

opinion

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The moral of the story...

Falling asleep with a good book. It's something that has happened to most of us, but maybe isn't happening as much as it used to.

It recently happened to a young boy in Toronto, reading that age-old favourite for kids of all ages - a comic book.

It is there that the story takes an adorable twist that seems to have touched a nerve with Canadians across the country.

Apparently a page of the comic book ripped when it fell and when it was returned to the library it included a handwritten apology from the boy and a promise that it wouldn't happen again.

It is just one of those feel-good stories that there just isn't enough of these days.

Of course, it starts out with a young child reading. Yes, the more jaded would suggest that it was only a comic book, but studies have shown time and again that reading comic books has far more benefit for kids than harm. The kid is reading, and that is always something to celebrate.

The positive of the story starts even earlier in that Jackson's parent(s) have him using the library, a resource that remains worthwhile and underutilized. Teaching habits like that early are key to god habits later in life.

There's also the angle of seeing kids reading as opposed to having their eyes on some kind of video screen, which are everywhere around us these days.

Then of course was little Jackson taking responsibility for the damage he had caused - even if good intentioned and completely accidental? Some commenters online debated the merits of whether young Jackson made that decision on his own or was instructed to do it by a parent. The distinction is unimportant.

If he made the decision to write the note apologizing, then good on him for understanding a basic truth of life that escapes many of us well into adulthood.

The good news according to library staff is that the page was easily repaired with tape and the most talked-about comic book in Canada can be enjoyed by other users in the days and weeks and months to come.

If, on the other hand, it was his parent(s) who made him do the right thing, then good on them for taking a situation such as it was and turning it into a teachable moment. Whether it was on his own initiative, or whether it was suggested by mom or dad, this little guy is getting some solid parenting.

In a world where it is increasingly common to duck responsibility at every turn, and blame anyone but yourself, and especially the attitude that it's never "MY" kid's fault, it is refreshing to see this kind of honesty.

TC Media



letters

Now is the time to save Canada's health-care system

As Canadians, we are justifiably proud of our health care system. However, when Canadians are asked to name the issue that concerns us most, health care, again justifiably, is mentioned most frequently, even ahead of the economy.

The Conservative party plans to cut \$36 billion from health care funding after the election. Such a reduction in funding could force the provinces to cut back spending on such items as home care, hospital care and care for seniors. It will destroy our universal medicare system as we know it, and lead to a two-tiered system in which those who can afford to pay will receive health care (or will receive it sooner) and those who are unable to pay will be left behind.

This would contravene the founding principle of our medicare system, that health care must be based on need, not ability to pay.

One in nine Canadians cannot afford to fill their prescriptions. A recent research study discovered that if Canada were to adopt a pharmacare program which would cover the cost of prescriptions for every Canadian, we would actually save billions of dollars annually.

We need politicians who are willing to renegotiate an equitable health accord with the provinces before the cuts in funding take effect, and we need a pharmacare plan that will save the country money while ensuring that everyone has access to the medications that have been prescribed for them.

This election is a critical point in the 50 year history of our cherished medicare system. We need to question our candidates on their position on these issues. And we need to vote carefully.

Mario Zirone,
Council of Canadians - P.E.I. Chapter

Hemp uses

Hemp is the name for all the dif-

ferent species of cannabis. Cannabis Sativa and Cannabis Indica were species that were smoked in many countries all around the world long before tobacco.

In the near east it is called hashish. In India it is called bhang or ganja. In South Africa it is called Dakka and in South America the name marijuana is called "Mary Jane."

It is called "weed" just about everywhere.

The usefulness of hemp in making fabric is really overshadowed by its use as a narcotic plant. Hemp has been adopted as a sacred herb by the Rastafarin movement and the cannabis leaf symbol is often depicted in the Rasta colours of red, green, and gold.

It is considered that the use of the herb purifies the soul, clears the mind, and promotes peacefulness.

The Buddhist see hemp as a secured plant. Hemp began growing in P.E.I. in the early 1970s.

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A penny's worth of principles is greater than Conservative's \$90K check of values

BY BRIAN MCLAUGHLIN

Whatever the outcome of the Mike Duffy trial, P.E.I. may soon have the characters, the makings of an 'infamous' political fable to revile the celebrated tale of Anne of Green Gables. Yes, a more nefarious tale; how a modern-day oblivious King-Harper; his officious former-PMO Chief of Staffer; and a hoodwinked former-Eg(g)o from P.E.I...no he's from Ottawa...no, no, his Senate residency clause say he's from Cavendish....Whatever!..... A tale of how they all came to be disgracefully hauled from the esteemed national halls of power.

Lucy Maud Montgomery's story about Anne of Green Gables speaks of a time past when character, integrity, values, and rock-solid ethics (even genuine dissent) was the valued (island) character of days gone by.

Years from now what will be the transformed 'facts turned to fiction' recounting the difficulties of former-CTV Ottawa bureau chief who hails from the Island?

I suspect Senator Mike Duffy's trial and difficulties of falling into public disgrace will be suitably recounted as the fable of How (King Harper-)Humpty....how deceiving former-PMO chief of staffer Mr. Wright...and how a disgraced, duped (Dumped) Duffy were all conjoined in national dishonor of a fall from the esteemed "Halls of Power".

Why? Because it comes down to the difference between what Canadians value as "truth as facts" and "truth as values."

With this riddle of a litany of financial forensic evidence and testimonies being unveiled during the yet to be ruled on trial of Senator Mike Duffy, what are the value judgements

Canadians should attach to the main players' - all dodging either knowledge of, collusion or culpabilities in, or criminal intent behind the ambiguous senate expense rules scandal, and attempted "\$90,175 cheque" cover-up? And, ultimately, what are the values of moral fiber of these characters who drafted and deposited the repayment cheque attempting to make Mike Duffy's character whole again?

Many Maritimers' 'pennies worth of principles' might far exceed the bottomless pockets of the Conservative Party's coffers and/or the values of Nigel Wright's ethical fiber (as a magnanimous millionaire claiming he was just thinking of "the Canadian taxpayers" best interests in this whole dubious, Conservative PR scheme).

If a children's nursery rhyme can teach us anything, it's this:

a King's court is only as divinely ordained as all the strength of the ethics and integrities of those characters who make up the official PMO staff advisers. And when the elasticity of the ethics of the chief of staff (and his administrative team) slackens and frays, the integrity of King and his rule over Canada's court-and-castle sits on a foundation more fit for contempt than for reverence of crown.

As for this trial of unscrupulous shenanigans of how men with no shame operate in our public house with no rules, what of the other part? What will Canadians fill in as its meaning come Election Day?

What ethical meaningful, or meaningless part will we Canadians play when ultimately cashing it all in, in the court of public opinion this fall?

Harper keeps insisting no involvement and knowledge of

"the monstrous scheme". End of story!

I'm one voter who feels, even though Harper devalued/discontinued the Canadian penny as an extinct denominator of national currency, my penny's worth of principles will vote on time honoured beliefs: ethnics, responsibility, accountability, and integrity count for something.

I will write my cheque on how this fabulous fable's last chapter unfolds come Oct 19th. Perhaps other Canadians will hand Stephen Harper (the Conservative Party) a 'bank note' with insufficient funds to be cashed on the unemployment lines Oct. 20.

Brian McLaughlin is a Maritime-based freelance writer/humourist. He has written extensively on politics, education, economic development, energy, as well as on alternative technology and contemporary business issues.

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