

LETTERS

The views expressed in these published letters are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The New Tanner Publishing Ltd.



Christmas list for all

To the Editor,

You can have an easy time during the Christmas rush.

1. Do not think everyone really wants something more to fill the closet. You are fooled by advertising. People want some of your one-on-one time so instead promise to visit on a certain day.
2. Use your money instead to help the Food Bank or send a gift to a charity. You will feel good and can be sure your gift is appreciated.
3. Maybe you like the thrill of seeing someone opening your gift. Isn't that like showing

how great you are? Christmas is about giving love.

4. Try doing a random gift and you will be glowing all day.
5. Other ideas: Offer to shovel snow—do it with a group so you all enjoy the fun, or get a neighborhood ice rink instead of an elaborate city facility. Dig out your own skates and teach the kids. They will think you are the best dads around.
6. Money cannot buy those presents. Also, they will be remembered years onward.

So have a really memorable Christmas everyone.

Sytske Drijber

Flames are optional

Well, Christmas came early this year. The other night while my wife and I sat in our living room, I observed a car pull up in front of our house and stop. The driver got out, removed a parcel from the back of the vehicle, proceeded to drop it on the boulevard, and then got back in the car and drove away. I thought it might be a bundle of the Independent Newspaper being dropped off for distribution later by the carrier. My wife went out and discovered it was a Coke-a-Cola 24 can flat box full of broken glass. It's not likely that this individual will see this letter 'cause I assume they are

from out of town as I can't imagine anyone living in this community being so crass and lacking in moral standards. We are senior citizens so we are quite used to cleaning up after the younger generation, but when it comes to total strangers we hope this lack of responsibility will be rewarded with an appropriate karma. At the risk of being politically incorrect, I want to wish this individual a very Merry Christmas, and may Santa leave a nice gift bag of reindeer doo-doo under your tree—flames optional.

Gary Leslie
Acton

SPORTS TALK

GTA teams on a roll

Toronto—Sports Capital of North America. Would you say this title is a bit far-fetched?

By **Michael Oke**

for thinking the City and its surrounding areas—like Acton—have become a sports fan's paradise.

The thought came to mind last night while preparing to go to work wearing "something red" to celebrate the recent triumph of the Toronto FC in the MLS Cup final.

On a serious note, very few cities in North America can boast of prominent teams in the highest levels of Soccer, Football, Basketball, Hockey and Baseball at the same time. Outside the usual suspects—New York and Los Angeles with estimated populations of eight and four million respectively compared to Toronto's three million—it goes without saying that Toronto is definitely punching above its weight. The closest city in size would be Chicago, which also has a long history of hosting major sports franchises.

Considering the heights Toronto-based teams have reached in major sports championship in recent times, one could be forgiven for making such assertions. Toronto FC secured the Major League Soccer Championship on Saturday beating the Seattle Sounders in a repeat of last year's final game. Another Toronto team, the Argonauts won the Grey Cup—Canada's version of the NFL Super Bowl—barely three weeks ago, the Raptors have established themselves as one of the top teams in the Eastern Conference of the NBA. To top it all the Maple Leafs are currently second in the Atlantic division of the National Hockey League. While Major League baseball is in its off season, the Toronto Blue Jays are well regarded in the American League East.

Of course, when we talk about Toronto, we are actually referring to the City itself and the GTA as a whole where the majority of fans reside.

Also, worthy of note is that the Blue Jays and Raptors have the added advantage of representing not just the city, but the entire country in their respective championships.

All in all, it's a great time to be a sports fan residing in the GTA.

So, one would be forgiven



POSTER CONTEST: Blaine McCauley (left), vice-principal of St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School in Acton received a check for \$350 from Grand Knight Kevin Hickey of the Knights of Columbus Council 8050. The fund-raising was part of the "Keep Christ in Christmas" poster contest for students at St. Joseph. The money will be donated to the Halton Catholic Children's Foundation. - Harry Rudolfs photo

JUST A THOUGHT

Hero worship



By **Trish Bell**

Today, I bring up that unique, overused, and often misinterpreted four-letter word. You know that one that gets thrown around a lot as we sum up our year, especially one like this. That word, for those of you playing along at home is hero, and while we all collectively pretend to understand its meaning, we find definitions that seem murky at best. We try to give examples: Justin Trudeau, Prince Harry, Terry Fox, Brad Pitt, Joe Carter—all are the idealistic picture of a hero—a man who says what we think he should, acts how we think he should, enjoys fame and fortune and if he looks hot while doing it all the better. Gone are the days of doing something brave. No wonder firemen calendars are losing traction. We have thrown the term hero around so relentlessly, describing the rich, talented, and famous, that we now mislabel even the most mundane efforts as heroic, undermining the value this word should hold. And that's the trouble, because when we talk about the gutsiest, noblest and most gallant of people, the little four-letter word should be equally resolute.

So, where did our idea of hero go so askew? Well, contrary to Hollywood gospel and many a woman's dreams, heroes are not simply rippling pecs, six-pack abs and chiselled cheek bones. According to the Merriam-Webster folks who've been doing this defining thing since 1828—wait does doing something for a long time make someone a hero?—there are a few different criteria to classifying a hero. First, they need to be mythological or legendary with special abilities. This is obviously where all our legends and comic book heroes get their pass and explains why we refer

to title characters in both literature and drama as the hero, although those even remotely well-read or up to speed on the latest Netflix 'must binge' show would likely argue most do not deserve the moniker. Creative folks love to perpetuate our false imaginings of heroes, something they have done perpetually since brush and ink were put to paper. Tales of deeds done well became more dramatic with each telling and the legends of heroes were born. Ironically, the word hero actually comes from ancient Greece, with an original translation of "one who was part of the Trojan War" quickly morphing into "protector" or "defender." To them, a hero was someone who, once dead, deserved worship because such fame or manner of death would give him power to support and protect the living. And all ancient cultures shared a similar revelry for incredible warriors and extraordinary deeds. Epic oral stories of men who were more than human, but less than gods, led to writers like Homer and Shakespeare solidifying our idea of a long-gone age of beyond belief escapades with larger-than-life characters doing impossible feats. And, while Greek warriors and Shakespearean princes were incredibly narcissistic and selfish, these qualities did not negate their eligibility as a hero, perhaps leading us to the where we are today with Merriam-Webster's more modern definition: an object of extreme admiration and devotion. That's right, somewhere along the way, quite

ironically, we began to equate a noble person doing noble deeds with the simple act of being popular. A fitting example is our current societal plunder of status worshiping, with those with the most followers, tweets and watches somehow more valuable as people. And before you start thinking, I don't do that, remember the movie stars, princes and famous athletes you, and millions more, follow relentlessly on Twitter, Facebook and You Tube suggest otherwise. Even our small towns celebrate such mediocrity as exceptional—look at the business leaders, winning teams and prominent people claimed heroes of our communities. Sure, they are swell people and we can give them a big pat on the back, but hero, really? Even our consistency seems lacking as the top team in Toronto Professional sports—just not our favourite sports like hockey, baseball, basketball or football—found out this past weekend. Sure, being popular is a fickle affair, but as a society we must ask ourselves if we really choose to hold fame and position in such high regard while thinking so little about the real heroes who walk among us. Men who grab hold of bombers to prevent further casualties, women who attend school despite being shot, people who risk their own lives to save an animal in need and countless more who do the right thing even when harm may befall them and no one is looking—all might not look like the Jedi heroes and comic book tag teams we flock to see in theatres, but they are the preservation of human's soul and they deserve more than a casual mention and equation to someone merely living their dreams.