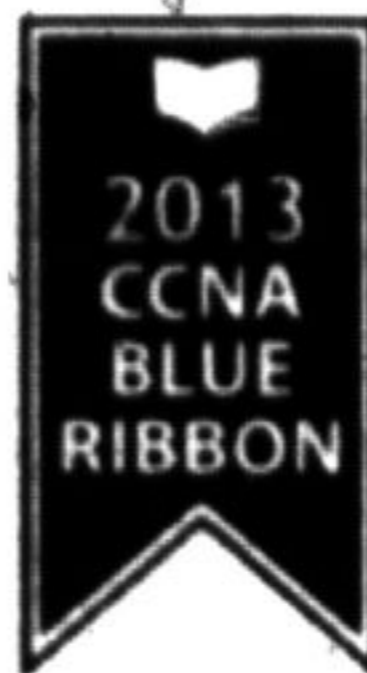


# OPINION



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## Take the time to remember, honour our veterans

**ISSUE: Canadians died in  
wars protecting our rights  
and freedom.**

**M**anny Langer sur-  
vived Auschwitz  
by portraying  
himself as an  
adult, who could  
be used as a labourer, rather  
than the pre-teen he was, who  
was likely to be murdered.

Georg Franz Hein adopted  
a new identity to enlist in the  
Royal Air Force and fight the  
Nazis, only to be captured and  
made a prisoner of war in 1941.

Jim Parks and his Royal Win-  
nipeg Rifles were forced into  
deep waters off the shores of  
Normandy June 6, 1944 after  
their landing craft was shelled.  
He was forced to float ashore  
on dead bodies and then had to  
take a gun from a fallen corpo-  
ral to defend himself.

Margaret Coburn found her-  
self driving down a dark road,  
dodging bombs exploding over-  
head, with four wounded sol-  
diers in the back of her vehicle.

Roland Robinson witnessed  
starving Korean mothers press  
themselves against cutting  
barbed wire to grab scraps of  
food for their children during  
the Korean war.

Scottish youngster Walter  
Maitland had an important task  
during the Second World War —  
cycling through his small village  
warning residents of impending  
German raids.

These are just some of the  
stories you can read in our  
special Remembrance Day  
coverage in the newspaper this  
Saturday and online at yorkre-  
gion.com

These are real stories. They  
are not Hollywood scripts from  
the imagination of a creative  
writer.

And they are stories that  
need to be told over and over to  
ensure they're never forgotten.

With every passing year,  
there are fewer world war veter-  
ans remaining.

In fact, our final surviving

First World War veteran died in  
2010, so all stories from that era  
are now second-hand.

And the youngest Second  
World War veteran would be at  
least 84 and that's only if he was  
underage when he enlisted.

It's vital that we don't let  
these stories die with our vet-  
erans.

The tales are sometimes dif-  
ficult to believe, but it's a part of  
our history that we can't ignore  
or forget.

Save for the Georgina Mili-  
tary Museum, which is the only  
one of its kind in York Region  
and is a valuable asset that  
teaches people of all ages about  
the true cost of war, Nov. 11 is  
our opportunity to remember.

It's our chance to honour the  
commitment and sacrifice of  
our soldiers.

More importantly, it's our  
chance to personally thank  
them for all they've done.

This Remembrance week-  
end, take the time to attend a  
ceremony and experience first-  
hand the emotion of watching  
grandfathers and grandmothers  
wipe away tears as they listen  
to the playing of The Last Post.  
Think about friends and family  
members who weren't as lucky  
as they were and flash back to  
nightmares most of us couldn't  
even imagine.

It won't be long before their  
stories will have to be told by  
someone else.

There are numerous ways  
we can honour our veterans,  
from the simple wearing of a  
poppy to personally offering  
your thanks to a veteran you  
see selling poppies or attending  
a service.

And at 11 a.m. Monday, Nov.  
11, pause your activities for two  
minutes of silence.

It's a small token of thanks  
for a huge debt we owe our vet-  
erans.

**BOTTOM LINE: Choose your  
way to honour and remember  
our veterans.**

## HOT TOPIC:

### Motus O sets record straight

*Re: Disturbing moments for students in play,  
letter by Wendy Bacola, Oct. 26.*

I am one of the co-artistic directors of Motus  
O dance theatre and the costume designer of  
Alice in Wonderland.

Our company feels it is necessary to set the  
record straight concerning the insinuations  
that we create sexually suggestive shows for  
children.

