

Tragedy affects everyone

Last week, Renfrew OPP laid four charges against a 62-year old Calabogie woman, effectively laying the blame at her feet for the tragic death of two 18-year-old men after the car they were travelling in crashed into a rock cut after they left Shooters Bar and Grill in Calabogie in October 2017.

This group of teenagers were all 18 years old with the world at their feet and a bright future ahead. The four young men were allegedly served alcohol at that bar and attempted to drive home to Renfrew around midnight when the driver lost control of the vehicle crashing into the rock and ejecting the three passengers from the car.

The OPP concluded alcohol was a contributing factor in the accident.

The accused, Ann Selack, was a server at the now closed bar, and by all accounts, she is a generous woman who has helped out many in her community over the years. Now she is perceived by friends and family, and total strangers as being the "fall guy" for that horrible crash.

When that car crashed into the rock and claimed the lives of Brandon Hanniman and Alex Paquette, it forever changed the lives of their respective families and friends.

The other two young men, Jacob McGrimmon and Ben Scheuneman, suffered not only physical injuries, but one can only imagine the immense guilt these two men will carry for the rest of their lives as they wonder why their friends are gone and they survived.

Just last week, our readers had a rare look inside a Pembroke courtroom during the Sentencing Hearing of an Eganville man who will spend the next three years in jail after he pled guilty to impaired driving that resulted in the death of his younger brother. He broke down in tears and everyone in that courtroom, including the prosecutor who recommended three years in jail for his crime, and a family torn apart by this tragedy, saw firsthand the immense guilt, shame and anguish of this broken man who made a foolish mistake that will haunt him the rest of his life.

As he was led away in handcuffs, riddled with pain and sorrow as he set out to serve his time, his family and friends also share his pain.

As do all those involved with that Calabogie crash. They will also be affected for the rest of their lives. The families of the deceased will never again have the chance to celebrate the holidays or a special milestone with them.

The survivors will always ask themselves why not me.

The accused, Mrs. Senack, has no doubt asked herself so many questions since that night. What more could I do to prevent this from happening? What could I have done differently? Could I have prevented this tragedy?

Perhaps there was nothing else she could have done.

Were the young men drinking before they arrived? Did they have fake IDs when they entered the bar that appeared legitimate? Should they bear the responsibility of making the decision to illegally purchase and consume alcohol?

Sadly, these questions are meaningless to all those involved and even if answered, it will not erase the fact two young men are gone forever and they left behind family and friends who are still mourning their loss. Asking "what if" is a natural process, and the victim's family and friends no doubt ask themselves that same question every time they pass by the site of the crash or look at a photograph of the young men.

For all those who serve alcohol like Mrs. Selack, they are watching this case unfold because one day they could easily find themselves in the exact same shoes as her.

Unfortunately, it seems every generation of high school kids live through a tragedy involving drinking and driving. This is nothing new. The pain and anguish is the same for all those affected, be they family, friends, or the ones who served the alcohol, and the questions always remain the same.

What could be done differently to avoid this type of tragedy?

The answer is very simple. Don't drink and drive.

A simple answer in a very complex world where one is quick to assign blame for the actions of others.

Literacy funding important

Dear Editor:

I am very dismayed, as a literacy practitioner in Renfrew County, to see Rob Ford axing funding for education programs across the province.

As a result of these cuts, \$60 million in planned spending for adult learning and retraining has been cancelled. This has a direct impact on the Training and Learning Centre of Renfrew County which has been providing free upgrading to adults who need it for over 25 years.

I believe most Ontarians want jobs for everyone. However, as our economy becomes more knowledge-based, a sizable percentage of the population is getting left behind.

In Renfrew County, 47 per cent of workers aged 25 to 60 lack high school or other educational credentials. Many of these workers dropped out of high school to work in manufacturing and other jobs that did not require high school. Manufacturing jobs are disappearing in the province, however, and

these people lack the essential skills necessary to fill the new jobs that are emerging. They are thus unemployed, under-employed, or working in dead-end jobs that barely support them.

Government-funded literacy and basic skills programs play a critical role in enabling such workers to improve their marketability. We provide support in completing high school, and essential skills training in communications, numeracy and computers. Most programs also provide targeted occupational training geared towards preparation for specific jobs, like PSW, retail work or apprenticeship.

