

## LETTERS

## No condo for cathedral site

Regarding "The death of abandoned cemeteries in downtown Hamilton" (June 16): It is important to note that several years ago, a decision was made not to proceed with a proposed condominium development on the Cathedral Place property. The cathedral congregation and diocese continue to explore possibilities to sustain and enhance the vital ministry that happens at Cathedral Place, for the benefit of the wider community we are called to serve.

Archdeacon Bill Mous, Anglican Diocese of Niagara

## Hamilton needs Horwath

Dear Ms Horwath:

As you know, we have known each other before you even thought about getting into politics and have worked on campaigns near and dear to our hearts.

I know you haven't made up your mind about running for mayor of Hamilton. Two terms as the official opposition is nothing to be ashamed of and although the party goal was to grab the brass ring, we all know that you were faced with a number of obstacles such as: media bias, social media lies, circulating false information, polling numbers and voter apathy just to mention a few. Andrea, you care about people in the community and you care about our city. You are a dedicated, hard-working woman and will never give an inch in fighting for our city. When you make up your mind, nothing can stop you. Honesty is at the centre of your decision-making process. You have a long history of fighting for the people of Hamilton.

If you do not throw your hat in the ring, you will be kicking yourself for the rest of your life. Andrea, the people of Hamilton need you.

Ed Thomas, Hamilton

## It's a continuum

Regarding "Finding the real roots of mass killing evil" (June 13): The author once again blames educators and schools. Indeed, kindness, empathy and connectivity are a focus in our school systems, and without them a classroom would not function as positive learning environment.

Nothing would be accomplished, and it is also intrinsic and learned by example. Comparing teaching empathy to times tables and ABCs does not make any sense, and the author would observe these values taught throughout a school day by spending time in an elementary or secondary classroom.

It is also the responsibility of parents and family to instill kindness, empathy and connectivity from infancy through adulthood. It is a continuum.

Jan Peirson-Reid, Carlisle

## Praise for the Rainbow Prom

Regarding "A welcoming safe space" (June 16): I was pleased to see a photo of two-spirit and LGBTQ+ students celebrating Pride Month at the HWDSSB's Rainbow Prom.

As the teacher-advisor for the positive space group at a large high school in Hamilton, I often hear stories of struggles with mental health and marginalization, both of which have been exacerbated by the pandemic particularly among this group. As a result, the high percentage of students currently experiencing trauma has been increasing at an alarming rate.

After more than two years of isolation, the opportunity to socialize is long overdue. It is only through events such as the Rainbow Prom that two-spirit and LGBTQ+ youth can finally feel free to be themselves in a safe and inclusive environment.

Andrea Rado, Hamilton

## Does my vote not count?

Most days since the provincial election, The Spec opinion pages have been inundated with accounts of voter apathy. So many gripes about their vote not counting. Seems to be the case of their preferred party's candidate being perceived as having no chance of being elected. I did vote as I do at every opportunity to exercise that privilege. Does this mean my vote didn't count because I reside in a NDP stronghold riding?

Michael Davy, Hamilton

## Gage Park renos fail

I am not sure how other people feel, but the renovations at Gage Park are a major disappointment in my estimation. I like to walk at the park with my dog. Having recently returned from Florida, I took her for a walk recently and was disgusted. Esthetically, it has gone from a beautiful natural place to an eyesore. With the paved paths it is no longer safe to walk there. Twice on one walk recently we had bicyclists whipping past us, nearly run us over. The park was much better before the renovations. What a waste of \$1.55 million.

Bob Stevens, Hamilton

## NDP lacked credible message

Regarding "How misreading the polls sank the NDP": I must respectfully disagree with the writer. I think what really sunk the NDP — and the Liberals, too, for that matter — was that they were unable to craft a message capable of convincing even 10 per cent of Ontario's voters that it would be worth the trouble of casting a ballot for them. Maybe they'll figure it out in four more years.

Michael Wakefield, Hamilton



A beach cyclist casually rides past a newly married bride and groom. Commenting on the post-pandemic surge in weddings, Thomas Froese writes, "So don't worry if, like that cyclist, you're riding single. The single life is no second-class life. It has advantages."

THOMAS FROESE

## Being good at being single



THOMAS FROESE  
OPINION

Most of us have no clue what we're doing in these matters of the heart, but if you're looking, and if it's any help, here's something for a summer day.

It starts with a fine young lady, Corinna Little Boy Hopeless, that's me, hit her with a rock. In Grade 2. Seated behind her. I'd also pull her dark, silky hair. I liked her.

Not as much as I liked Dianne, though, another brunette, the older sister of my buddy Mike. She had doe eyes and a way about her. I had someone snap a photo of us three, before I got some scissors and cut Mike out, leaving Dianne and myself as the lovely couple. The photo was pinned to my bedroom wall. That's Grade 4.

As a teen, the object of my affection was, surprise, another brunette. Sherry was some angel. One evening I broke into a church basement window to sleuth for her family's address, then drove to her front door and knocked, only to find (good grief) her boyfriend.

Later, in dating relationships, more brunettes followed. It was, well, more learning.

Which is all to say — blond, brunette or otherwise — don't marry

young. The grey matter in your head is still developing. Learning takes time. And let's be honest. The grass on the marriage side of the fence isn't always greener. Ask Johnny or Amber or you-fill-in-the-blank.

