

## LETTERS

## Limit parking to limit damage

**Re: Ancaster residents decry Tiffany Falls parking lot plan, June 15**

I don't think Tiffany Falls needs more parking. Yes, parking is limited, but even with that, the trails and surrounding flora and fauna are being destroyed by overuse. People are not staying on the trails and are leaving garbage and ignoring signs. Decrease the human impact and let nature recover.

Liz Sutherland, Ancaster

## Trump not fit for presidency

**Re: The Strait of Hormuz: The supply chain loop that broke the world, June 17**

Reading Behrouz Bakhtiari's insightful analysis of how the Iran crisis evolved, I was struck by how completely it would fly over Donald Trump's head. Complex feedback loops, diplomacy and unintended consequences don't fit easily into a worldview that amounts to, "If I don't like it, if they don't behave, we'll go right back to dropping bombs right smack in the middle of their head."

Derek Elliott, Hamilton

## Iran commentary enlightening

A clearer, more cogent and informative explanation of the conflict between the U.S./Israel and Iran would be difficult to craft. The narrative offered by Behrouz Bakhtiari in Thursday's edition was extremely enlightening. Would that more scholars were able to offer this quality of information delivered with refreshing brevity.

Kathleen Livingston, Hamilton

## We can only be pushed so far

**Re: Dundas Museum celebrates 70 years of preserving the Valley Town's history, June 16**

I found it timely that in Mark McNeil's Flashbacks column on the Dundas Museum that they would have on display a banner calling on the Queen's representative, Lord Durham, to find out what had triggered two armed uprisings in the Canadas of 1837. Seems it was having appointed representatives forming the government over the people and under a system known derisively as the Family Compact that people found intolerable and compelled them to take up arms against it. His solution would ultimately create popularly elected, or "representative" governments, in both Upper and Lower Canada — modern day Ontario and Quebec.

With Doug Ford arbitrarily replacing elected government representatives throughout Ontario the premier may want to revisit some classes he undoubtedly missed in high school and study the results of history.

Bob Sorrell, Caledonia

## What if rats were at city hall?

If the Gore Park rats migrated to city hall, I wonder how quickly the problem would be resolved.

Barb Allen, Hamilton

## City services aren't free

For those complaining that the city looks bad because some grass isn't mowed or that the city should give seniors free bus rides, did you complain about your huge tax bill this year? Also interesting that the free senior bus ride letter was posted beside an op-ed stating seniors are the country's wealthiest cohort. All these types of perks are great, but are not free.

Liz Lewis, Ancaster

## Where should data centres go?

**Re: 'Moratorium today, total ban tomorrow': Councillors vote to regulate AI data centres, June 16**

Why the big fuss about a data centre replacing a steel mill? The land is currently zoned for heavy industry. I'm certain the data centre will not create near the noise and pollution heavy industry will create.

Anyone that uses a cellphone, laptop or personal computing device of any kind uses data centres constantly. Thus these centres need to go somewhere. What better place than a piece of industrial land that's not being used? What are the options? Put it on some farmland out of sight? Or another option, send the investment down to the U.S. and create jobs and income there.

City council needs to deal with and promote this now and not kick it down the road. We need the tax money this will create. Oops I forgot, there's an election coming up.

Gary Aikema, Hamilton

## This is not a 'ceasefire'

**Re: Over 1,000 killed by Israeli fire since ceasefire, June 18**

Again I read an article in the Spec, this time from "The Associated Press," with the headline "Over 1,000 killed by Israeli fire since ceasefire." Surely it is only common sense to stop using "ceasefire" in terms of almost daily attacks and killing of Palestinians.

At least put ceasefire in quotation marks as the word is being grossly misused.

Allan McCulley, Dundas

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A father in Oicha, Congo, holding his young child. Reflecting on Father's Day, Thomas Froese writes, "My sense is that both would be OK, even pleased, knowing their photo found its way into this space even now, 23 years later."

THOMAS FROESE

## Embracing fatherhood in a changing world



THOMAS FROESE  
OPINION

The thing about even the most humdrum of moments is that something of life's larger mystery can come through them.

Take this moment in Congo: a father holding his child in their home's doorway. Neither seemed to mind me stopping. My sense is both would be OK, even pleased, knowing their photo found its way into this space even now, 23 years later.

My wife was pregnant with our first, so we too were in the doorway of parenthood. We'd just travelled from home in Yemen to home-to-be in Uganda, before flying to Congo in a small single-engine plane to visit Hamilton friends working there. (But really, people, can we not all agree that even the smallest of planes needs a second engine as a backup?)

She was six months along, which gives you an idea of my wife. It's also a reminder that mothers, wherever they are, have nine months to warm up to the entire idea while they nurture life inside them day after week after month.

Fathers, on the other hand, are thrown into it all, one minute wondering the next a father, and here you go, here's your little loaf, and good luck. As a friend recently put

it, "For men, fatherhood is more a decision you make." I don't doubt this truth.