If we want the future of Ontario to be an inclusive one, we must demand that our government continue to fund the programs which will prepare displaced workers for the jobs of the future.

Pamela Friedrich
Literacy Practitioner
Training and Learning Centre
of Renfrew County

Walking: then and now

One of the things I enjoy most about leaving the Canadian winter is the opportunity for daily walking, unencumbered by boots, snow, sleet, ice or cold.

Nerja, the town in Spain where I often rent an apartment, is geographically much like Pembroke if you put the Mediterranean where the Ottawa River is and add four hundred restaurants and cafes along the narrow, winding, picturesque streets. It's easy to cover about 10 km on foot during a typical day which might involve lunch at one end of town, a trip to the bookstore or the grocery store at the other end, and maybe an evening glass of wine in a cafe on the beach. It is the sort of town in which walking is necessary and extremely pleasant.

Before I left for my trip, I was walking semi-regularly at Opeongo High School; it is a wonderful opportunity to get some exercise without being outside in the howling blizzards. If I were a harder soul, I would venture out into the wilds on snowshoes or skis as some of my more outdoorsy friends like to do.

In years past, we walked the snowmobile tracks in Wilno regularly. In summer we walked through heat and deer flies, in winter we walked

A View from Bulger's Corners (and Wilno and Douglas and Barcelona)



Johanna Zomers

with the danger of frostbite or being run over by a snowmobile. Nothing equalled the trials of springtime, walking through clouds of black flies. Autumn was the most pleasant, with gorgeous views, lovely weather and only small possibilities of marauding bears in the wild apple trees along the route. We knew enough to talk, sing or otherwise make noise.

As an adult with a car, my decisions to walk are purely my own, unlike our childhood where we had

no choice. We walked to and from the one-room schoolhouse and I must confess that without TV, radio, hydro, running water or enough books to read at home, I was more than happy to cover the three kilometres per day. In the evenings we walked to get the cows or walked and ran as part of our playtime in the pastures or the bush lot. Sometimes we were allowed to walk to the General Store at the corner of Opeongo and Hwy. 512, searching the ditches for pop bottles to cash in.

As a farmer, our father walked the length and breadth of our fields at least a dozen times a season. First behind the horses and the plough, then again with the disc, and then the harrow, followed by the seeder and then a bit later, the scuffer or the cultivator. At harvest time he walked behind the horses with the binder, then again to stook the grain, then to load it on the wagons.

Haying required just a little less mileage on foot. Working in the bush, skidding behind a team also added miles, much of it in snow and on slippery footing over underbrush, rocks and other obstacles. Ottawa Valley farmers and loggers and their hardworking wives had no need for the extra walking that we now seek out to stay fit and healthy. I think it's called progress.



In like a lamb, out like a lion

It truly was the winter of our discontent and hopefully, this is one of the last photos depicting heavy snowfall in our area. Gloria Tunn captured this scene from the back deck of her Douglas home Sunday morning after some areas of the Valley recorded snowfall accumulation in excess of 40 centimetres (16 inches). The old adage in like a lamb, out like a lion rang true for the month of March.

Happy faces welcome everywhere

They are particularly welcome in nursing homes, hospitals and the work place. We have heard it said that teachers are born, not made. I truly believe the same can be said of nurses.

Not long ago God called home a nurse who was born to nurse. Her name was Maureen Grimes, nee Donohue, one of my loveable first cousins, the girl I nick-named *Happy Face*. When she started nurse training in Hotel Dieu Hospital, Kingston, I recall her mother telling us there was no doubt she had chosen the right profession. She had practiced on three younger sisters and two younger brothers. She told me she had chosen Hotel Dieu because it is The Home of God.

One evening on the way home from Scarboro Seminary I stopped for a visit and Maureen and Jean George decided to show me one of Kingston's tourist attractions, Old Fort Henry. There were so many sights to see we stayed too long, and got locked in. But luck was with us. An hour later one of the guards happened to drive by and let us out. Fortunately, I was wearing my holy clothes, black suit and black tie, so the nursing mother believed my story so the girls were not punished for breaking curfew.

We were unable to attend her funeral

An Old Man's Opinion

Not Necessarily Ours



Al Donohue

but I can easily see *Happy Face* being welcomed in God's Heavenly Home.

