

LETTERS

Name ignores local history

Re: Magnolia Hall is the new name for the former St. Mark's church — like it or not (May 9)

Congratulations to the city council for choosing a spineless woke name for St. Mark's Anglican Church. Besides the "Churchy McChurchface" option, I wonder what the other names were presented for consideration. I'm sure any reference to a place of worship or even a sniff of actual Durand neighbourhood history were quickly thrown out as offensive or racist. I'm assuming they did not name the site on the corner of Hunter and Bay after the Magnolia Plantation in South Carolina which housed 235 slaves in 1835.

Wray Brown, Dundas

A good reminder life is short

Re: Celebrating the stories of our mothers (May 9)

What a beautiful article by Deirdre Pike. So happy for her that she had such a wonderful loving mother and that they were so close. She is very lucky. Thanks also for the reminder that life is short and we need to build beautiful moments and memories before it is gone.

Mary Hickey, Burlington

In praise of nursing profession

As a young person considering what career path I might follow, I decided being a nurse might be too gross and gruesome. After raising my young family and seeking a career change, I thought nursing might not be as bad as I thought, having dealt with gross and traumatic experiences in motherhood. So I started my journey into nursing and found a career that was not always easy, but mostly satisfying. It gave me sense of purpose and achievement. The more I put into it, the more I got back, and when I was thanked for doing my job, it felt good. I understand many things have changed since I retired, but the need for nurses hasn't. I started with one idea in mind, but that changed as I found myself drawn in another direction. There are many areas this profession can lead to, so give it a try.

Irene Hough, Hamilton

Focus on helping failed states

Re: It's the Canadian thing to do (May 8)

This letter writer is correct that Canada has always welcomed immigrants warmly. However, she is mistaken when she says "Canada has the resources to provide support to those fleeing their own countries." In recent years, economic migrants have fled in such huge numbers that they have overwhelmed countries' ability to support them. It is impossible for nations to absorb all the millions whose own countries are failed states. Surely the solution is to aid those states in solving their governance problems so more countries of the world can provide safety and opportunity for their own citizens?

Reg McGuire, Mount Hope

Why no tents on Oct. 8?

Re: McMaster says it's willing to meet with protesters if their tone is 'respectful' (May 9)

Why were there no protesters in tents at McMaster on Oct. 8, 2023? The day before, young people at a music festival were raped, tortured, slaughtered and survivors were kidnapped. That was an act of war. Today protesters are on the campus, but nobody is mentioning the first victims of this attack. And why is it that so many students are wearing masks? Martin Luther King Jr. never wore a mask. Nor did Nelson Mandela. If you believe in what you're doing, uncover your face.

Pat Lynch, Stoney Creek

Join together to call for peace

Re: Without justice there is no peace (May 9)

Justice is not an absolute, not finite, but a moving target, as is all of human endeavour. We are built that way — for survival. But let's have peace above all, even if it's not perfect, or stress-free. Let's have Jewish and Palestinian students demonstrating together in solidarity for peace and a two-state solution. How can we, in the West, support the denial of self-determination of any group? It's ironic to think that the Arab (Indigenous) folk cannot be free to create their own country in their own land. Colonialism continues with the help of bombs, missiles and tanks.

Renate Manthei, Hamilton

Two sides in this exchange

Re: Respect missing in political debates (May 7)

I do agree with the author that respect is missing in political debates, and I am not condoning the choice of the word "wacko" in describing our prime minister by Pierre Poilievre. But I wish the author would tell both sides of the exchange, which may at least explain how they got to this point. Justin Trudeau would not answer the question about his federal drug policy in B.C. and instead accused Poilievre of "courting white nationalists" because he stopped at an anti-carbon tax rally. Trudeau didn't answer the question and instead tried to discredit Poilievre and insult him by calling him a "spineless leader." The Speaker asked Trudeau to retract this remark, but wasn't asked to leave, unlike Poilievre, who was asked to leave after the "wacko" remark. Good journalists should present all the facts, not just the part they like better because of their political views.

Gary Brown, Hamilton



A mother and emaciated baby at a hospital in Egbe, Nigeria. About 800 mothers will die in childbirth this Mother's Day, mostly in developing nations, a loss that will affect families, communities and entire nations, writes Thomas Froese.

THOMAS FROESE PHOTO

Moving beyond sentimentality



THOMAS FROESE
OPINION

I once read that if you're a mother, then you have no more claim on humanity than anyone else.

I think there's something to it. Otherwise we'd just idealize motherhood or idolize mothers.

I'm also not one of those people who sees a miracle around every corner.

But I believe there are some remarkable things about motherhood. And anyone who has ever witnessed a child's birth — I have, twice — can't help but wonder if the entire event is nothing but a disguised miracle, easy to miss because, like the air we breathe, it's so common. By the time you finish reading this, hundreds of newborns will have come screaming into the world.

Yet in any given day, like Mother's Day, for their efforts in all this, in childbirth, about 800 mothers around the world will be dead. Families, communities and children (some children will subsequently die) will feel the loss.

I know something about this because when I was younger I was, at times, a lost boy. So lost that one day two girls, strangers, pulled me aside while I walked from school, full of

tears, through a shopping mall. They sat me in a food court and asked me about things. All I could blurt out was, "My mother died."

They then encouraged me and told me how much God loves me, how much he was for me. I found this as astonishing then as I do now. Imagine. Strangers.

But the funny truth is that my mother died years earlier when I was barely in kindergarten. So those tears that day in that mall had less to do with my mother's death and more with the lingering void it left, a void relating to family life, and growing up, and the bridge that mothers tend to be — a bridge that was missing between me and the places I needed to go.

