

Who are our heroes?

Every nation needs its heroes.

Our neighbours to the south have plenty — what with over 200 years of history to draw from. And if they don't have a hero to fit the occasion, they invent one from time to time. Paul Bunyan, for example.

Canada has its anti-hero Louis Riel, or fictitious heroes such as Lucy Maud Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables. For his part, Pierre Berton has done his best to create Canadian heroes with his historical novels.

In our modern Western culture, particularly in North America, we tend to bandy about the term "hero" somewhat freely. Anybody remotely high profile is deemed a hero.

When the U.S. Olympic hockey team won the gold medal in 1980, Jim Craig was anointed a hero for backstopping the team to its thrilling victory. One could perhaps grant artistic license in a case such as this. However, it was disturbing to hear news reports of Craig's conviction on manslaughter charges after he was involved in a vehicular homicide, and the media continued to refer to him as "Olympic hero" Jim Craig, in a way as to excuse his actions as a simple misdeed.

Some years later, another hockey player, Craig MacTavish was involved in an impaired driving accident, was convicted, and spent twelve months in a minimum security prison in Massachusetts. When MacTavish was released, and subsequently obtained by the Edmonton Oilers, it was appalling to hear people in this city comment on how MacTavish had made such a heroic comeback. Sympathy was smothering this guy because he was playing so well after a year off skates. A year off skates. What cruelty.

Another bad example of misplaced hero-worship is in the entertainment industry. Drugs and delerelation are glorified to such an extent that makes AADAC's job realistically impossible. Is it any wonder kids are confused when Eric Clapton, a desperate heroin addict and later alcoholic is proclaimed "god" by his legion of fans. I wonder if St. Peter had to tell God where the detox center was located.

This isn't to demean the positive contributions these three men have made to our world. Craig united a nation for a moment in February of 1980 at Lake Placid. MacTavish is a diligent winger worthy of praise for his on-ice efforts. Clapton is arguably the greatest guitarist ever to grace this earth. It's just that sometimes a little restraint is needed when regarding our public figures. All the public speaking engagements or proclamations of clean living, however well-intended, will not repair the torn or terminated lives that these people, and others like them, have left in their wake.

When is someone going to stand up and proclaim Joe Average a hero. I drive to work every day — I'd like to thank the people that assembled my Mustang back in 1979. I live in a house that doesn't leak or get too cold in the winter — I'd like to thank the homebuilders. All the health-care professionals that took care of my grandmother when she was in and out of the hospital last year — they're heroes. All the people who contribute to the common good of mankind — they are the real heroes — not the over-inflated egos that strut across a sound stage or patrol between the blue-lines. Let's worship some real heroes, not these pariahs.

Cam McCulloch

The Gateway

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Letters to the Editor are encouraged and always welcome.

If you have a comment which would be of interest to the students of the University, please do not hesitate to send it in. All we require is your name, address, and phone number, and student ID if you are a student. We will not print letters missing any of these.

Letters should be no longer than three hundred words.

Mail or deliver your letters to Room 282 SUB, or drop them at any SU information booth.

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LETTERS

Undergrads shut out

Don't tell me about poor working conditions Mr. Belanger and Ms. Henriuk! Undergraduates sit for hours in stuffy, overcrowded lecture halls and classrooms with lack of light and fresh air.

When I started at this university I too had a favorite spot to retreat to where I could study, read or simply relax, namely the Humanities Undergraduate student lounge. However, after it was renovated and improved it became strictly a graduate lounge. The next year I found another hideaway in the old arts building. It too was renovated and once again claimed by Graduate and Honours students. What kind of quiet and pleasant atmospheric spots are left for the undergraduate students now? Benches in HUB Mall, benches in the hallways connecting V-wing and CAB, corridors in Biological sciences and Troy Building, and overcrowded libraries with uncomfortable chairs where freedom to eat and smoke while reading, studying or relaxing is restricted. Undergraduates constitute a very large proportion of this university's

student population, we spend a lot of time and money here and all we ask is some consideration for our need of a quiet spot for relaxation and contemplation.

H. G Reynolds

But you had fun!

Re: Engineering Week story (Gateway, Thurs, Jan 21)

It must have been an earth-shattering experience to have had to attend such a function. Unfortunately, our sympathies do not go out to you since you survived and are able to tell us about. And to tell you the truth, it sounds like you had a marvelous time. Next time you decide to attend such functions, remember to remove the cactus from your ass, you just might enjoy yourself.

D. Tertzakian
 T. Syvenky

Check out a Church

During Christian awareness week I would like to say why I go to Church.

I go to church because after having searched for a long time, I have finally found an approach to "the natural and the supernatural" that I find stimulating, understandable and useful.

I find that the people I have met in my Church and other Churches of different denominations are, for the most part, intelligent, sincere, friendly people who generally have their lives in order.

I have also had a large amount of fun with Youth Groups (age 15-35) in an atmosphere that is non-threatening, spontaneous and mutually respectful.

The Christian faith contains thousands of years of human thought and the distilled wisdom of at least three cultures. The short stories, novellas, poems, songs, histories, myths, anecdotes and philosophical material of the Bible has great literary value, aside from the fact that it addresses man's deepest yearnings and desires. The New Testament (the life and teachings of Jesus Christ) combines adventure, devotion and wisdom into one of the most compelling and outrageous stories ever told. Every Sunday I treat myself to some of this fine, nourishing material.

Don't believe without question those who claim that religion is basically a social, political or economic phenomenon. Instead, go for yourself; "taste and see that the Lord is good."

Michael Cenknier

HUMOUR

Busing it again

Busess... Yes, taking the bus is a sheer pleasure, especially if you take the right bus.

"What is the right bus?" you ask.

Let me tell you about my bus, the one I take every morning.

It's got the weird bus driver. The kind that stops at corners, opens the door, and explains to anyone who cares to hear that he's Don Juan. The kind that uses the P.A. system on the bus (never knew they had one? neither did I) and tells everyone to have a great day.

It's got the regulars. The riders who soon begin to recognize around campus. You don't necessarily recognize them, but you know their perfumes (cough! cough!), shoes, music which filters through their headsets, and even lunchbags (designer brown paper).

It's got social opportunities. Where else can you make such creative remarks like "get off my foot" or "stop reading over my shoulder"?

Of course, social opportunities can lead to the bus romance. "Their eyes met across a long and crowded bus..." The rest of the story is history.

It's got the chance to practice those math skills you never though would come in handy. How many people can fit into a bus on a day below freezing? How much room could be saved by stacking passengers horizontally or by hanging passengers upside-down from those silly bars?

It's got sound effects the sounds that make you feel like you've hit some small vehicle and are dragging it along under the wheels of the bus.

My bus... There's just so much to say. To sum it up, my bus is the right bus.

Kisa Mortenson

