

Opinion

Hardware hits a soft spot

In sports, when you win something you usually get a trophy to commemorate the event. After a number of years that trophy, with all the names of past winners engraved on it, acquires a certain aura; in essence, the reflected glory of all champions.

Some of these venerated trophies are widely known because they are awarded to national figures for national, or international sporting deeds. The Stanley Cup, e.g., awarded to the champions of the NHL, is among the best known trophies in the world.

It isn't only national sporting champions which are commemorated by trophies. Many local or regional trophies are competed for by thousands of people each year. Within certain circles those trophies hold as much significance as the Stanley Cup or the Heisman.

Recently Halton high school sports convenor Peter Moore put out a call to secondary schools in Halton asking for old trophies that have gone out of use. The schools are pillaging their trophy cases and handing over their relics to be reconditioned and used again for something else.

This is a mistake. In fact, it is almost as bad an idea as Moore's determination that scheduled games against unshared opponents are only worth one point to the winners in the standings. But I digress.

The trophies that Moore is collecting were won by athletes who deserve to have their achievements commemorated. That's the idea of awarding the trophy is the first place.

It's a collection of all the achievements of a school's students that set standards for future generations. Schools are defined, in part, by their trophy cases. The value of achievement is reflected in shiny metal and wood right back in the faces of those who most need to be inspired to great deeds, be they on the fields of athletic endeavor or in the classroom.

Brian Arsenault at Bishop Reding knows this. The head of physical education is fighting an uphill battle to build a tradition of athletic



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with
BRAD REAUME

excellence at Bishop Reding. It's a battle he's winning. Because he's winning, students are winning long after they graduate, because they have a winning attitude.

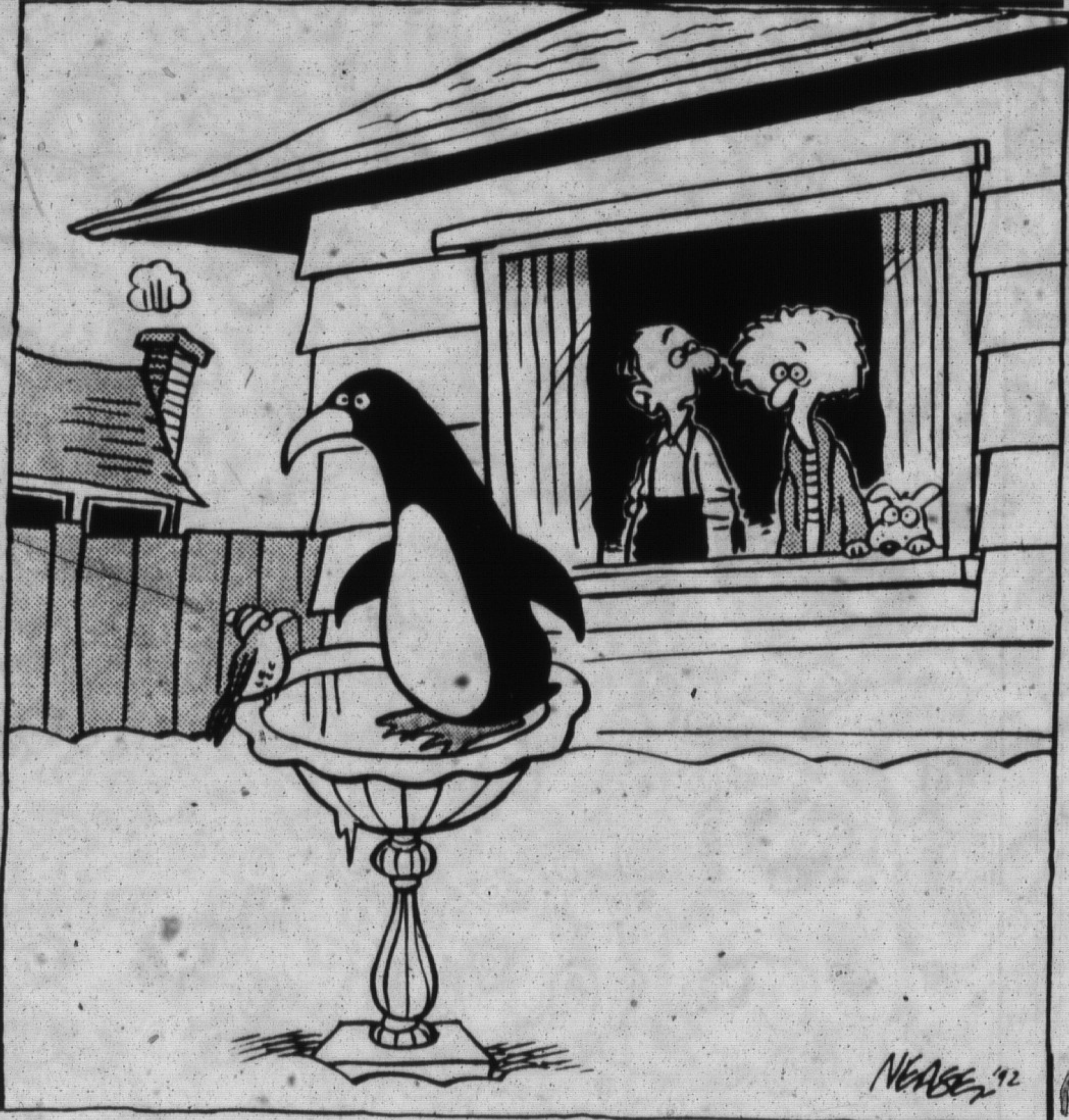
To Moore's credit, since he began as Halton secondary school convenor, the profile of high school sports has increased dramatically. He spends many hours cajoling the media to cover high school games, even though traditionally even the students have been uninterested. He arranges for quality officials, sets schedules and promotes tournaments to encourage athletes to play high school sports.

