

LETTERS

Scooter riders need to take care

Re: E-scooter, e-bike injuries popping up in Hamilton emergency rooms, July 24
This article comes as no surprise.
I have lived adjacent to the radio trail in Ancaster for many decades and can confidently vouch for the proliferation of these electric scooters. They travel at incredibly high speeds, which not only poses a danger to the riders, but to the pedestrians as well.
Several times I have seen three “tween girls“ on one scooter, with only one wearing a helmet. Sandals, shorts and tank tops completed their riding outfits. A crash on the gravel surface would certainly compound the extent of their possible injuries.
Yesterday, I witnessed a young girl of about six or seven riding one with no helmet, and the same day a crash with two slightly older girls who'd been riding on an uneven sidewalk.
Parents, if you want your kids to ride a scooter, buy the one that needs the energy of the human body for propulsion, and thereby increasing your child's physical activity, or at least make them wait until they're old enough to realize the inherent dangers of what can be a very high speed vehicle. It will be healthier and safer.
Hamilton enforcement, spend a few hours on this trail, and I'm sure you'll have your ticket quota for “no motorized vehicles” on the path, for the entire year.
Beverly Myhal, Ancaster

Moral compass lacking

As a parent I know that raising children is without a doubt both the most rewarding and challenging role most of us will ever experience. Our children's behaviours and actions are a direct reflection upon on us their parents. On the ice, Michael McLeod, Carter Hart, Alex Formenton, Dillon Dube and Cal Foote made their parents proud. Their off-ice behaviour in that hotel room displayed a total lack of a moral compass. Nothing for their parents to celebrate even with the not guilty verdict rendered in a London courtroom Thursday.
Mary Elizabeth Toth, Ancaster

The right person won

Re: Poilievre's ideas resonate with Canadians, July 24
I feel the need to respond to the letter written by Leslie Farrington.
Pierre Poilievre didn't even win his seat at the election. Someone else had to give up his for him. That doesn't sound right and possibly illegal. When people vote, they expect an honest response and accounting of the votes. PP lost and was able to trade to get a seat.
As for the winning party, Mark Carney is *not* Justin Trudeau which the majority of voters have realized. You can vote for the person or the party and in this case people voted for the person. And the right person won.
Janet Remias, Ancaster

Affordable housing is a myth

Politicians have been promising affordable housing for years, yet people still have to see any affordable housing built.
I have not read any postings about what it costs to build an affordable house or condo. Moreover, how much would a family have to earn to buy an affordable dwelling?
The federal government stated it would grant \$50,000 to a first-time buyer. This would hardly make a dent in the total cost.
And once someone gets an “affordable” dwelling, what's to stop them from then selling it for a higher price?
Let us remind ourselves what caused the housing crisis. Speculators started buying up houses, increasing the costs for everyone. Home builders in the last decade have only built high-end houses costing \$500,000 or higher and many in the \$1-million range. Even a new condo costs \$400,000 or more.
Take a look at the rental market. After COVID -19, owners decided they needed a big increase in rent. Our provincial government did nothing to stop these increases.
People are demanding that governments step in and solve the housing crisis caused by greedy developers and apartment owners.
Roman Caruk, Hamilton

Don't ignore homeless people

Re: A plea for compassion, July 24
Compassion is something we all have, but so many of us seem to ignore. I watched an unhoused person standing outside a grocery store from my car before I exited and went to the store. People were walking past him pretending he wasn't there. Some had a very distasteful look on their faces, but he stood there, not uttering a word.
As I was entering the store, I asked him if it bothered him that people were not even acknowledging his presence. He answered, “No ma'am. They also have problems in their lives and I understand that.” *He* was showing compassion!
Please don't ignore them and don't look at them with disgust. Even a smile can brighten up their day.
Christine Crooks, Hamilton

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Writing about George Bernard Shaw and beards, Thomas Froese displays one of the playwright's quips. Today happens to be Shaw's birthday.

Writers and the razor-averse



THOMAS FROESE
OPINION

Why can't women grow beards?
They're so remarkable. Men, really, have no idea how fortunate they are. My wife tells me this all the time.
“Babe,” she says, pretty well every time she sees me, “You know how passionately I love beards and that rugged mountain-man look. Would you, for me, grow a Rip Van Winkle beard that's long enough to trip over? Or even one of those bushy baseball beards?”
I tend to keep my modest goatee short. No need to have yesterday's lunch or the dog's ball or some backyard squirrel getting lost in there.
Even so, growing a wild beard could be a heritage project. Mennonites, after all, had baseball beards before baseball players did.
My great-great-great-great-great Mennonite grandfather wouldn't have been the storyteller that I imagine he was if he couldn't throw back his head with his substantial hair and beard cascading like a lion's mane, this to warm up his audience.
Then there's George Bernard Shaw, neither a Mennonite nor a baseball player, but a playwright

