

# LETTERS



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## Support for Dam cleanup

To the Editor,

A good news story concerning the replacement of the dam on Fairy Lake.

Would it be possible to add a few more dollars to the budget for the removal of garbage, especially the branches that were left in the spillway many years ago?

The branches were not left

there as an act of nature, but by mankind trimming trees and leaving the branches.

A thorough clean up can only enhance the aesthetic beauty and calming effect of the tumbling waters.

Respectfully,  
D.A. Ford  
Acton

# SPORTS TALK

## Tribute to Humboldt Broncos

It's not likely you had heard about the city of Humboldt, Saskatchewan—est. population

By  
**Michael Oke**

Bank Cup.

A catastrophe like this really makes one appreciate a

6,000—before last Friday's fatal bus crash involving the Humboldt Broncos, a Junior "A" hockey team from the city, which resulted in the loss of 15 precious lives with 14 others injured. 10 players, two coaches, a radio announcer, a team statistician and the bus driver lost their lives. Most of those affected were under 20 years of age. According to reports, the bus carrying the team was about 20 kilometers from completing its journey from Humboldt to Nipawin when it collided with a semi-truck on Friday night at around 5 p.m. local time.

Like most towns and cities in the Prairies, hockey forms an integral part of everyday life for most residents of the area. The Broncos play in the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League (SJHL) and were in a semi-final playoff series with the Nipawin Hawks before this tragic accident.

The winner of the SJHL playoffs would go on to play in the ANAVET Cup against the champion from the Manitoba Junior Hockey League for the right to represent the Western region of Canada at the Junior "A" National Championship, the Royal

lot of the things we take for granted. Like most parents who travel with or without their kids in participating in various sports near and far, it is important to be grateful for journey mercies.

It's also important that the relevant authorities get to the bottom of this mishap to help us understand the root cause and possibly prevent it from happening again.

The stories of compassion and the coming together of the larger community after this tragedy have been overwhelming. From NHL teams observing a moment's silence before games and adorning jerseys

**THOSE YOUNG LIVES LOST HAD SO MUCH PROMISE AHEAD OF THEM, AND NO WORDS CAN EVEN BEGIN TO COMPREHEND THE SCOPE OF THIS CALAMITY.**

with Humboldt Broncos written on them, to one of the grieving families deciding to donate their son's organs, to Canadians donating over \$4 million in less than 48 hours at the Humboldt Broncos GoFundMe page.

Anyone who wishes to contribute in some way should visit the advertised donation websites or book an appointment to give blood.

It is at times like these that we realize there is indeed more to life than sports.

May the souls of the departed rest in peace.

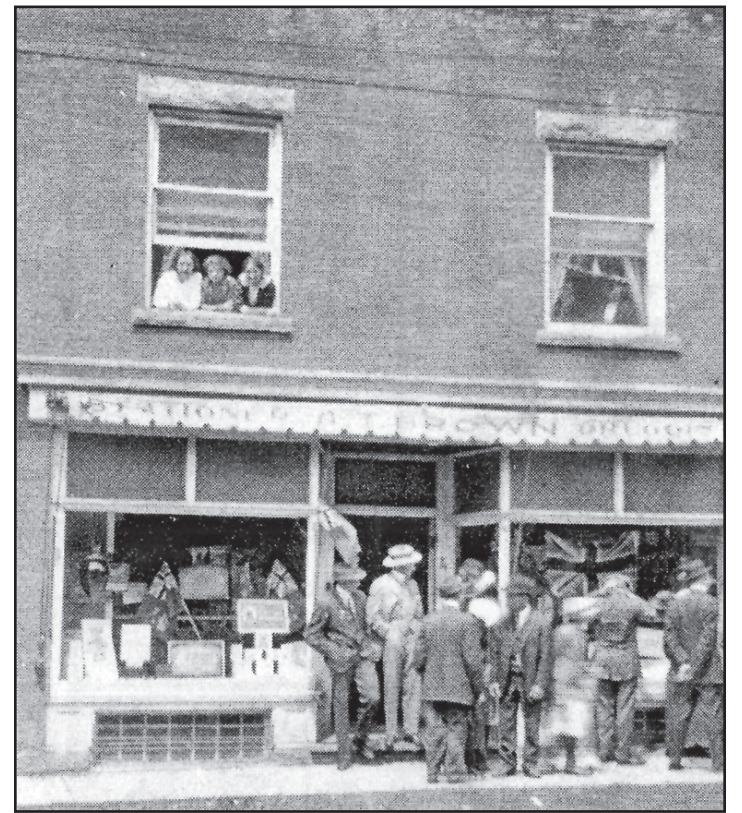
**This sign south of Acton captures the mood in the country right now in the wake of the terrible tragedy that befell the Humboldt Broncos junior hockey team on Friday.** - Vivien Fleisher photo



