

Economist & Sun/Sun-Tribune

DIVERSIONS



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEN

While Amanda Connolly of Aurora and Lambert Yake of Stouffville have a passion for racing.

Placing stock in cars

Speedway regulars at different stages of racing careers

BY JOHN CUDMORE
Staff Writer

Back in the day, Lambert Yake was one of those young bucks with a fast car and a desire to see how fast it could go.

Amanda Connolly came by her need for speed from hanging out at the racetrack, a regular part of her family's lifestyle when she was a little girl.

These days, both are regulars at Sunset Speedway, where they hop behind the steering wheel and perform at high speeds in search of Saturday night's checkered flag.

That Mr. Yake has done so on summer weekends for many of

the past 32 years is testament to the addictive nature of stock car racing. Still, it took some self-convincing to put the Whitchurch-Stouffville farm operator behind the wheel on an oval track.

"We always had a car on the go, so once you got your licence you were eager to prove how good you were," recalled Mr. Yake, now 54, who traded the idea of street racing on public roadways for the sanctuary of an actual race facility.

There was always the question of going to jail or getting hurt. I couldn't afford either, so this looked kind of appealing. I just asked myself if I wanted to get arrested for doing something I love, or do it legally.

For Mr. Yake, racing is a diversion. It's a sport he entered as a young man in his 20s, exited briefly and returned to when his son Corey showed interest. He has left rubber on the asphalt at most

Ontario facilities over the years, competing mostly in the Limited Late Model Sportsman class.

"I suppose it grew from the love of being able to work on cars and week after week of not doing anything else but racing," said Mr. Yake, who started at Pinecrest Speedway in Vaughan, a facility that closed in the 1970s. "It's a total break from everything we do through the week, even though you use the same wrenches and tools."

As a girl, Ms Connolly grew up following the exploits of male family members, notably her uncles and late father.

"From the first time I drove one, I knew it's what I wanted to do," said Ms Connolly, a promising national calibre women's softball player before knee injuries put her on the sidelines. "I've always loved competition since I was young. Winning and getting

that trophy, that's what it's all about. God knows it's not for the money."

As much as she loved softball, racing is easily front seat in her preferences. And the attention she receives at the track always manages to make her smile.

"It amazes me what people have said to me, about me or done for me. Little kids coming up and asking for photos or autographs and I think, 'Yeah, I was that 10-year-old running around at the track. I know exactly what they are doing.'"

Ms Connolly and her crew chief Andrea Dakin don't even have to be at the track to catch folks off guard.

The cousins always manage a snicker for the funny looks they receive when they pour out of their truck for a breakfast stop at

See YOUNG, page 16.

Don't take Testament as gospel

Book review

Novel: Testament (456 pages, \$21, paperback)
Author: Nino Ricci
Publisher: Anchor Canada

An itinerant preacher wanders the first-century Holy Land, healing the sick and sharing a message of compassion and forgiveness, winning a devoted following among the poor but making deadly enemies among the powerful.

You know the story. Well, you probably don't know this story.

Testament, Nino Ricci's fictionalized biography of Jesus, presents a detailed and compelling portrait that bears only a distant relationship to the Bible.

Structured like the Gospels, the story is told by four narrators, in this case Judas Iscariot, Mary Magdalene, Mary Mother of Jesus and Simon of Cyrene.

The author gets into the minds of his narrators, fleshing out characters who are mentioned only in passing in the Scriptures and filtering events through their distinct perspectives.

The award-winning author is at his best, meticulously painting characters and setting scenes. His prose plants the reader squarely in the midst of a distant time and place.

Testament's opening passages describe in gritty detail what 40 days of fasting in the desert would do to a person. As Judas hangs around a dusty village on the border of the Judean desert, awaiting his next revolutionary contact, he watches an emaciated figure stroll into town and settle on the main street. Although he asks nobody for help, people feel compelled to bring him food and, impressed by the man's quiet dignity, Judas lends him a cloak.

The book captures the tensions and intrigue of a nation trying to throw off its Roman oppressors and, as such, makes for an interesting read, even for those who have no interest in Christianity.

In fact, I'm far more reluctant to recommend *Testament* to Christians and I would advise anyone wanting to learn more about the faith to stay clear of this book.

See MARY, page 16.

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