignores residents

#### An open letter to Mayor Rick Bonnette regarding proposed seniors residence.

We want to express our extreme disappointment with both your decision and that of eight of your council members who did not support us on Dec. 12.

You did not listen to the obviously large neighbourhood voices who sent in emails, phoned their councillors, attended this meeting and communicated their reasons and rationale as to the big negative impact that this proposed seniors residence at Mountainview Rd. N. and John St. would have on their and our neighbourhoods.

The voices of about 500 homes with a minimum of two adults per home is 1,000 voices.

We would in fact like to have those statistics of the emails, phone calls for our Neighbourhood Committee that we are in the process of forming.

It was interesting to note the huge

time and attention given to the fence delegate who presented ahead of us.

There was a request from council to give a show of hands from her attendees as to how many supported it. Our neighbours were not given the same privilege for their input. On the grand scale of things, a few people are impacted by this fence, whereas 1,000 people and their children are impacted for 50 years or more by your decision. These are all single-family homes and classified low density.

Why did you and your council not support your Official Plan? What is the purpose of having a plan where the core elements are violated? It seems like a waste of taxpayers' money. It also calls into question the credibility of this plan.

You have violated your own plan in that it will fail us and the 1,000 and more adults, plus their children, summarized as follows:

- Does not maintain the character of the mature neighbourhood;
- It will have negative shadow impacts on the immediate neighbours. Take a look at Anderson Ct. and the shadow impact of the fifth

storey expansion of 222 Mountainview Rd. N. (Seniors Residence). Add a sixth storey. Please visit it. Why did council permit this maximum should be three storeys? You can also see the negative impact on Meadowglen Blvd.;

- Lack of privacy is also an impact;
- It will negatively impact the significant views and vistas of many neighbourhoods, including the residents on Costigan Ct., Meadowglen Blvd., and Sutcliff;
- It will most likely cause serious accidents to the proposed residents themselves – please see paragraph five on the first page of Patrick Horigan/Mary Broderick presentation (delegation). Most of the council did not interpret this correctly. They thought we were referring to the intersection only;
- The Town's Official Safety Plan considers the impacts only on intersection safety. The flaw and the reality is that it does not consider the impact of getting in and out of driveways. A glaring example of this is the 300 homes in the Meadowglen Development with a minimum of two cars per home. You have 600 cars exiting onto

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