# LOOKING BACK

By: Scott Brooks

**A.T. Brown was a pharmacist and a photographer. Brown was responsible for the many historical photos of Acton's early days. He operated a drugstore at 31 Mill Street East for 50 years until his retirement in 1944, when he sold the store to Earl Cooper; the old building was torn down and replaced with a new building. Pictured is a crowd of people outside of A.T. Brown's Drug Store—C. 1920s.** - Photo Credit: A.T. Brown / Dills Collection



# JUST A THOUGHT

## But for the grace of God

The coach. An assistant coach who played for York U. A stats whiz kid. The play by play guy. A goalie. The captain. A bus driver. A farm kid. A former NHLer's son. A defenseman. A forward. A right winger. A left winger. A billet that would play with puppies. The organ donor. And 14 more lives—some still struggling to survive—that will forever be changed by the physical and emotional effects of such trauma, none more horrid than the guilt of surviving it.

The horrendous Humboldt Broncos bus crash in Saskatchewan has consumed many of us since it occurred last Friday night. Theirs are the stories of so many young and talented lives snuffed out and changed for no reason at all. But they could be the lives of any of us. This crash wasn't an "act of god" through bad weather or some other unforeseen or uncontrollable condition. It wasn't—as of yet—a cruel inevitability due to neglect of equipment or protocol. And it wasn't—again, as of yet—a callous human action or inaction. No, what happened on that long stretch of two lane highway was an accident, pure and simple. Even if time and investigation eventually allow us a cause or name to which we may point our anguished fingers, it will still remain a horrible accident and one which I am afraid—and brace yourselves here—has happened before and will happen



By  
**Trish Bell**

again. Since 1953 there have been some 14 other truly terrifying bus accidents, claiming the lives of 251 poor souls, although one could likely argue there are many more that simply didn't seem ghastly enough to make national news, but that tormented those involved just the same. With stats like this it is almost an inevitability that such tragedy will occur again. So, why do so many of us feel this connection to the boys out west?

While some claim hockey as the great common denominator here, the true reason remains an emotion as simple as any other: guilt. Guilt that but for the grace of god, any of us could be the ones mourning our town's children. Any of us could be sitting in that arena wishing to wake up from the never-ending nightmare other parents are now stuck in. Guilt that we will get another chance to hug and kiss our kids tonight. Guilt that our kids make it to their next game. When the media related that all of us have been on that bus, they truly meant it. We have all put our kids on that bus; be it to school, camp, day trips, sporting events or just getting to work, our country is vast and if we wish to explore it beyond

our front steps we must take the risk, knowing that such an outcome—however unlikely—is still possible.

Social media has been abuzz with the heartache of a nation in disbelief. Sure, we go about our daily lives still, but somehow do so while remaining locked in that moment. Whether we've lined up hockey sticks outside our doors, traded team colours and names on jerseys, or sent money—to the tune of over \$8 million—as of this writing—all show Humboldt we care. Yet, more than care, they show our own personal need to come to terms with such outlandish loss and the guilt we feel. It is as if moving on in one's own life automatically means we are uncaring, uncompassionate and by extension forgetting. This is the reaction of those who survive because not just survivors feel guilt. And so, like every unbearable incident before this, we tell ourselves never again. We will find the cause. We will make more laws and rules. We will put up crosses and memorials. We will sign our donor cards and create scholarships. And somehow, we appease our sense of loss and guilt and assure ourselves that some good can come out of such tragedy, convinced we have prevented the next one. But as bereaved Broncos father Scott Thomas said so well, "there was no reason for this. It's just unfair." And the next one will be too.