

THE EXPOSITOR

PUBLISHED IN BRANTFORD SINCE 1852

The Expositor, published by the Niagara Newspaper Group Inc., a subsidiary of Osprey Media Group Inc.



Publisher and General Manager
Michael Pearce

Managing Editor David Judd
Advertising Manager Len Offless

Production Manager Alan Oakes
Circulation Manager David Elliott

Editor Emeritus K. J. Strachan

53 Dalhousie Street, Brantford, Ont. N3T 5S8

Second Class Registration Number: 0781

Member: The Canadian Press

Audit Bureau of Circulation, The Ontario Press Council

The contents of this newspaper are protected by copyright and may be used only for your personal non-commercial purposes. All other rights are reserved and commercial use is prohibited. Permission to republish any material must be sought from the relevant copyright owner.

The city's rebuilders

A new group of business people are helping to breathe life into some of the city's oldest and most derelict buildings. Steve Charest, Gabriel Kirchberger and Dalip Multani are investing millions of dollars in the city's renaissance. We call them the Rebuilders.

A three-part series on these men concludes today in The Expositor with details of the projects under way by Multani's company Multani Custom Homes. Saturday featured Charest's company, King and Benton, and Monday was the turn for Kirchberger's company, G.K. York.

The three men have several things in common. They're all originally from out of town — indeed, Kirchberger is from Germany and Multani is from India — they love to restore disused buildings and they all have a vision of revitalized neighbourhoods or the city core.

Of course, they aren't the only developers engaged in rebuilding the city. They are the leading ones putting new life into industrial brownfield sites and old commercial buildings.

In one year, Charest has made big improvements at the former Harding property on Morrell Street. The property that he bought from the city for \$100,000 is now listed for sale at \$6.3 million after Charest cleaned up the place, spent \$4 million on renovations and started lining up business tenants.

Charest is developing the privately owned industrial park in the city's northwest and has expressed interest in restoring the city's largest brownfield site — the 52 acres at Mohawk and Greenwich Street.

Kirchberger is responsible for \$35 million being invested in Brantford and area. He fixed up the former Commercial Hotel on Dalhousie Street and has started work on the Temple Building next to the Sanderson Centre. His company has taken over the Market Square mall and is negotiating with the city to build the civic square. In addition, Kirchberger is enthusiastic about transforming the old Penman buildings along the Grand River in Paris into housing.

Multani has nearly completed a housing project in the old Barber Ellis factory. He currently is redeveloping for housing the old Solaray factory on Grand River Avenue and is involved in plans for an affordable housing project on Harris Avenue, part of a larger project involving the YM-YWCA.

The three rebuilders are pointing the way. Where others see derelict buildings, they see opportunities to improve properties and to make money. They take risks — you never know for sure what environmental problems may be lurking beneath brownfields — but they are calculated risks. Brownfields and heritage buildings offer special challenges and special rewards.

Charest, Kirchberger and Multani get a kick out of seeing old properties returned to good use. Generations of taxpayers have installed water, sewer and roads in older areas of the city. It makes no sense to leave properties vacant and abandoned.

Empty, unsafe buildings are threats to the community. Redeveloped buildings promote the economy, provide taxes, jobs, new businesses or housing.

Rebuilders are doing more than redeveloping old buildings. They're restoring our city's pride and self-confidence.

GEORGE W. BUSH RE-ELECTED

Suzuki should accept it

Not surprisingly, Dr. David Suzuki joined the left-leaning liberal chorus that would have us believe that the sky is about to fall as result of the re-election of George W. Bush. Some people think that they have a corner on knowledge and wisdom and that those of us who disagree with them just don't get it.

Just what are the Democrats and liberals afraid of? They probably fear that

Bush may try to put the Bible and prayer back in the schools. So what if he does? We may get more discipline and less violence, drugs and crime.

It is time for the know-it-all elite to stop the hand-wringing; start to practise some tolerance; accept the results of a democratic election and get on with it.