Ms Bacola claims we "engaged in a rowdy  
version" by displaying a "sexual portrayal of a  
distorted Tweedledee and Tweedledum". We  
are very surprised she saw large genitalia in  
Tweedledum's costume instead of large thighs.

It is one thing to interpret art from your  
own perspective, but another to intimate that  
we create costumes for a family show that are  
sexual in nature and sharing this distorted and  
disturbing perspective with the community.

She assumes we take delight in twisting the  
minds of young children. We have been work-  
ing with youth of all ages for more than 25 years  
ensuring they grow in their self-esteem and  
confidence by having the opportunity to dance  
and perform.

The other disturbing thought that Ms Bacola  
described was that Alice was "left in the despair  
of being misunderstood".

I agree that being misunderstood is many  
times unsettling. That is exactly the point. It  
is human to be misunderstood. It is what we  
do with the struggle of being misunderstood  
that propels us into growth. Embracing the  
truth that it will always accompany us in some  
form is the first step in growing through it and  
beyond it.

I am sad this letter was even printed by  
our hometown media. We are all for freedom  
of speech and expression, but not when it  
defames one of your community organizations  
who have worked tirelessly to bring to life arts  
and culture into our town.

I do agree with one of Ms Bacola's questions  
and I ask her in return, "What message have  
you now given the kids"?

CYNTHIA CROKER  
MOTUS O DANCE THEATRE  
STOUFFVILLE

### Fairy tale endings not real life

*Re: Disturbing moments for students in play,  
letter by Wendy Bacola, Oct. 26.*

After reading this letter, I wasn't sure whether  
to laugh or cry when she suggested the Motus O  
performance of Alice was "extremely offensive  
and inappropriate for children".

While watching the show, for the first time  
in many years (I am 48), I felt I was age eight  
again. The adaptation was fun, skillful and well  
performed.

I am a writer from Iran and have lived in  
Canada since 1991.

In Iran, at the age of 16, I was arrested, tor-

tured, abused in many ways, and came close  
to execution, because I had dared ask the new  
post-revolution teachers to teach their subject  
instead of government and religious propa-  
ganda.

With the success of the Iranian revolution in  
1979, even though my friends and I had grown  
up wearing bikinis on the beach and mini skirts  
on the streets of Tehran, the new regime even-  
tually announced that dancing, singing, wear-  
ing make-up, holding your boyfriend's hand in  
public, not to mention wearing bikinis and mini  
skirts, were satanic and immoral and were now,  
as a result, banned.

The most innocent behavior, such as wear-  
ing a nice dress or chatting with someone from  
the opposite sex could land one in prison.

In Iran, many everyday activities that we  
enjoy in Canada, such as going to see a show  
like Alice, are illegal.

The lesson I have learned is that extremism  
knows no logic or boundary and aims to limit all  
forms of creative expression. Many times what  
one person might see as immoral has nothing  
at all to do with immorality itself, but is really a  
form of control that certain individuals might  
want to enforce for various reasons, one of  
which might be forcing others to see the world  
the way they do.

Ms Bacola doesn't like the ending of the  
show, either, writing: "the rabbit is still there to  
torment her". It seems Ms Bacola can accept  
nothing but a fairy tale ending to stories.

But in real life, as I strive to teach my children,  
there is rarely a fairy tale ending. Actions have  
consequences and difficulties don't evaporate  
at the wave of a wand.

We need to work hard, sometimes for years,  
to see results we want. The Motus O ending to  
the tale of Alice was realistic, imaginative, cre-  
ative, thought provoking and educational.

MARINA NEMAT  
AUTHOR OF PRISONER OF TEHRAN AND  
AFTER TEHRAN, AURORA

### Alice is a tale of innocence

*Re: Disturbing moments for students in play,  
letter by Wendy Bacola, Oct. 26.*

Having been in attendance at Saturday's  
performance of Motus O's Alice, I find this letter  
slightly confusing.

I did not interpret the costumes as Ms Bacola  
did, but found the buffoon portrayals of Twee-  
dledee and Tweedledum hilarious. The entire  
audience, both young and old, was in stitches.

Among the fantastic costumes and mesmer-  
izing set, surrounded by captivated children —  
many enjoying their first theatre experience — I  
couldn't help but feel a childlike appreciation  
for the story all over again.

Alice is a tale of innocence and imagination,  
perhaps it has to be experienced as that.

JOHNNY WIDEMAN  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, THEATRE OF THE BEAT,  
STOUFFVILLE