

LETTERS



RE: Is abuse a right of the powerful

To the Editor:

How egregiously ridiculous of Trish Bell—the bride of Stephen Harper—to conflate the Weinstein affair with Liberal policies—at any level. With rolling pin in one hand and noose in the other, this bridezilla affects not only abuse, outrage and betrayal, but amazingly, rape and violation! Even worse, and more repugnant, she cries out and asks, “Why there is no mounting lynching party.” My goodness, this shrill harridan doth protest far, far too much.

I am at a loss as to where all this conservative hate comes from. To invoke a lynching in response to her perceived political ills is not only repellent, but utterly disgusting. If this bridezilla would only crawl out of her own cowshed long enough to listen to Billy Holiday’s “Strange Fruit,” she might possibly be ashamed at the absolute horror

of lynching and its sordid history. And since I am currently reading Greg Iles’ “Natchez” trilogy, I find this conservative hatred inexcusable.

Those of us on the liberal spectrum of politics have historically been called soft, namby-pamby, pinkos or socialists, but surely these names pale in comparison to the grotesque spectacle of tiki-toting, AR-15 carrying creeps from an alt right, a hard right, an evangelical right or a just plain reactionary right. Once again, I am at a loss to explain these displays of outright hatred.

This is not the first time bridezilla has been taken to task in your paper. Please no more talk of rape and violation. It is “Just a Thought,” but this invocation of lynching parties in this—or any other paper—should be a firing offence.

Terry Ferguson

SPORTS TALK

The Toronto Raptors and the curse of San Antonio

By: Michael Oke

In case you missed it, the NBA season started last week and, at the time of writing this column, the Toronto Raptors are going into their fourth game.

The sole Canadian team in the NBA won their first two games against the Chicago Bulls and Philadelphia 76ers fairly comfortably. Game three was against the San Antonio Spurs, and would be the start of a six game 12 day trip away from home for the Raptors.

As with a number of sports franchises, the Raptors find themselves in a bit of a bind; just good enough to get far in the playoffs, but never quite having the talent—or some would argue the coaching depth—to win the relatively ‘easier’ Eastern Conference, never mind going all the way to clinch the NBA finals.

Nothing proves this point more than their game against San Antonio on Monday night. The Texans came into the game without two of last season’s most influential players—Kawhi Leonard and Tony Parker—while the Raptors were missing the services of their seven-foot centre, Jonas Valančiūnas.

The Raptors competed very well going into the fourth quarter, and looked set to take the honours in an arena they had not won in 10 years. Unfortunately,

ly, the difference in class came through after a timeout called deep in the fourth quarter by five-time NBA championship winning coach, Gregg Popovich.

The Spurs went on a nine-point run, and despite a late rally by the Raptors, the damage had been done. This exemplifies the difference between teams at the NBA Championship level and those not too far behind. A well timed timeout backed with necessary technical instructions changed the course of the entire game.

I am sure the Raptors coaching staff must have learned a thing or two from this game, but there is very little time to reflect as the big games come in quick succession—NBA Champions Golden State Warriors next.

It is definitely early days, but the expectations of just making the playoffs is no longer sufficient, neither is a 50 plus win season.

With many of the star players in the Eastern conference electing to move west and the Cleveland Cavaliers in relative disarray with the move of Kyrie Irving to Boston, there hasn’t been a better time to win the Eastern Conference. However, the technical side of the Raptors game needs to match up with this ambition.

All in all, I look forward to a very exciting season.