All his work has increased the level of play in high school sports, which in turn makes them more rewarding for the athlete and more enjoyable for the fans.

But Moore is making a mistake recycling trophies. In an effort to quickly and cheaply produce more trophies for present day athletes he is destroying the past, and ruining the reason that people want to compete. In 30 years will today's trophies, today's commemorations, today's deeds be washed away in an effort to save a few dollars?

Today's winners should have their achievements commemorated along side the glories of the past.

There is nothing wrong with making slight changes in the orientation of some trophies, but the idea of removing winners and placing them on a plaque is wrong. The Grey Cup was once awarded to rugby champions and those ancient winners are still there for all to see. As they should be.



"What did you say the temperature was?"

Depression hits younger now

Is the rate of depression increasing or decreasing? A recent report in the New England Journal of Medicine reviewed studies on depression in Canada, the United States, Sweden, Korea, New Zealand and Germany, and there were some interesting new trends.

Depression is no longer the exclusive province of the middle-aged and elderly; adolescents and young adults are quickly becoming its major target. Even children as young as seven years of age are now being diagnosed with depression. The rate of major depression is increasing among people born after World War II, and it is most likely to strike during the late teens and early 20s.

At the same time, however, depression is increasing among older people, and the severity of depression (i.e. hospitalizations) is also decreasing. Moreover, the huge gender gap (women being diagnosed with depression 3-4 times as much as men) is rapidly closing, as more young men experience depression.

Why is depression striking at a younger age? Why is depression decreasing in the elderly? Are men being hit harder than ever before?

The study isn't conclusive, but it offers some compelling reasons.

One major contributor is thought to be baby boomers' expectations about economic well-being. These expectations are, increasingly, not being fulfilled. With the price of housing skyrocketing over the last 10 years, interest rates high, an abundant "supply" of baby boomer job-seekers, and expectations that they will achieve more than their parents, the young person has been hurt by the truth — most baby boomers did not become yuppies, cannot afford the house they want, and are struggling financially.

And it's worse in Canada. Young people here compare themselves to the U.S., where middle and high-income earners obtain a substantially higher standard of living (e.g. the huge tax deduction for interest expenses in the U.S.; dramatically (4-5 per cent) higher interest rates here; higher income and sales taxes; etc).