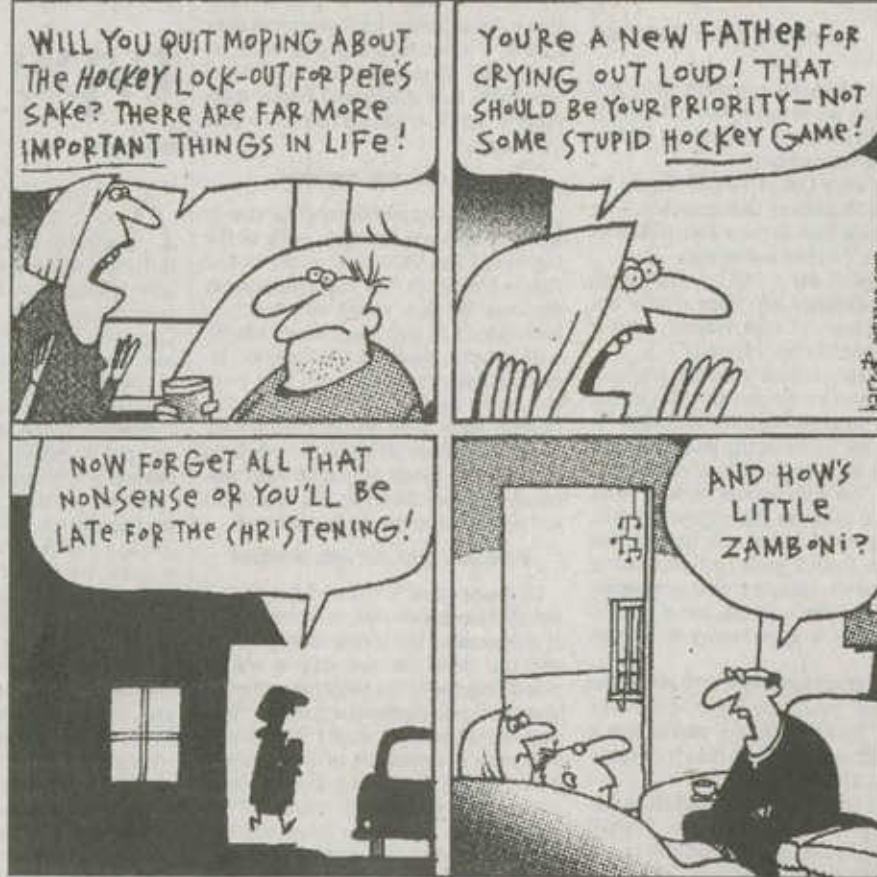
ROBERT ANES
Brantford

ONTARIO PRESS COUNCIL

The Expositor is a member of the Ontario Press Council, which considers complaints against member newspapers. Any complaints about news, opinions or advertising should be taken first to the newspaper.

The complaint should then go to:

The Ontario Press Council, 2 Carlton St., Suite 1706, Toronto, Ont., M5B 1J3



Gwynne Dyer

WORLD

'Greatest' series sparks big trouble

"The only thing it proves is that white South Africans have telephones," said Max du Preez, a South African journalist I once made a film about. He always did have a talent for understatement.

The South African Broadcasting Corporation had bought the "Greatest Britons" TV format from the BBC, and invited the viewers of SABC 3, an English-language channel mostly watched by affluent whites, to nominate their candidates for the hundred "Greatest South Africans" by phone, e-mail and text message. (Nelson Mandela got a free pass to the top of the list.)

It then dutifully made hour-long television documentaries about each of the 10 leading candidates after Mandela, with well-known personalities ("champions") advocating each nominee's cause — and failed to notice until the series began to air last month that not one of the top five was black.

Predictably, there was uproar. Not only was the list laden with whites in a country where only a tenth of the population is white, but some of them were heroes of the apartheid era like former prime minister Hendrik Verwoerd, who placed 19th, and neo-Nazi leader Eugene Terre-Blanche, who placed 25th.