The psychologists can tell you more about this, the cost of absent moms. My bride, my own children's mother, can tell you how, on another level, absent mothers hurt entire nations. She has delivered several thousand children in our community. But abroad, where she's known simply as "Dr. Jean," she's advocated for mothers in less-privileged places that seem further away than they are. Recently, she returned home from East Africa.

Worldwide, about 300,000 women now die annually in childbirth, the vast majority in developing nations. Some simply bleed out, convulsing on some dirt floor while nobody with birthing skills, especially needed in obstetrical emer-

gencies, is nearby.

The good news is that from 2000 to 2020, the global maternal death rate fell significantly, by about 30 per cent. One reason is because strategic people in these nations — not just health workers, but community workers, politicians, lawyers, journalists, educators and clergy — are being trained to use their spheres of influence to advocate for better maternal care.

This is the core of, for example, the Ugandan-Canadian program Save the Mothers. Jean is the founding director.

Ironically, maternal deaths are rising in some western nations, including Canada. In the United States, in 20 years, the maternal death rate has doubled, partly because women have children later in life. Even so, in Canada, we generally lose less than 50 moms annually. But in Uganda? More than 5,000 mothers still perish every year.

Mother's Day is a day that's easy to sentimentalize. We commonly give our moms a card with mushy words written by someone else. On other days we might expect too much from our mothers, knowing that they're often compelled to give, maybe from love or maybe from some unspoken expectation.

One way to thank them, and consider their well-being, is by simply loving our neighbours, like those moms in those far-off places that aren't so far off. After all, it shouldn't be too much for any mother anywhere to expect to be kept alive. That's something any mother can appreciate.

You can learn more about helping at savethemothers.org.

THOMAS FROESE WRITES ABOUT NEWS, TRAVEL AND LIFE. FIND HIM AT [THOMASFROESE.COM](https://thomasfroese.com).

Going green can be a dirty business

WAYNE POOLE

Our industrial foundation, our economies, are built on the mining sector for aggregates, minerals, metals and fossil fuels; the raw materials needed to make steel, aluminum, copper, cement, critical battery materials and other essential commodities needed to help decarbonize the energy sector.

Industries that we depend on to produce solar panels, wind turbines, batteries and hydro installations are themselves carbon intensive, most depending on fossil fuels.

A typical lithium-ion electric vehicle (EV) battery pack contains 16 kilograms of lithium, 46 kg of nickel, 46 kg of cobalt and 43 kg of manganese, plus smaller amounts of other metals. Wind turbines require concrete, steel, copper, rare earth elements. Solar panels require aluminum, silica sand magnesium, copper and other materials.

As demand for critical battery minerals increases, companies are looking to the seabed, where deposits of concentrated metal nodules and crusts are found, adding to the long list of insults we inflict on the marine environment.

Fossil fuels account for 91 per cent of total global greenhouse gas emissions. Of this total, steel production accounts for seven to nine per cent, cement eight per cent and mining four to seven per cent.

Jonathan Watts of The Guardian writes, "A mere 57 oil, gas, coal and

cement producers are directly linked to 80 per cent of the world's global fossil CO2 emissions since the 2016 Paris climate agreement..."

Hydro electricity is a carbon-free source of energy, but building massive dams is not. It is time-consuming, environmentally destructive and incredibly expensive. Shifting rain and snowfall patterns, affecting water reservoir levels, threaten hydro production. Think Lake Mead and the Hoover dam.

From picks and shovels to huge Euclid trucks, mountaintop removal machines and enormous floating oil and gas drilling platforms, the scale of mining has increased dramatically to satisfy our growing needs.

Mining comes with a lot of baggage, however — habitat destruction, is water intensive, air and water pollution, health and safety issues, displacement and mistreatment of Indigenous peoples and other human rights abuses. The loss of life, habitat and environmental damage caused by mining is extensive — Springhill, Hillcrest, Deep Water Horizon, Piper Alpha, are the tip of the iceberg.

According to earth.org, "the mining sector is one of the major emitters of greenhouse gases and it produces fossil energy resources that also significantly contribute to global CO2 emissions." Abandoned mines are often left unremediated, threats to the environment and human health, leaking toxic materials, a problem for others to deal with.

While the earth's exhaustible mineral resources, particularly critical minerals, diminish while human populations and demand continue to grow, at what juncture will demand outstrip supply?

Geopolitical tensions and conflicts will arise as countries race to secure sources of critical minerals, making recovery and recycling of battery materials essential, but this will also require fossil fuel energy.

What can we expect with the proposed development of the 5,000 square kilometre "Ring of Fire" in northern Ontario, an area of environmentally sensitive fens and bogs, a huge storehouse of carbon, but also an estimated \$90-billion source of minerals that could feed the massive Stellantis and Volkswagen battery plants?

It could be a model of resource development or an environmental disaster.

Will the environment assessment be rigorous? Will the Indigenous people who live there be properly consulted? Can they trust governments to honour development agreements? Will they benefit from this development? Will we be given assurances that all efforts will be made to minimize the environmental damage, and there could be significant damage?

Who will profit most from this development; Canadians, or multi-national companies? Will we be subsidizing this development with taxpayers' money, and will we be on the hook for cleanup at the end of operations? Who can be trusted to develop the Ring of Fire responsibly?

As we move to a lower carbon world, we can't ignore the greenhouse gases generated to get us there. This is our conundrum. There is no free lunch.

WAYNE POOLE LIVES IN DUNDAS.