Another factor is that people are much more



Psychology

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mobile now. They move more frequently than their parents did, and they move farther away. One effect of this increased mobility is that it reduces personal attachments, to friends, neighbourhoods, and family. This also reduces their social support network, which is known to be a vital part of coping during times of stress, anxiety or depression.

Another factor influencing depression is changes in the family structure. In many families, especially young families, both parents must work.

This means they can't spend as much time bringing up their children. Worse, perhaps, is the impact it can have on self-esteem and a marriage. Many men feel they are failures if they can't provide enough income to let mom stay home and take care of the kids.

There are many other reasons for the increase in depression in young people — ranging from a fear of AIDS to virtually half of those children living through a divorce — but the reasons for a decrease in the elderly is less clear.

Senior citizens have seen remarkable new discoveries in health care during their lifetimes.

Consequently, they are living longer, in better health, with more leisure time to watch their children and grandchildren grow up, and their life expectancy/standard of living are higher than their parents had. They also can feel useful — to family, community, church, or at work — much longer than their parents did.

Finally, they lived through a depression and a couple of world wars, so they may not be depressed by things that young children of today get depressed about.

Is one dog better than two?

Since you enjoy animals so much and your dog is such a wonderful addition to your family group, you may have contemplated bringing another canine into your home.

On the surface, getting a second dog might seem like a good idea. Your reasons (or rationalizations) could run something like this:

1. The dogs will keep each other company.
2. If one dog turning cartwheels of joy when you come home from work makes you feel good, think how great two dogs will make you feel.

3. Should anything (God forbid) happen unexpectedly to one of your pets, you won't suddenly be reduced to a dog-free environment.

4. How much more trouble can two dogs be than one?

Nice try. Now let's look at the realities of the situation.

First of all, if something is working perfectly fine i.e. not broken, why mess with it? You and your family and your dog have a wonderful relationship. Should we tamper with or take lightly such a beautiful thing?

Assuming you plan to get a puppy as your second dog, consider what that entails (sorry, can't resist a pun). Yes, an adult dog may more easily accept a puppy than another adult. Most dogs have built-in inhibitors against harming the young of their species. There will, however, be some jealousies and how severe these are will depend on your first dog's good nature. Have the sense to feed them separately at all times, and to make sure your older dog gets a treat or an extra pat when the puppy gets his extra feedings.

Housetraining, always a party, will most certainly be complicated when another dog is present. Be prepared for the possibility that your original dog may "forget" some of his

Pets & You

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own clean habits. He may be marking his territory over the newcomer's "accidents", or he may just figure "Hey, this little twerp goes wherever he wants, why should I bother trekking out to the back yard every time?"

Think about the increased amount of dog waste you'll be cleaning up from your back yard and scooping from public parks and walkways. Something to consider.

Back up a little and think about doubling your feeding costs and annual vet bills. This doesn't take into account any unexpected veterinary expenses such as sudden illness, injury or regular medication.

Household animal maintenance will increase dramatically, too. Combing, brushing, bathing, ear cleaning, teeth cleaning, and nail clipping are all multiplied by two. If your dogs visit the groomer on a regular basis, this expense will be markedly higher.

Remember, too, twice the amount of dog hair will be deposited on your furniture and clothing, unless you choose a non-shedding breed. (Non-shedders definitely need the services of a groomer.) Depending on the size of your dog, this could add up to quite a lot of hair. Well, maybe you can save it up and make a rug.

Obviously, this second dog discussion is a lengthy one; we haven't even touched on the behavioural issues. We'll talk about those next time.

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Publisher — Ian Oliver
General Manager — Neil Oliver



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Jane Muller — Editor
EDITORIAL: News: Rob Kelly,
Karen Smith, Sports: Brad Reaume,
Photography: Graham Paine.

Neil Oliver — Advertising Mgr.
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CIRCULATION: Bonnie Walsh.

Tim Coles — Composing Mgr.
COMPOSING: Mark Dills, June Col-
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Julie Green.

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