

EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

Some confusion

More than a few Canadian Cancer Society volunteers were concerned about a letter which appeared in last week's edition of The New Tanner announcing that Cancer Assistance Services of Halton Hills was starting their fund-raising campaign simultaneous with the start of the April campaign of the Cancer Society. They feel Cancer Assistance Services will be funnelling money into their coffers originally intended for the Cancer society because of the confusion caused by two cancer campaigns at the same time.

There is confusion. April has been the traditional month for the Canadian Cancer Society's annual fundraising campaign, using the daffodil as a symbol.

Campaigns in the past have realized tens of thousands of dollars for research into a disease which afflicts so many. Few families have not been touched by cancer. Those who are survivors know the importance of the research that goes into finding a cure for it.

Cancer Assistance Services is devoted to keeping its money in Halton Hills providing assistance to local people who may need it, at no cost to the patient or their families. It's a different service with a different goal and certainly one that should be lauded.

It's just unfortunate both campaigns are running at the same time. It can be confusing when canvassers come to a door from Cancer Assistance Services one day and perhaps from the Acton branch of the Canadian Cancer Society the next. Most people don't have the resources to donate generously to both so it is important to know the distinction between the two appeals.

One way to know the difference is to look for the daffodil on a canvasser. It's the symbol of the Canadian Cancer Society and identifies what organization they represent.

There are only so many dollars to go around so residents should be aware of where their money is going.

Why so long?

One has to wonder how a man who received 1992 conviction for impaired driving and seven subsequent convictions for driving while disqualified could still be on the road. He may finally have been stopped thanks to an investigation by Burlington OPP and Halton Police which resulted in both vehicles he operated being seized by the Crown. But his actions covered the years between 1992 and 2009, 17 years in which he was a disqualified driver.

In December of 2007, the driver of a 1991 Chev pick-up was stopped in Oakville for an expired licence plate validation sticker. That's when Burlington OPP officers discovered he was a disqualified driver stemming from a 1992 conviction for impaired driving and seven further convictions for driving while disqualified.

In January of this year (2009) the same person was operating a 1995 GMC van without licence plates when he was stopped by Halton Police. It was then that the Criminal Code of Canada allowed for seizure of the vehicles and ordered them forfeited.

OPP Commissioner Julian Fantino, known as a strong advocate of the law, said, "This is another example of high-risk driving behaviour that has been stopped thanks to the use of legislative tools and the cooperation of two police agencies."

We're glad the Crown was able to seize the vehicles concerned and to get that driver off the road but still wonder why it took so long.



STILL GOING: Writing non-stop since age 14, Burlington autor Lawrence Hill signed dozens of copies of "The Book of Negroes" for delighted fans at teh John Elliott Cultural Centre on Tuesday, March 10. - Charles Tysoe photo

'Book of Negroes' author fascinates John Elliott audience

By Charles Tysoe

Halton Hills and a packed John Elliott Cultural Centre hosted their very own book salon last Tuesday; celebrated Canadian author Lawrence Hill took up the invitation from the Friends of the Library (FOL) to come and read from his best-selling, award- and world-winning novel of the 18th-Century slave trade, "The Book of Negroes."

In an atmosphere of palpable vitality Mr. Hill proved an eloquent spokesman for his craft and a gracious and compelling statesman-advocate for matters of historical – and Canadian – import, taking an hour of questions from a rapt audience. Many embraced copies of the first-person narrative by freed slave Aminata Diallo; few left without obtaining a copy to be signed by the author, who warmly engaged all comers.

Mr. Hill was thrilled by the "warm, generous and big-hearted audience." Also delighted was Norm Elliott of FOL; Elliott hopes the credibility earned by Hill's appearance will stimulate the Friends' efforts to provide similar future events.

Use the word Negro in Brooklyn N.Y. will likely get you a broken nose, Mr. Hill said (asked about the novel's Fall 2007 U.S. release as "Someone Knows My Name"); whereas in Canada folk might shake their heads and think you are just out of touch. A provocative title; but as many Canadians, (often surprised and sometimes a little ashamed of their ignorance) a growing international audience are discovering, this epic tale is grounded on a real Book of Negroes.

Lawrence Hill's creative mind made Aminata, his female protagonist, the author. She usurps a

naval officer's role as a shipboard ledger clerk in New York Harbour, to record the names of 3,000 escaped slaves, the so-called "Black Loyalists" who pledged themselves to the British Crown, most in exchange for passage to and land in Nova Scotia during the U.S. Revolutionary War.

The real Book of Negroes is housed in the British National Archives, Kew, England. That's where Mr. Hill, in a "surreal moment" and trying to look suitably profound for CBC camera's, last fall first laid eyes on the largest single document about black people in North America to emerge from the 18th century. This a day after an audience with Queen Elizabeth in her Buckingham Palace apartments, where the Her Majesty eagerly discussed the 18th Century with Mr. Hill, plying him with questions about the document.

Continued on Page 7



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