

EDITORIAL

with Dawn Brown

Technology isn't what it used to be

I will be in the market for a new laptop soon. The computer on which I am typing this very article is showing signs that it is winding down; running a little slower, overheating. It's about four or five years old, and after some rather informal research into the overall lifespan of a laptop—three to five years for hardware seems to be the popular consensus—I guess I'm due.

I've done what I can to increase the lifespan of this computer. I've replaced the keyboard once already, a surprisingly easy and inexpensive fix. Though, the 'e' and 'r' keys have gotten a little sticky lately, so I might be looking at doing so a second time. I have been told by both the hubster and the kid that I am hard on keyboards, hammering the keys like I'm using an ancient typewriter. I've also had to replace the battery and the power cord. Since the former is only holding a charge for about fifteen minutes these days, I think I will have to order another one soon. But with each passing year, the parts I need become more and more difficult to find. But the thing is, I want to get more out a computer that will range anywhere from \$500 to \$1000 to replace than five years.

This quick turn over for expensive products isn't just reserved for computer equipment, but most electronics and appliances too.

My parents bought a new color TV when I was just six years old. Eventually, that same TV was replaced with a bigger fancier model and the old one relegated to the cottage. Twenty-five years later, when my parents sold that cottage, that TV still worked. Admittedly, it took a minute for the picture to form on the screen, but it worked which was more than could be said for the two television sets that had replaced it at home.

My point in all of this is manufactures don't seem to make their products to last. After all, there is more profit for them when consumers have to buy the next model every five years.

The old saying 'They don't make them like they used to' is accurate. Big ticket items that in my grandparents' generation were meant to last a lifetime, are not made to last a decade. The quality isn't what it once was and we as the consumer don't seem to care. Not only do we not insist that our expensive electronics and appliances last, we just push them aside and bring in the next one without blinking an eye.

We've come to accept a lesser quality product, and in some instances are happy to see said product die so we can buy the next bigger and better model. We have bought into a level of consumerism that asks us to spend more and more money while providing us with shoddier and shoddier products.

Give us bigger. Give us shinier. More bells. More whistles. More. More. More.

Maybe instead we should be chanting, give us better. Give us longer. Make it last. Last. Last.



FIRST TIMER: Jeff Grove, who recently moved to Acton from Caledon, was a first time donor at the Blood Donor Clinic held at the Legion in Acton last Thursday night. When asked what his motivation was to make his first blood donation, Grove said that while it was the right thing to do, it was also quite easy and convenient. Clinics in Acton are typically held on the third Thursday of the month, between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. at the Acton Legion on Wright Ave.

Circuses, Zoos and you

I know when I was a kid my parents took me to the circus. It didn't traumatize me. I don't remember thinking that the animals were being mistreated. It was just a circus. I think, like many kids before me, being able to go to see the circus was pretty special.

About 10 years ago or maybe even more, we were in Florida just before New Year's Eve and out on a day adventure when we noticed a crowd of people. We stopped and saw one of the most memorable random happenings I have ever seen. It was the Ringling Brother's Circus train unloading the elephant car for its New Year's Eve performance in their "hometown" run in St. Petersburg, Florida.

The elephants gracefully ducked coming out of the cars and delicately stepped one by one then paraded down the street to the stadium. It truly was a wondrous sight of grace and beauty. I didn't see the elephants being beaten. I wasn't worried that they were being mistreated and oddly there weren't any protesters in the area either.

This past weekend, the "Greatest Show on Earth" aka Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus held its last



By
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show after 146 years. Oddly, the elephant's last show was just over a year ago. The elephants were then transferred to the Center for Elephant Conservation also in Florida.

Last year, just shy of its 100th birthday, the Bowmanville Zoo closed. It was thrown into a media fury after video was leaked and the director of the zoo was facing animal cruelty charges. Although the zoo cited closure as a result of diminishing attendance not being able to cover their expenses. The "Greatest Show on Earth" also had diminished attendance and increased operating costs.

The Toronto Zoo amongst a lengthy turmoil lost its elephants in 2013. They were rehomed in a California sanctuary. Now the Zoo faces another crisis as zoo workers have been on strike for two weeks. The Toronto Zoo is a not for profit charitable organization and apparently can't equip the wage increase the union is rallying for their members.

Marineland has been constantly in the news for its apparent treatment of animals. Seaworld is another one brought forth in animal rights justice. Seaworld's attendance plummeted 15 per cent in the first quarter of this year.

Are circuses, zoos and similar type facilities mistreating animals or is social media and mainstream media pushing us to change our antiquated way of thinking? Is it okay for animals to be caged out of their natural environment and made to perform for humans? Is being out of their natural environment really that bad?

I don't think it's wrong for places like Seaworld to exist. We took our kids there just a few years ago. Would I take them to a zoo? Yes, I would and have. However, I won't take them to places that mistreat animals, and by mistreat I mean beat or physically hurt intentionally. Our kids actually love going to the Lions Safari and the Zoo. It's great for them to be able to see these animals in real life and to use these opportunities to educate them. What's wrong are people that physically harm animals intentionally.



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