Today, we had the pleasure of a visit from our long time friends, John and Dorothy Baird who just celebrated their 71st wedding anniversary, heading for their 75th. John's 94-year-old memory is every bit as good as it was 80 years ago. In fact he remembers a few things that would be better forgotten. John and Herbie Currell were two of my shift mates at Chalk River for a number of years. We also spent quite a few of our days off working at the farm,

forgetting that water was also good to drink, replacing it with a stronger beverage. They accompanied me to Chapeau the day I purchased Paddy the pig. Of course, we had to stop at Hotel Chapeau to allow Paddy to become acquainted with his new surroundings on the back of my truck. When we finally arrived home and unloaded Paddy in the barnyard, Herbie thought it would be proper to see him perform. So I talked one of my pet sows into coming out to meet Paddy. As we followed them around the barnyard, Herbie started to laugh and his bottom denture dropped out. After a long search it was found, held under the tap in the barn, and ended up back in Herbie's mouth.

One night or morning on graveyard shift we were having our 4 a.m. meal in the Plant cafeteria, a meal that some call breakfast, some dinner and older people call supper.

Herbie brought his lettuce and tomato sandwich to the table and went back to the counter for his drink. John lifted the top slice of bread and I placed a folded serviette on top of the lettuce and tomato, causing a few moments of tough chewing for our chum.

There may have been a few foul words but, of course, we will never print them. All I can say is he was lucky we had found his dentures back on the farm.

Letter Harmony editorial created disharmony

Dear Editor:

I have the good fortune of calling Killaloe and its surroundings my home. The natural beauty of the place drew me here. What planted my feet firmly in this ground were the people I now call my friends and neighbours.

While it was a pleasure to read Debbi Christinck's article about "Morninglory's 50th anniversary celebration," I can't say the same for the "Harmony" editorial that followed.

The editorial on the arrival of the Back to the Landers ("BtLs") in the late 60s and 70s focuses on the descendants of the first immigrants who settled this area in the 1880s, describes Killaloe, Wilno and surrounding hills as "a wonderful dichotomy of two cultures -- BtLs and the descendants of the Polish, German and Irish settlers who first settled here".

The descendants are lauded for being "so tolerant and welcoming to people so very different than themselves." It states that instead of this tolerance and welcoming, it "would have been easy" for the descendants "to try to pass by-laws restricting them from buying property or ignoring them, making life difficult for them or appealing to the local government to keep them away".

It suggests perhaps the memory of their ancestors' stories of coming here to start a new life and reliance upon "Christian charity" while ignoring "the pull towards Christian intolerances" inspired the descendants' "welcoming" response.

In noting the relevance of this "welcoming" in today's world, it concludes the world could learn a lot from this place where the residents' lives are lived with inclusion, tolerance, acceptance and harmony.

This editorial would have contributed more to this learning by including a fundamental part of story -- the acknowledgement of the Algonquins of Ontario, who have occupied this land from time immemorial, and the unceded Algonquin Anishinabek territory which includes the lands settled by the first immigrants, now owned by their descendants, the BtLs, and all other newcomers.

While I expect the *Morninglory* community fully acknowledge the Algonquins and their Territory in its celebrations, it is disheartening that this editorial fails to do so.

The editorial sets out some "easy" options for the descendants in response to the BtL's arrival. These options bring to mind some of the many measures Canada used for controlling Indigenous Peoples and their lands for over a century.

For example, seizing or occupying lands and resources, where necessary negotiating treaties, establishing reserves, instituting a "pass system" confining First Nations people to reserves in the 1880s without legal authority, and denying Indigenous People who refused to abandon their Indigenous identity the right to participate fully in Canadian political, economic and social.

The *Back to the Landers* 50th anniversary invites us to reflect upon the benefits of persevering to overcome fears and prejudices while learning to welcome differences in beliefs, values, faiths and ways of life of all community members.

The collective labour of the BtLs, alongside the descendants, Algonquins and other neighbours, over the past 50 years, is a wonderful lesson on the value of embracing our differences. May this lesson motivate community members to accept the hard truths of the toxic history between Indigenous Peoples and Canada and to openly support Algonquins in their struggle for justice.

Mary Crnkovich,
Killaloe

Editor's Note: The point of the editorial was to acknowledge the welcoming attitude extended to this new group of people. Nothing more, nothing less.

The Eganville Leader

150 John St. P.O. Box 310
Eganville, Ontario K0J 1T0
Ph: 613-628-2332

www.eganvilleleader.ca

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"Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

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