

INDEPENDENT EDITORIAL

Where do we stand?

Enough is enough.

What is happening in the world is horrible. It's horrible in Ukraine; it's horrible in Gaza; it's horrible in Israel; it's horrible in Iran. It's horrible in Afghanistan.

But it's not supposed to be horrible in Canada. And it's not supposed to be horrible in Barrhaven.

We have been trying to be driven by common sense in our coverage of local events and reaction to these local events. Unfortunately, our inbox is getting continuously polluted by those on both sides who feel our coverage is biased and unfair.

Our objective has always been to unite the community. We are not the only ones who have had that objective. Rabbi Menachem Blum of the Ottawa Torah Centre in Barrhaven and Imam Dr. Zijad Delic of the South Nepean Muslim Centre have worked together, arm in arm, since before Oct. 7 and even before COVID-19 to bring the community together as one. They have been bringing communities together in Barrhaven and were accomplishing things in our community that couldn't have been accomplished in 1,000 years in the Middle East.

They have probably done more to combat antisemitism and Islamophobia together than any two people in Canada.

But then October 7 happened.

And here is where we stand:

- The murder and slaughtering of 1,200 Jews at a music festival and the horrific actions of Hamas terrorists triggered this conflict. It was done in secrecy on a Jewish holiday. We feel that parades and marches celebrating this attack in Barrhaven, Riverside South and Ottawa have no place in Canada.

- Hamas is a terrorist organization. Their mandate is to annihilate Israel and kill all Jews. Hamas took over Gaza in 2007. Israel then imposed a blockade on Gaza, restricting movement of people and goods in and out of the territory in what they said was a necessary step to keep the group from developing weapons.

- We are confused and disgusted that many leaders of OPSEU, a union representing public sector workers in Ontario, would weigh in and side with Hamas in this conflict. OPSEU's job is to negotiate contracts for their employees. Stay out of politics.

- When we listen to someone ramble on about colonialism, well, why are they still in Canada then?

- Sadly, the actions of a few pro-Palestinian extremists have increased the level of Islamophobia in Barrhaven and in Ottawa. They have selfishly nullified the important voices of members of our community who have family suffering in Gaza.

For generations, people came to Canada for a new life. Nobody in Canada wants anyone to bring their conflicts with them.

Because of all of this, we will no longer be printing letters to the editor on the topic. They would only further divide our community.

We may be Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, or any other religion. But we are all Barrhaven.

Remembering our staycation at the non-inclusive YOW resort

It's been 10 years since we vowed we would never travel with Sunwing again. Yet, here we go, heading to the Ottawa airport and lining up at the counter like Pavlov's dogs.

The last time we flew Sunwing was exactly 10 years ago. The first two days of our trip to Cuba didn't quite go as planned. It went a little something like this:

8:35 a.m. – The Diva and I arrive at the airport. I am a bit stressed because our flight to Cuba is at 10:20 a.m. and we are less than two hours early.

8:39 a.m. – After my failed attempt, the Diva piled our luggage efficiently in the little cart. We get into the Sunwing line-up. As we are entering the maze, an employee comments to us that “there will be a slight delay with the flight.”

8:43 a.m. – It was our turn at the Sunwing counter. We check our bags, and because of the weight restrictions, I had to open them all up and start playing three shoe monte, moving things from one bag to another to another to the carry on, until the somewhat fed up lady at the counter is finally pleased. As she hands us our passes, she says, “Your flight has been delayed until 6:15 p.m.” The Diva looks at me with that “do something about this” look. We are each given a food voucher, good for \$10 off food purchases at any of the airport's restaurants. What will \$10 get you at the airport? Skittles?

8:56 a.m. – We sit at the restaurant for breakfast. Our paper table cloth is stained, so the waitress comes over and casually flips it over rather than replacing it. “There,” she says. “Good as new.” I hope she gave us clean plates and didn't just lick the ones left on the table by the last group.

