

FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE: This and That

By Stephen Somerville

Before this column returns to the local themes of people, politics and public affairs, below are some unconnected, stream-of-conscious and (most likely) incoherent musings and observations regarding the summer season in Aurora.

I have five items to discuss.

First, this rather new notion of public parent shaming.

I had never really heard of this concept until a few weeks ago when I read about people on the internet revealing the names of the parents of that boy who fell into the gorilla cage at the Chicago zoo.

You may recall that zoo officials were so concerned about the safety of the young boy that they had to shoot one of the gorillas. People were up in arms that the animal had to be shot and therefore 'outed' the family by revealing their names and showing their pictures on various social media.

While I don't know if the right decision had been made to have the gorilla put down, I don't think the parents had to be publicly reprimanded by anonymous people. If there was a charge to be laid, let the enforcement authorities do their job.

Second, and which is related to my first musing, I am not a big fan of social media.

Our society is very fortunate that the communications industry has made such great leaps that we today have individual cell phones and devices that let us keep contact with one another virtually wherever we are in the world.

However, I have not really found anything much good or productive to come from social media. To me, for the most part it is just an outlet for mean spirited rants from usually anonymous individuals and crazies.

My third point is about litter in the park after Aurora minor house league soccer games. As I leave the field I continually find plastic water bottles and wrappings from chocolate bars/fruit rollups that have been discarded.

Please pick up your trash and at least one piece of other trash as you leave the park. Our community has many beautiful parks and fields; let's keep 'em that way!

My fourth point is about posted signs.

We all felt heart broken when we heard about that two year old boy from Nebraska who was snatched by an alligator while wading in the water at Disney World's Floridian Resort.

This story hit very close to home when my wife and I recalled our then five year old son playing in the sand near the water's edge at the very same beach, albeit in the daytime and not at night.

It is good that Disney has now posted signs all around about the dangers of alligators and snakes. Disney is also erecting a fence made from boulders around the beach areas at all their resorts, which is also a good idea.

It is just unfortunate that the tragedy had to happen before the signs went up.

My fifth point is about my previous column entitled, 'Stop Texting and Driving.'

I received quite a few e-mails from readers, with each one agreeing with me that the commercial that was shown at the Cineplex about not texting and driving to be very powerful. That commercial has now been shown on television and scares me every time that I see it.

The movie commercial made me stop altogether. I will take or make the occasional call with the voice-only device in my car but I do not check or make any texts while I am driving in the car. I will only check the messages when I am at my destination and I have parked my vehicle.

Please make a similar pledge to yourself to stop texting while driving.

To end this column on a sunnier note, you won't hear me complain about the tremendous weather that we have had this summer. I like all this heat and sunshine.

Although, as someone employed in the hydro-electric business, some more rain would be good for business!

I know that soon enough, the October and November chilly winds will be here and that the snow will soon follow.

Enjoy this weather while you can!