JUST A THOUGHT

The war on Hallowe’en



By
Trish Bell

On reflection, Hallowe’en was truly an amazing holiday. No big presents or feasts. No hours in the car to visit relatives you barely knew. Simply one night where you could be anything or anyone you wanted. Your socio-economic status didn’t matter; everyone was equal at Hallowe’en. Costumes could be homemade, treats could be mom-made and every activity at school could be about ghosts, goblins and witches and it was never too much. Treats were treats in those days—a full-size chocolate bar would be a self-rationed afterschool treasure. The entire season was a build-up that, when finished, left a happy glow like that of the jack-o-lantern on the porch. But I wonder, will Hallowe’en become another tradition sacrificed under the knife of political correctness? Clearly, news stories show schools and communities throughout Canada moving away. No costumes. No parades. Age restrictions. Curfews. Let’s be honest; the real reason schools and towns are avoiding Hallowe’en isn’t to protect feelings, customs or the little ghouls as they claim; it is really to protect themselves. Someone’s period-costume knickers might get into a knot and people would have to take a side. Hallowe’en, like everything else in our collective childhoods, has become a tool to appease the masses who might find offense. Clearly, we can’t pretend to stand for something others might not like. We would be better to shut it down than possibly offend. This is the beginning of a much larger problem. What ever happened to mimicry being the greatest form of flattery? Shall I be offended every time I see someone in a kilt? When I hear someone who clearly looks different from me calling their cookies biscuits? Hark the 21st century battle cry: that’s my culture and you have no right to engage in it. What nonsense. Appreciation of other cultures is always a good thing—it is the quintessential foundation for successful globalization and globalization goes both ways. If you are so protect-

ive of your culture that no one else can participate in it, then you risk the world leaving you behind.

Do I think there are costumes that go too far? Absolutely. The Anne Frank costume was clearly a mistake. Costumes are not the method of choice for hard history lessons and should never be based on the horrid slaughter of one group by another. Same goes for anything labelled “sexy.” If the word sexy is in it, it’s an adult fantasy thing. Call it a costume if you want, but clearly it is a fantasy item and the fantasies of adults cross lines of morality far more politically incorrect than cultural. I would like to think adults would remember to be respectful of the children in view—and yes, teens, you are children—but, if a kid wants to dress up in Ukrainian folk dress or be a bloodthirsty wolfman, don’t declare it “culturally insensitive” or “evil wolf stereotyping.” Let it be what it is: fun! We’ve sucked the fun out of almost every other aspect of childhood, couldn’t we just leave one?

When my daughters were little they emulated Mulan and Pocahontas. They found something compelling, something that resonated in the stories of these two real girls who—just by coincidence—looked nothing like them, but who overcame great odds to stand up for what they believed. As a mom, you can’t ask for better role models. This interest led us to take out books and learn more about their stories, celebrating the cultures from which these stories came. And each girl, in turn, asked to be their “hero” for Hallowe’en. Did this make us culturally insensitive? Of course not; it showed an appreciation of real people who are inspiring and of whom these cultures should be proud. These lessons transcend culture which is why they are both inspiring and important to share.

The irony in all of this is

that while worried about the sanctity of the cultures of others, many of us know nothing about our own. As we celebrate the “rich culture of our sister city, Wenjiang” in our town, why is it okay to celebrate the dance, calligraphy and history of another group but not celebrate our own? Why is okay to exhibit Chinese culture but a child wearing a traditional costume is cultural appropriation? Hallowe’en itself is part of our cultural identity. Originating some 2000 years ago, it began as the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, a celebration of harvest and the beginning of a new year. It was believed that, on this day, spirits could more easily transverse the planes of the living and dead, so people would leave food and wine on doorsteps to prevent the spirits from entering and would wear masks when going out to appear as ghosts—elements of which emulate Mexico’s Day of the Dead. There was Souling, where the needy would beg for food in exchange for praying for the souls of the departed, and Guising, where people in costume would go door to door singing, telling jokes and reciting poetry for food and sweets—similar to carolling. Because winter was harsh and associated with death, these customs of celebration made sense. By the 1950s, the family friendly version of trick-or-treating, as we know it, was established, putting the focus on kids rather than on the harvest or religious connotations. It isn’t a day celebrating a battle or a conquest; it is simply neighbours coming together to give thanks for the past and hope for the future. To me, that is the quintessential holiday to celebrate. Yet, in our attempts to appease other cultures, we are once again giving up our own. As we become more culturally informed, it appears we are equally culturally muzzled. Hallowe’en was a magical holiday of imagination, facing fears and having fun. Perhaps people need to remind themselves that it isn’t a political holiday, just a cultural one. And shouldn’t we embrace our heritage, too?