11:29 a.m. – After walking the strip a few times and stopping in every store, we head to the duty free shop. I had a Seinfeld flashback and started annoying the Diva by singing, “I like to stop at the duty free shop,” over and over again. After about the millionth verse, she finally looked at me with defeat in her eyes, and responded with, “Oh dear Jesus, what time does the bar open?”

1:20 p.m. – We finally decide to use our \$10 food vouchers and eat at Darcy McGee's. The winners of the family competition of the Annoying Olympics were there. Judging by the baby's mood, he wasn't any happier to be ice stormed in at the YOW than we were. Yet, his proud Grandpapa took him to every table in the restaurant to visit and say hi and show off his bundle of screech.

5:45 p.m. – Our flight has been delayed again. It will now leave at 7:30 p.m. Allegedly.

7:13 p.m. – Our flight has been delayed until 9:35 p.m. Shocker. Back to the bar.

9:28 p.m. – The angry mob is gathered at Gate 13, which the Diva had predicted that morning was a bad sign for the trip. There are no Sunwing employees in sight.

10:04 p.m. – With the increasingly angry mob congregated at Gate 13, a passenger loudly proclaims that the flight has been delayed until 4:50 p.m. the following day.

10:27 p.m. – Two employees representing Sunwing appear and are immediately mobbed by the frustrated and impatient crowd. The angriest of the mob is an elderly French woman with an orangeurgendyurple brushcut. She is bellowing

at the staff, demanding to know what they are going to do for her. How about ship her back to the Crayola display in the hair aisle at Jean Coutu.

10:31 p.m. – One of the employees melts down and starts screaming at the customers. “It's not my fault,” she yells with tears in her eyes her nose running. I had a You Tube flashback. “Leave Britney alone!”

FROM
THE OTHER
SIDE

Another moron decides to be the voice of the passengers. “It's not youse guys's fault. If there's no crew, youse guys can give me the keys and I'll fly it.”

10:47 p.m. – With the cops now present and the first employee not in sight but assumed to be lying under the counter in the fetal position, we are told that Sunwing has not cancelled the flight yet and they can't give us our luggage back.

11:45 p.m. – We are told the flight is leaving at noon the next day, even though the website says 4:50 p.m. We all crowd around the carousel at baggage claim.

12:13 a.m. – I see our bags. I make a move for them but I am shoved. I step on the toes of a woman who is on her cell phone and tells her friend that “nobody here cares about me and some BIG OAF just stepped on my foot and he doesn't even care enough to apologize.” Sorry Princess.

1:09 a.m. – Moe the taxi driver drops us off at our front door. It's minus-20 and we have no coats. Day 1 of our Cuban vacation is in the books!

7:15 a.m. – The alarm clock goes off. It's Day 2. We're not in Cuba. This is so Groundhog Day.

7:55 a.m. – I see our neighbour as I bring in the recycling bin. It's minus-28. “I thought you were in Cuba?” she says, puzzled. “I am,” I said. “It's our second day here. It feels just like home.”

8:20 a.m. – The Diva gets on the Sunwing website to check our flight. It doesn't seem to exist. Then we find another flight that is listed for the previous day leaving at 3:45 p.m. We aren't sure what to think.

10:06 a.m. – After a call to the travel agent and confirmation that our flight leaves at 3:45 p.m., the Diva decides that a morning of Chopped on the Food Network is a better way to spend time than to needlessly be sheeped around from gate to gate to gate for another full day at the YOW.

1:48 p.m. – We get to the YOW and check in. The guy next to us is losing it. He and his teenage son are going on a fishing trip. Sunwing has lost their fishing rods. I'm sure, deep down, they care.

3:08 p.m. – Our flight has been delayed. Who saw that one coming?

3:37 p.m. – We head back to the duty free shop. I know better than to start singing. The Diva has had enough of me by this point.

4:12 p.m. – We are shocked to learn that our flight has been delayed again. The new departure time is 9:15 p.m.

5:50 p.m. – We head back to the bar.

7:08 p.m. – I decide to go and strike up a conversation with the lifesize cut out of Jose Bautista at the Booster Juice kiosk, kind of like how Tom Hanks would have long chats with Wilson the volleyball.

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