

## LETTERS

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## Mall's nativity location shocks reader

To the Editor

I very rarely write letters, but I feel this subject must be addressed. Stone Road Mall owns a beautiful, almost life size Nativity Scene which, in previous years, has been prominently displayed on the main mall level for all shoppers to appreciate as they go about their Christmas shopping. However, last year and again this year, the Nativity has been relegated to a rarely visited corridor on the second level, even though there seems to be

ample spaces in the main mall. As Christmas is a celebration of the birth of Christ, I think the mall management does a great disservice to thousands of families who look forward to seeing the Nativity scene as they shop. It has been beautifully presented; it is just in the wrong place. I have contacted the mall's management with no response, but I hope they will reconsider their decision if enough people complain.

Charles Vince,  
Rockwood

## SPORTS TALK

### Grey Cup is truly Canadian

It doesn't get more Canadian than the 105th Grey Cup final game between the To-

By  
**Michael Oke**

Redblacks in 2016 and so had recent experience on their side. Most expected

the Stampeders to win.

The game itself started as expected, the half time score was 6-0 for Calgary, and with about five minutes remaining, they'd managed to maintain their lead at 24-16 and had the ball. The Argos, however, demonstrated the "True North Strong" spirit by capitalizing on a fumble and, complemented by some good defense, clinched championship. It was a truly remarkable turn around.

Having said all that, I do believe the snow did affect the agile spectacle expected at a Grey Cup final. And while no team had any advantage due to the conditions, it must be said it presented more challenges to teams on the offense.

This has led to calls in some quarters for the CFL season to begin earlier, probably in May so the Grey Cup would be played close to the end of October which would reduce—not eliminate—the chances of a snow-covered field.

Whichever way you look at it, the 105th Grey Cup ticked all the boxes of what it means to be Canadian.

ronto Argonauts and the Calgary Stampeders which took place last Sunday at the TD Place Stadium in Ottawa.

Starting with the obvious Canadianism, a snow-covered field and weather-beaten fans dressed in toques and winter jackets trying to stay warm and excited at the same time, followed by video clips broadcasted during the pre-game show of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as a young boy attending a previous Grey Cup with his father—former PM—Pierre Trudeau.

What could have been more Canadian than watching Windsor, Ontario born Shania Twain's dramatic arrival for the half time show on a dog sled, then escorted onto the stage at by a Mountie?

Even the game itself showed true Canadian grit exemplified when the underdog overcame all odds to emerge victorious.

The Stampeders were by all accounts the favorites. They had an outstanding regular season record which included two wins over the Argonauts. Add to that, the Stampeders were beaten finalist against the Ottawa



**COAT DONATIONS:** Grade one students at Limehouse Public School presented winter clothing donated to Graham Worsfold for St. Alban's Anglican Church's Winter Clothing Bank. Anyone in need can get warm winter clothing from St. Alban's, 19 St. Alban's Drive, every Thursday between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. If unable to visit during those hours arrangements to visit at a more convenient time can be made by calling 519-853-2711. - Submitted photo

## JUST A THOUGHT

### Net neutrality doesn't mean we should be neutral

As our sesquicentennial year wraps up, it appears rustic woody landscapes and a stereotypical love for cabins are dominant décor themes this Christmas season. While we may not all share a love for Buffalo check plaid, it is hard to find a Canadian who can't boast about our beautiful country. Be it mountains or valleys; forests or fields; our picturesque scenery and varied climate are indeed striking. Internationally, we brag about a shared landscape and identity but contrary to collective imagination, many of us have only vaguely similar scenes beyond our frosted windows. Emily Carr said, "it is wonderful to feel the grandness of Canada in the raw," and while our bountiful backyard is something to behold, it is not without immense challenge. Almost 10 million km<sup>2</sup> and 90 degrees of longitude, Canada hosts six time zones and approximately seven distinct climates. She boasts a coast that dips its feet in three oceans and is home to more than three million fresh water lakes—that's more than all the rest of the world combined! Not surprisingly, the rawness to which Carr spoke has been the mother of great Canadian invention: the snowblower and the snowmobile to name but a few. But while challenging vistas provide us both necessity and inspiration to create, they also offer occasion for challenges beyond our capabilities, and, like transportation before her, our varied access to the internet now threatens to usurp our place in the global village.

Geography has always been an immense obstacle in connecting Canadians. Be it trains, telephone lines or roads, getting across our great nation is a challenge. With sprawling low population settlements, ensuring rural Canada has fast, reliable access to the information super-



By  
**Trish Bell**

highway is an expensive proposition with a staggering number of challenges. Telecomm companies like Bell or Cogeco have been the ones laying and paying for internet infrastructure for years, but let's face it: connecting all Canadians at high speed, while noble, isn't necessarily going to make these companies rich. Mountains, water, land use and agreements impede our efforts to simply lay fibre cable everywhere. And unlike the stuff in the kitchen, that fibre's pricey. Using microwaves warrants the use of numerous devices over spread out areas, plaguing reliability and driving up costs, while satellites remain unreliable and slow—all sluggishly hindering the 5Mbps download threshold the government proposed be in place for all Canadians by 2015. This list continues, but you get the idea. Basically, someone has to pony up the money and put in the grunt work or some of us will be left in the dark. And according to the Canadian Internet Registration Authority, that number is in the range of one million plus.

But don't kid yourselves; geography is only part of the story here. Numerous reports, including a 2013 Harvard study, have labelled the Canadian system as "poorly priced with inconsistent accessibility fragmented by both geography and socioeconomics" and Canadians know it. The federal CTS commissioner reported a staggering 5,800 internet complaints last year alone, up 38 per cent year to year. What's worse, the need to be online is quickly becoming crucial. Banks are ceaselessly pushing us online while retailers

have turned to more lucrative virtual platforms in exchange for costly brick and mortar models. Even our elementary students are expected to utilize online classrooms and resources. Yet, a shocking one in five households have no internet access at all. None. Zilch. No checking balances. No Amazon purchases. No Google Classroom. Not surprisingly, Stats Canada showed that 46 per cent of these households earned \$30,000 or less and 35 per cent of all respondents quoted a lack of confidence or equipment as their main reason for being offline, meaning the problem is clearly not just geographical. Worse, without access, our most vulnerable—seniors, low income and those with challenges—have the most to lose, a likely reason the CRTC declared broadband internet a "basic service" last year. Yet, to date, nothing has changed. Worse still, net neutrality—or the idea that all information on the net remains equal and not subjective to financial incentives to ensure speed and access—is once again up for debate in the U.S. Allowing businesses to essentially hijack information unless you pay them is as corrupt as it sounds, and while Canada says it believes the net should remain "an open space without barriers," kid yourself not: if the U.S. law is scrapped, the cost for everything here, online and off, will be affected, likely hurting those most who can afford it least. Famed Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan said, "the huge advantage of Canada is its backwardness." Sure, for rustic Christmas décor or a humorous beer commercial, but not, even McLuhan would argue, in regards to the internet. Information is power—best it be enshrined as free and available to all.

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