

EDITORIAL

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The Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

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OPINION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Lack of snow shovelling ruined family's holidays

Because of someone's laziness, Christmas this year was ruined for our family.

My mother slipped on an icy sidewalk, breaking her hip, spending Christmas and probably the next three weeks in hospital.

She will have to move out of the apartment where she lived for the last 14 years. She had been taking care of her sister, who, as a result of this accident, has been moved from her home of 27 years into assisted living.

For my family, it has meant driving two hours each way several times over the holidays to visit mother in hospital and move her sister into a retirement home.

What is the impact? Well, my mother who exercised and ate properly her entire life and who was in excellent health, now has a 75-per-cent chance of living the rest of the year and,

after that, a 25-per-cent chance of being able to walk properly again.

Two people need to be moved into assisted living, which will cost in excess of \$3,000 a month in extra expenses.

And it has cost taxpayers numerous dollars in medical bills because someone was too damned lazy to shovel the sidewalk in front of his home.

The lawyers will decide the additional monetary penalties to the lazy individual.

Stouffville is not immune from this. I have been slip-sliding along many unshovelled sidewalks this winter.

Do you want to risk ruining someone's life and damaging your pocket book for being too lazy? I suggest everyone pick up their shovels and do their duty.

PETER MCARTHUR
STOUFFVILLE

You can read letters to the editor, columns and stories from The Sun-Tribune at yorkregion.com



Positive blood donation feel-good moment

So what was your "feel-good" moment of the holiday?

I find it inspiring and uplifting to read about people who go the extra mile for others, offer comfort to strangers, who organize fundraisers and galvanize schools or churches to do good work in the community.

In my own way I try to do my part to reach out to others at the end of another year.

This year, my feel-good moment came at the Hillcrest Mall blood donor clinic in Richmond Hill.

Longtime readers may recall I've written in the past about being unable to donate blood due to low iron levels.

When I turned up the morning of Dec. 24 to try to give blood, you'll understand why I was relieved and thrilled, really, to find my iron levels were acceptable and I could offer the gift of life.

The first screening nurse wondered why I was so pleased, probably thinking I'd been indulging in too much holiday cheer.

After filling out answers to some of the required questions, I waited for the next nurse to determine if I was healthy enough to donate.



Marney Beck

Perhaps because there were few appointments that day, the second nurse took an extra amount of time with me, probing my health and donation experience.

When I confessed that I usually feel faint and light-headed after donating, she immediately left the room and went to get me a glass of peach juice.

She told me the first step to having a good donation experience is drinking enough fluids and that caffeine drinks such as coffee and tea don't help at all.

She insisted I inform other clinic staff that I often feel faint during and after blood donation and pressed yet another glass of juice into my hands.

As I stretched out into the donation easy chair, I dutifully told the young male nurse of my typical experience. He immediately started joking around, but I could tell he made up his mind to make my donation more pleasant and positive.

I won't go into the clinical details for those readers who are squeamish, but suffice to say that he asked lots of questions and fussed over me to ensure everything went smoothly.

Among many of the identity questions donors are asked, we're frequently asked our birthdays to make sure that the paperwork identifying our blood donation is correct and follows the life-saving fluid through the Canadian Blood Services system.

Suddenly, another nurse blurted out, "Hey, your birthday is the same as mine!"

When she mentioned the date, suddenly the donor right beside me, a young woman, said, "That's my birthday, too!"

What were the odds in a clinic of about six staff, two high school volunteers and six or seven donors, that three people would have the same birthday?

After such pleasant and diverting conversation, I realized with surprise

my donation was complete.

I also realized I had none of the unpleasant symptoms I'd come to expect.

As I ate cookies and drank more juice at the treats table and the young volunteer marked on my donor card that it was my 20th donation, I realized it was the best experience I'd ever had. I made sure to thank the two nurses most responsible for this before I left and now I know one big secret to donating blood is to drink enough fluids beforehand.

The best news of all from the community relations contact I had is that while the Hillcrest clinic only had 15 appointments booked for Dec. 24, they ended up welcoming 58 donors in all.

So remember my "secret" and make a new year's resolution to share the gift of life. It will truly make you feel good.

(You can give the gift of life Jan. 23 at the Ballantrae Community Centre and Feb. 19 at Latham Hall in Stouffville. To make an appointment, call 1 888 2 DONATE.)

Marney Beck is a York Region Media Group editor.