The series was suspended after the broadcast of the first two episodes, and the head of the SABC, Peter Matlare, announced: "We're going back to the drawing board on this one."

GREATEST CANADIAN

Some other people urgently need to go back to the drawing board, too. When the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation bought the format and called for the public to nominate the "Greatest Canadian," the top 10 included a ranting bigot called Don Cherry, a hockey commentator whose speciality is ethnic slurs against the players (but at least they didn't nominate Celine Dion).

The Dutch voted the assassinated anti-immigrant extremist Pim Fortuyn into second place in the "Greatest Dutchman" stakes. And there was a serious risk that the British public would choose Princess Diana over Shakespeare, Darwin and Newton.

She did get more votes than those luminaries — after all, they only wrote plays, discovered gravity, and created the theory of evolution, whereas she made a bad marriage, threw herself down the stairs, and made bulimia fashionable — but she was overtaken in the end by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the great Victorian engineer.

The loyal students of Brunel University voted early and often, and only the BBC's tactic of running the Winston Churchill show last ensured that the old imperialist ("I have not become His Majesty's first minister in order to preside over the dissolution of the British Empire") finally came out on top.

The list that really impressed, though, was the "Greatest German" list: Luther and Marx, Bach and Einstein, Gutenberg and Goethe. The Germans have had a profound influence on the world over the past four centuries — and yet you did have this nagging feeling that the list was incomplete: that if "greatest" means having had the greatest impact on the world, and not just being the cleverest or the nicest, then there ought to have been one more name on the German list. And there might well have been, except that the organizers refused to record any votes for Hitler.

That's the problem with this format, you see: many countries have large skeletons in their closets. The French, for example, will undoubtedly include Napoleon on their list.

In real life, Napoleon was Hitler without the racism and the death camps, and he had a considerably longer run in power because he wasn't quite as bad a strategist as Hitler. Enough time has passed by now that the French will probably get away with putting Napoleon on their list, but he did invade practically every country in Europe, some of them several times, and that's bound to leave a lingering resentment.

JUST SAY NO

Any list of "Great Mongolians" would start and end with Genghis Khan, hands down history's greatest killer, and there are places (like China and Iraq) where that is still remembered and resented. The list of candidates for "Greatest Arab", currently being voted on, would undoubtedly feature Osama bin Laden somewhere near the top if the organizers did not ban him. And if the Russians do not ban Lenin and Stalin from their list, they'll be near the top, too.

It's an awkward thing, history, and this "greatness" business is doubly awkward. Some interpret it to mean historical importance, and by that criterion Hitler certainly belongs on the German list and Stalin on the Russian list.

Others see it as a popularity contest, however, and that's certainly how foreigners would interpret it if the great killers made it onto anybody's list. On the other hand, what if your country is so small or so new that foreigners don't even recognize any of the names on your list of "Great Ruritarians"?

Best to stay away from the whole topic, and avoid the resentment and the ridicule alike. So when the BBC salespeople come around touting their fascinating new format, just say a firm "No, thanks" and get back to doing reality shows and soap operas: that's where the audiences and the money really are. The minority who want challenging intellectual content can go listen to radio. Well, all right then, they can go read books. Both of them.

Oh, and a prediction: Bill Gates will top the list of "Great Americans."

Gwynne Dyer is a London-based independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries.

GREATEST CANADIAN

Was Bell really a Canadian?

I think it is dandy that the amazingly talented Alexander Graham Bell might have a chance at becoming the greatest Canadian, but was he really ever a Canadian citizen?

My encyclopedia lists him as an American scientist and inventor. It says that he was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1847 and became a resident of Washington, D.C. and a citizen of the United States in 1882.

I think we all know the story of why his family moved to Brantford in 1870. However, according to my encyclopedia, the good Canadian air helped Aleck regain his vigorous health so quickly that in 1871 he moved to Boston, Mass. to teach visible speech.