So give time. There's your formal education. And finances. But when you do commit, marry full-on. Why? Because formal marriages, in general, are stronger than civil unions. Research shows this. One study shows that one-quarter of marriages, divorced before their eldest was 12.

Now we're in a post-pandemic wedding surge. Nobody can find a venue. Maybe try the beach? That's where I recently stumbled across a wedding. There the bride and groom stood, oceanside, looking at the open horizon, when, in a comical juxtaposition, some beach cyclist rode past without a care.

Yes, everyone's getting married. Or paired off. Except they're not. So don't worry if, like that cyclist, you're riding single. The single life is no second-class life. It has advantages. For one, your time is your own. And, no, your body parts won't fall off. The sun will still rise every morning.

This is my own story, and gentle advice from someone who, sure, is no Cyrano de Bergerac. Learn to live single well. If you want marriage, you'll later marry well.

Healthy people attract healthy people.

Of course, there are other ways to go about it all. Young people living together are especially uninspired by the quaint notion of marriage. It's such a bummer. The institution is losing its shine across the western world. Weddings are expensive. Even so, the focus should stay on the marriage, not the wedding.

But you're completely unattached? Make peace with it. It's a season of opportunity. Travel. Develop a range of meaningful friendships. My friends included an eclectic group dubbed "The Over-30 Unclaimed Precious Jewels Club," singles not hooking up, but connecting in other ways. And when you need clearer direction? Open a book. It's like checking a compass.

Long before he co-founded e-harmony, Neil Clark Warren wrote, "Finding the Love of Your Life: 10 Principles for Choosing The Right Marriage Partner." Or try "Becoming a Friend and a Lover," by Dick Purnell, a guide on compatibility in the five elements of relationship: the physical, intellectual, spiritual, emotional and social. Or go to another helpful guide. Pray honestly. Wait patiently. Settle only for what's best, not just what's good.

It's a wonder they don't teach these things more in school. No, really. It's less vital than science or math?

Eventually, one summer day, this entirely helpless boy did marry. We recently took a pandemic-delayed trip for our 20th. So is my bride a striking brunette? Of course she is. There's no surprise there. The surprise is that the wonder (please, pinch me) is still felt all these years later.

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## To good health and quiet breathing



DEIRDRE PIKE  
OPINION

"Good health and quiet breathing" my dad often exclaimed.

Instead of a simple "Cheers," he chose those words to accompany each raising of a glass. I didn't know it back then, but I think he was likely riffing on the words of the English poet John Keats.

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever ... full of sweet dreams and health and quiet breathing."

Unfortunately, too many drinks of cheer and utterances of "good health and quiet breathing" likely led to my dear dad's ultimate lack of good health and untimely death at just 63 years of age.

All those years ago, I could see why he would toast to good health, but I never really understood a desire for quiet breathing. Nonetheless, I carried on saying the same words with every drink I consumed until, at age 53, I realized they might kill me, too.

During the pandemic, I discovered what a gift it is to experience quiet breathing; to have the kind of life in which I would never be winded or out of breath, sighing deeply or utterly exasperated.

After needing prednisone to clear my lungs from whatever was ailing me for the entire month of February 2020, I knew what it meant to

pray, not necessarily cheer, for quiet breathing. A month later, as we began to watch real people gasp for breath on the nightly news before being hooked up to a ventilator, I knew clearly why someone would long for quiet breathing.

Thoughts of breathing surfaced again last week, during the third annual, but first in-person, Pride celebration hosted by the Anglican Diocese of Niagara.

"Fiercely Loved: Born This Way," featured guest preacher, the Rt. Rev. Kevin Robertson, Bishop of York-Scarborough, Anglican Diocese of Toronto. The marriage of Bishop Kevin to his partner, Mohan (he/him), was celebrated by Bishop Susan Bell in 2018, causing many people in the Anglican communion to breathe heavily, some from making a joyful noise, and some due to shouts of protest.

On this day, any breathing was drowned out with an extended and thunderous applause from the gathering as Bishop Kevin lauded the courage, love and tenacity of allies and advocates like Bishop Bell and her predecessor, Bishop Michael Bird.

Bishop Kevin continued with a message about breath to allies and advocates, indeed to each of us who long to change the systems of oppression that favour some over others. He called us to be co-conspirators, "to breathe together against systems of injustice ... systems that need to be disrupted, that need to be changed."

While the word conspiracy often leads one to think pejoratively, of sinister plots and takeovers, at its core are the Latin words, *con*, meaning together, and *spirare*, meaning breathe.

"Join the great conspiracy of transformation," Bishop Robertson urged.

"Breathe together against the systems" conspiring to take our breath away, and not in the good way, as a euphemism for experiencing some form of rare beauty.

Sen. Kim Pate continues to co-conspire alongside Indigenous Senators and leaders, against the criminal justice system, resulting in essential reading just in time for National Indigenous Peoples' Day on Tuesday.

Injustices and Miscarriages of Justice experienced by 12 Indigenous Women, responds explicitly to Call for Justice 5.14, of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, seeking a thorough evaluation of the impact of mandatory minimum sentences on the over-incarceration of Indigenous women, girls and LGBTQ+ people.

"Whatever our gift, we are called to give it and to dance for the renewal of the world. In return for the privilege of breath," writes Robin Wall Kimmerer.

While we have this privilege of breath, let us breathe together against systems of injustice. As co-conspirators, we can bend the arc of the moral universe toward justice, good health and quiet breathing for all.

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