with the sort of serious beard that women would go for in any century. It was 1925 when Shaw received the Nobel Prize for Literature, maybe for his wit as much as his idealism and humanity.
Which leads us to today's fun fact. Today, July 26, is Shaw's birthday.
The Shaw Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the second largest repertory theatre company in North America, continues Shaw's legacy. I mean, have you seen some of the beards around the place?
Now you can be a walking billboard for Shaw with a T-shirt showing one of his quips. Consider: “You see things and you say, ‘Why?’ But I dream things that never were and I say, ‘Why not?’”
Or, “I often quote myself. It adds spice to the conversation.” (Do you think some wet-behind-the-ears, clean-shaven man could think of this?) Then there's every senior's favourite: “Youth is wasted on the young.”
Yes, if you like running around with whitening facial hair while in shorts and bare feet — there I am, all year long — this is the attire for you. It shows old Shaw as a fun rascal in some ancient and sexy swimsuit looking like a white-bearded Moses as much as an Irish playwright.
That beard is what surely must have helped Shaw write until he was good and ripe, to the age of 94, when he died, in 1950, days after

falling off a ladder while pruning a tree on his London-area property. He was clearly one of those people who sucked the marrow out of life.
He had some eccentricities, sure, including a quirky relationship with food, like meat, which he, in fact, didn't eat. And he had a strange fondness for authoritarianism.
Ugly politicians like Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin apparently bothered him less than, say, bad grammar.
But there's no indication that Shaw's wife of 45 years, Charlotte, a woman's rights activist who came from an impossibly wealthy family, ever doubted the virtuous and redeeming value of her husband's beard. Unlike Samson's Delilah, she never took scissors to any of her man's hair.
In either case, the truth is that I can't compete. And my wife, I know you suspect, isn't a fan of beards. So as a different sort of gift for our anniversary, Tuesday, I'm now shaving. To everything there's a season. Today's plan is for her to first read here this exciting news of my razor before I appear for her to see and feel my smooth face for the first time in a long time.
Happy anniversary, babe.
“Man shaves his modest goatee.” Hardly the world's biggest news. “Saint Nicholas shaves big white beard.” Now there's a headline. But facial hair in this corner? “Es kommt. Es geht.” (It comes. It goes.) Now it's history again, like this column, which, with any luck, even Old Man Shaw might have found mildly amusing on this, his summer day.
THOMAS FROESE WRITES ABOUT NEWS, TRAVEL AND LIFE. FIND HIM AT THOMASFROESE.COM AND THOMASFROESE.SUBSTACK.COM.

Why good leaders step aside for others



LOIS TUFFIN
OPINION

My father loved his job as a high school shop teacher. For years after he retired, grown men would come up to me and tell me they were his favourite student.
That is how he made them feel.
On top of his classes, he revelled in mentoring younger teachers as the head of his department. He also inspired longtime staff members to keep their skills up to date over their careers.
To set a good example, he took a sabbatical midway through his career to work at an electronics firm. As a result, he came back refreshed and ready to impart lessons that reflected the current marketplace.
Despite his passion for teaching, Dad chose to retire at age 55. At that point, he had seen the potential in a younger colleague as a future leader and stepped aside.
He never regretted that decision, especially as his successor thrived and brought new energy to the role.
Thirty years later, I found myself at the same point. After 15 years as editor in chief at Peterborough This

Week, I looked at my staff and realized they were ready to carry on.
The longer I stayed, the longer they would be stuck in the same jobs, when they could do so much more.
They had taken the courses and learned from their experiences. I was in their way. So, I left.
Seven years later, I couldn't be happier. I have a more flexible schedule and never deal with hostile members of the public. Life is good.
I wish more people would make the leap.
Years ago, I had a boss who made it very clear that he wasn't going anywhere.
“I'm planning to die in this chair so don't get any ideas,” he told a room full of reporters. How motivating was that? Not at all.
Last year, a longtime politician told me she cannot leave since she serves as the organization's corporate memory. She feels a responsibility to quash ideas that have already been tried and didn't work.
She really said that. Doesn't that sound like a place that never plans to welcome change as long as she is there?
So many so-called leaders in this community have been doing the same jobs for too long and need to move on. I'm talking to politicians,

executives and board members who think no one can fill their roles as well as they can.
That's your ego talking, so get over yourself.
True leadership is about planning for the future, not wielding your own power in the present.
That means taking steps to develop others so they can take over from you. It begins with not making them feel they need to turn to you for every decision.
The strongest organizations have leaders who recognize they need depth then develop the talents in their people early on. They prepare for a time when a leader has to leave for a family emergency or suffers a health crisis of their own.
They know that people move on to new jobs or new towns. Or that volunteers will only stay as long as they feel valued and challenged.
Instead, people settle into roles and centralize power. They turn into martyrs who say, “No one else will do what I do.”
Give me a break.
Every organization — business or volunteer-based — needs new blood to evolve and stay with the times.
That means seeking new people who may challenge your assumptions. Rewarding them when they offer fresh perspectives.
Then getting out of their way.
That way, you'll get a chance to find a next step of your own.
LOIS TUFFIN IS A FORMER JOURNALIST AND A LONG-TIME COMMUNITY ADVOCATE AND ACTIVIST FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING, VOLUNTEERISM AND OTHER CAUSES.