At the Bell Homestead we are told that he worked on the telephone in his parents' Brantford home during his summer vacations.

We also know that in later life, he and his family lived, spring-to-autumn, on Nova Scotia's Cape Breton Island.

To be sure, he spent a lot of time in Canada and must have loved this country. However, I have never heard or read that Alexander Graham Bell had ever applied or received Canadian citizenship. Am I missing something here? Perhaps some Bell expert out there will be kind enough to enlighten me.

JOAN BURK
Brantford

Editor's note: Until the law was changed in 1947, Canadians were British subjects so Bell, being born in Britain, did not need to apply for "Canadian citizenship." As late as the 1890s, John A. Macdonald, another candidate for Greatest Canadian, declared: "A British subject I was born; a British subject I will die."

Terry Fox sought to help the world

The greatest Canadian in my book of many great Canadians is Terry Fox.

His unselfish attitude puts him far ahead of all the rest.

When he dipped his leg in the Atlantic Ocean and said he would dip it in the Pacific Ocean to raise money to help cure cancer, he was not doing it just for himself. He did it to help the entire world and not to fill his own pockets.

Every politician nominated does not deserve to be on the same page as Terry Fox.

JOHN BARNES
Ohsweken

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Maybe shoppers did not hear announcement

I wish to respond to Melanie Schultz's letter to the editor in Monday's Expositor, "Shoppers ignored moment of silence."

I completely agree our revered veterans most certainly deserve our respect and two minutes of silence is very little to ask.

However, as a hearing-impaired person, the first thing that came to my mind was that I perhaps would not hear the announcement. Granted, the Nov. 11 date should be enough to clue folks in.

If the time of day got away from you, a hearing-impaired person might appear to be very rude and ignorant.

A gentle reminder to a shopper close by that two minutes of silence was being observed would be helpful to people, hearing impaired or not.

SANDY NOONAN
Brantford

Shoppers should not whine

At the 11th hour, on the 11th day, of the 11th month, if you want to hear appropriate music, go the the war memorial. They have solemn bugle music there, and no one ever comes away whining and snivelling, to my knowledge.

Can you believe it? People are out shopping at such a time and then have the nerve to criticize the big box stores.

Give your head a shake, not to mention your conscience.

WARREN BECHARD
Brantford

DECLINE AND FALL OF THE UNITED STATES

U.S. risks losing power in wars just as Britain did

History offers examples of some strange twists and turns in the course of events. One of the more unusual developments in recent history is that since the end of the Second World War, England has become a virtual colony of the United States, whereas 200 years previously, America was a colony of England. Now when President Bush tells England to jump, Prime Minister Blair asks, "How high?"

As recently as 1900, England was the dominant world power. The British Empire extended over three-quarters of the Earth's surface, if we include its dominance of the world's oceans. Commercially and politically, especially as Europe's referee, England was at its

zenith in power. So what happened? Simply put, it fought two wars against a European power that wasn't its actual enemy. England and Germany were competitors, not enemies.

Obviously, the two world wars of the first half of the 20th century were disastrous for Europe and paved the way for non-European powers to dominate global affairs.

American leaders can draw a lesson from history, but maybe it's too late for it to have any value. The point is that a great and powerful empire can collapse as a result of one or two wars against a power that isn't a real enemy.

It is an immutable historical law that a victorious war against a real and natural enemy al-

ways results in enhanced power for the victor, whereas a war, even though militarily successful, against a power that is not a real, actual enemy will weaken the victor in relation to other existing powers.

Iraq is not a real enemy of America in the sense that it could possibly conquer America, if it chose to do so. And so, whatever the outcome militarily, the United States will emerge from Iraq greatly weakened in relation to other power blocs in the world. Thank goodness, Canada had more sense and showed greater independence than England and stayed out of this war.

WERNER BROCHINSKI
RI Princeton