Father's Day is a good time to consider it, this doorway. On average, worldwide, four men become fathers or, more often, fathers again, every second of the day. This during, on average, 363,000 daily births. Then the stepdads and adoptive dads.

In Canada, we're seeing more fathers who are foreign born, now about one in three, and a still-increasing age of first-time dads, now 34, according to Statistics Canada. First-time mothers now average age 30. Most Canadian births are in late summer or early fall.

More than 80 do so now, including this weekend, although Congo celebrates Parents' Day in August.

It's a small sketch. But, with the children's mother, I now find myself entering life with young adult children. And while you'll easily find oceans of books on raising young kids, often contradictory if not complete nonsense, there's precious little on how to be sensible with your adult kids. It's all the more reason for fathers to commiserate on these still important fathering matters.

Another friend, who has seven children under 15, recently told me he can't find good material on disciplining them. As a boy, he told me, it was, "Let's just spank them." Naturally, it was the same when I was a boy, although I was rarely spanked,

one exception being when I smoked even before middle school. It didn't work. I smoked all the more later.

In either case, if I tried to spank my children, now 23, 20 and 20, nobody would be happy. This much I know.

In recent conversation with a dear loved one — she and her husband have two boys, 40 and 33, now living backhome — we did talk about a rare book that's helpful with some of this. "Doing Life With Your Adult Children" by Jim Burns has the subtitle, "Keep Your Mouth Shut and the Welcome Mat Out." Seems clear enough. Two ears. One mouth.

My wife and I have listened to it while driving here and there. If you're in a similar season, which enough of us are, you may find it a helpful guide on issues like boundaries, money and keeping connection during these changing seasons.

Today's only other rumination on fathers and doorways is that the next time your son or daughter is standing in one, whether they're coming or going, or not sure whether they're coming or going, tell them that you love them. And keep telling them. Often.

Anyone at any age still needs this, to be held, so to speak, by a father who means what he says.

THOMAS FROESE WRITES ABOUT NEWS, TRAVEL AND LIFE. FIND HIM AT THOMASFROESE.COM AND THOMASFROESE.SUBSTACK.COM

## Learning hard truths in the forest

GIDEON FORMAN

This spring, I attended a tour of the Sauble Dunes, a recently expanded conservation reserve owned by the environmental charity, Ontario Nature.

Due to the area's delicate landscape — the sand there is almost as fine as dust — it could easily be destroyed by vehicles or boots and is seldom open to the public. But on a beautiful Saturday morning, Ontario Nature allowed a small group of naturalists to briefly enter the property. I was fortunate to be among them.

The organization says Great Lakes dunes are "among the most rare and sensitive ecosystems in Canada."

The reserve is located on the Lake Huron side of the Bruce Peninsula, just north of Sauble Beach. I hadn't seen anything like it.

Imagine sand dunes in the midst of a forest. I came upon yellow and white birch, elm and fir trees; I observed an eastern garter snake and the yellow lady's slipper orchid.

But I also observed unattractive parts of myself.

I realize I subscribe to a wildlife hierarchy. Some creatures are big prizes, others small. In the Sauble "lottery" I won 50 bucks but cov-

eted the cash-for-life jackpot. I found a garter but sought ribbon snakes and a glimpse of the elusive massasauga rattler.

I should view all animals as beautiful and respond to them with gratitude.

I should consider as gifts even the raccoon who scavenges my green bin and the pigeon on my porch. I do not. I want to see rare species like dwarf lake iris, wood turtle and bobcat.

I realize how destructive I can be. At Sauble I walked through a landscape without trails; my great fear was stepping on the flowers and saplings I had come to see. Inevitably I crunched a few, for which I ask forgiveness. The absurdity was not lost on me.

I produce unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions. There's no public transit to the reserve nor is our car electric.

My choice was burning fossil fuel or not going. Selfishly I chose to go. By contributing to the climate crisis, my transportation harmed the very creatures I wanted to protect.

I see that my feelings about forests are ambivalent. At the beginning of our tour, I wanted badly to get away from the property's boundary-road and the swoosh of vehicles.

I wanted to be deep in the woods,



GIDEON FORMAN

Yellow lady's slipper at Sauble Dunes Nature Reserve. As I walked through a landscape without trails, my great fear was stepping on the flowers I had come to see. Inevitably I crunched a few. The absurdity was not lost on me, Gideon Forman writes.

listening to bird song and the croak of frogs.

But after a couple of hours walking in wet shoes and pushing branches from my eyes, I grew fatigued; I craved dry socks, a granola bar and box of juice.

As the tour drew to a close and we approached the road, I again heard cars and trucks. They telegraphed that my adventure — which truly I had enjoyed — would soon be over. I was pleased.

I see that I'm not sufficiently evolved to love nature unconditionally.

GIDEON FORMAN IS A LONGTIME ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST.