

LETTERS

Consulting smoke and mirrors?

The hosting of three public forums to gather input, suggestions and answer questions on the proposed encampment process seemed very democratic and simple enough.

I attended the convention centre along with my Ward 1 neighbours and 1000 others. Good planning by the city for the revised location due to a large attendance of the lower city residents and attendees from the organized pre-meeting encampment gathering. That is where the good planning ended. Why? The process was flawed. Two meetings to date, two different formats, therefore two different levels of information conveyed. The moderator, a consultant, was directed or decided himself to narrow the scope to protocol and sanctioned encampments topics only. No open microphone for questions, concerns or suggestions like at the first meeting. Written questions were given to the moderator for screening. The majority of speakers were residents of the encampments and/or supporters. The submitted questions put to the housing director by the moderator were again biased toward one view of the encampment issue. I believe the large majority of attendees left with more questions because there were no answers.

Is this a crisis? Yes. Is there a solution? It appears that it has already been adopted by the city councillors who quietly sat in the front row of the venue. This process is smoke and mirrors.

Anthony O'Grady, Hamilton

Pierre and the convoy

Supporters of Pierre Poilievre can write glowingly about him all they like, but all I see is his face during the illegal occupation of the capitol of Canada. While the citizens of Ottawa were threatened with physical harm, endured blaring air horns, and had their laws defeated on, Poilievre used the opportunity as a photo-op. I see his smirking smile in amongst people who carried "F--- Trudeau" placards, rebel flags and swastikas. I see him shaking hands with people who proudly proclaimed on the news they had weapons and were prepared to violently overthrow a legally elected government. But mostly I see his smug face remain silent as protesters who carried banners proclaiming they want freedom desecrate the National War Memorial and dance on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. I would call it ironic if it wasn't so revolting.

Gary Johnson, Hamilton

PP's woes exaggerated

Chantal Hébert is an intelligent and politically astute political columnist. However, I believe she has exaggerated the level of PP's woes. If Pierre Poilievre is hindered by in-house woes, Justin Trudeau should be completely submerged. Just look at his track record. But as a Torstar columnist, you know that nothing about Pierre will ever be purveyed in a positive way. I hope one day the media will be unbiased across the political spectrum.

Allan Avery, Binbrook

He's not good for Canada

Regarding "Media unfair to Pierre" (June 28): The author asks us to do our homework. OK. Her complaint is with the federal Liberal party and Justin Trudeau, while praising the Conservative party and Pierre Poilievre. But her complaint is about health care and education which are the responsibility of the provincial government, which in Ontario is Conservative, and yes, they are indeed destroying our health-care and education systems. If you want to complain about Trudeau, then do apples to apples, meaning compare Canada to other countries in the world for inflation, unemployment, GDP, international affairs, etc., and you will find that Canada rates highly and is well run. Poilievre is showing himself to be a negative scatterbrain who will not fix our provincial government but will negatively impact Canada.

Terry Horne, Hamilton

Golfing at Chedoke

I went to the course to play on the Beddoe on a recent morning. Really busy and what do I find but the clubhouse and halfway house both closed. There was no place to buy drinks or snacks. Great revenue stream. Surely the city could do better.

Robert Risidore, Hamilton

Pemmican-making anyone?

Education Minister Stephen Lecce is making teaching cursive writing mandatory. A real vote getter?

What's next? Pemmican-making? Wagon wheel apprenticeship? Curing buffalo hides?

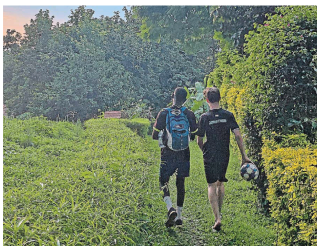
Perhaps courses should teach kids how to print when their device fails, how to punctuate, how to enunciate and how to spell so they don't need acronyms? While he is at it, Mr. Lecce should enrol in a course himself: Common Sense for Beginners

Don Morrow, Vineland

Cursive return welcome

As a retired teacher, I applaud the reintroduction of cursive writing. It should have never been removed. I fondly recall teaching this skill to my students in the '80s. Hopefully, resources and support are given to teachers this coming school year to have them instruct the beautiful art of penmanship to their students.

Mike LoSchiavo, Stoney Creek



Writing about families and nations, columnist Thomas Froese refers to this photo of his son, Jonathan, right, walking peacefully with a Ugandan boyhood friend. "Never forget your story," he writes. "Your story, including the hard parts, is all you'll ever really have in this passing life."

HANNAH FROESE

Contemplating Canada's birthday



THOMAS FROESE
OPINION

BANFF, ALTA. I know Canada as much as anyone. I've tasted its vastness. Live long enough with even a half-curious mind and you'll get out here and there. I've spent time in each of our provinces.

Even today I'm in the mountains of Banff with my boy, Jonathan, celebrating his 18th birthday, his entry into adulthood, while we also celebrate this nation that stretches its wings from sea to shining sea. I've also lived outside Canada enough to know that you'll appreciate it more when you're, funny-enough, completely gone. There's something to be said for absence making the heart fonder. A striking photo of Jonathan taken not long ago in Uganda reminds me.

He and his Ugandan boyhood friend, Brian, are walking through lush, tropical greenery under a gentle Africa sunset. With a soccer ball in-hand, Jon is barefooted. It's a peaceful moment as the two young men simply enjoy each other's company.

Our three children largely grew up in the East African nation, where they recently visited, and where their hearts remain. The photo, taken serenely and joyfully by my Ugandan-

born daughter, Hannah, captures this, a spirit of past, present and, somehow, future.

This is what I've told my children. Remember where you come from. Never forget your history. Your story. It's who you are. Your story, including the hard parts, is all that you'll ever really have in this passing life. My prayer is that long after I'm gone they'll remember this.

My desire is also that their stories will lead them — as Canadian citizens with significant benefits — to later, on their own, return with a rhythm to the other side of the world to give something of themselves, in this case to a developing nation that has its needs, along with its lessons.

Because, like people, nations have their stories. Their identities. Things that set them apart. Our sitting prime minister once said otherwise, telling the New York Times, "There's no core identity, no mainstream in Canada." He called Canada the world's "first post-national state."

Gosh. One wonders what shocking thoughts can clank around in a prime minister's head. Canada isn't homogenous, true. We're many races and ethnicities. But we still have a core identity rooted in Canada's story: its history, traditions and experiences. It's all inseparable.

Canada is a democracy, for starters. We each have rights, and responsibilities, while we live as dif-

ferent peoples together. Our founding fathers forged things this way.

Looking at the land, they borrowed from the Hebrew Psalmist who wrote of the Creator's spirit having "dominion from sea to sea." This is where Canada's official motto "A Mari usque ad Mare, "From Sea to Sea," originates, and why Canada was historically called a "dominion." There's a sense of stewardship not unlike what's understood so well by Canada's First Nations.

Of course, any nation's founding fathers can get kicked around. It comes with the territory. I don't know many fathers out there who don't have a few bruises. What interests me more is another ancient thought, a prophecy about healing through the leaves of a good tree.

From the book of "Revelation," it's looks to tomorrow, to Eden restored, and is written by the old prophet and apostle John while he was exiled and left to rot on the island of Patmos. It relates to a certain tree of life, how "the leaves of the tree are for the healing of nations."

What's interesting is that some commentators suggest Canada can easily be seen as having this sort of prophetic, healing role. Worldwide, our flag's dominant leaf certainly stands out. So let others parade, say, their fighter jets. We're called to other things. In this, we can walk in peace and let our story give direction. It's true for families, and nations, both. It's not the only thing about Canada to celebrate this weekend. But it's a fitting thought, and it shouldn't be missed amid everything else going on.

THOMAS FROESE WRITES ABOUT NEWS, TRAVEL AND LIFE. FIND HIS COLLECTED COLUMNS AT THOMASFROESE.COM.

Setting a new set of priorities for our city



ANDREA HORWATH
OPINION

Hamilton's best days are ahead. It's time to get important things done. These condictions guided me as I led council through an effort to identify the first-ever set of council-driven priorities for our current term in office.

I ran for mayor last October because I knew it was time to forge a new path forward, to prepare our city to prosper and Hamiltonians to thrive despite the significant challenges ahead.

That's why I brought council together to develop a set of achievable and impactful priorities for our term in office. This is the first time a council has begun its term by taking time to collectively set clear achievable priorities.

We are at a turning point — Hamilton is well-positioned to realize its immense potential. We are attracting significant investment, both residential and commercial/industrial.

Hamilton has strong goods movement infrastructure, productive and precious agricultural land, a superior geographic location, world-renowned post-secondary and health-care systems, a skilled workforce with a long history of successful manufacturing, exciting opportunities unfolding in the West

Harbour, on the former Stelco lands, the Bayfront film industry hub, the rapid transit system, a renewed entertainment district downtown and so much more.

Not to mention a rich arts and cultural scene and our amazing sports teams!

We all know that we face challenges. Hamiltonians are struggling with rising costs of living. The most vulnerable people in our community do not have the supports they need. That is undeniable.

These challenges, among many others, grounded our discussions while priority setting. Indeed, I believe that thoughtfully confronting these challenges offers Hamilton an opportunity to lead.

The three priorities are: 1. Sustainable economic and ecological development; 2. Safe and thriving neighbourhoods; and 3. Working of city hall and transparency in municipal government.

These priorities are supported by explicit outcomes and measurable key performance indicators that will be tracked and reported on, so that Hamiltonians can see the progress we're making and hold us accountable.

Ensuring that the ongoing development in our city is sustainable economically and ecologically, we seek to reduce the burden on residential taxpayers; accelerate Hamilton's progress toward decarbonization; and protect our green spaces and water.

We will ensure our neighbour-

hoods are safe and thriving by increasing the number of housing units across the housing spectrum and reducing homelessness, while improving mobility, accessibility and road safety.

We will improve how city hall works and introduce more transparency in municipal government by implementing new budget process; improving public engagement; developing more efficient customer service and communication; and becoming an employer of choice so that we can recruit and retain talent.

For our city to lead, council, Hamilton residents, businesses, not-for-profit organizations, and provincial and federal governments need to work together, communicate clearly and achieve shared goals.

In all my years serving our community, I've come to know that when we work together, no challenge is too great. And Hamiltonians are full of heart — we want to care for our neighbours and community members, our environment, and our city.

The measurable priorities and outcomes that we've set are ambitious but achievable. I'm grateful that councillors stepped up to do the work to set these priorities. We now have a broad, measurable vision to work toward as Team Hamilton.

I want to hear from you regarding the priorities council has set. Please contribute your thoughts, ideas and concerns about the work of council. My office will be there for you when you need it.

I love this city. I know you do, too. By taking a whole of Hamilton approach, we can build a prosperous city where everyone can thrive. Let's get to work!

ANDREA HORWATH IS THE MAYOR OF HAMILTON.