

A little lighter

Are you a champion?

Are you a champion? Do you live within a 'City of Champions? What is a champion anyway? Webster's Dictionary defines the word, 'champion', as a defender of any cause. Furthermore, the word, 'cause,' is defined as that which produces a result or an effect.

From these definitions, it is logical to conclude that our beloved Edmonton Oilers and Eskimos may not be the only champions of our great city. I would even venture so far as to say that Edmonton's former mayor, Laurence Decore, would agree with me.

I don't know who it was that first introduced the slogan, the 'City of Champions' for Edmonton. Perhaps it was the result of the Oilers' first Stanley Cup win in 1984 or their second in 1985?

I have another theory. On July 31, 1987, an F4 tornado, the second most powerful tornado characterized by its blinding fury, ripped through one of Edmonton's trailer parks, killing 27 residents. This particular event will forever more haunt our greater history by its notorious name, Black Friday.

Yes, the very finger of God scarred our ground, reclaiming 27 souls for the heavens and, ultimately, reminding us of what our human lives are truly about.

Quickly and with out hesitation, hundreds of Edmontonians selflessly volunteered their time and resources to aid in the emergency and to help rebuild the lives of the people who survived. Mayor Laurence Decore, in response to the community's quick efforts, cited in a speech that this was indisputable evidence that Edmonton was indeed the 'city of champions'. Quickly after the fact, the 'City of Champions' slogan was adopted.

By definition, average, blue collar Edmontonians had become champions, for they selflessly defended their cause of preserving human life. The image of the true Edmontonian has been forever preserved as one who has the ability out of heart, courage and wisdom to overcome the worst of adversity for the greater benefit of all.

Despite this tragic event and its significant and meaningful outcome, Mayor Stephen Mandel is now pushing to adopt a different, more 'updated'

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slogan to create a new image for our city. Edmonton is now to be known as 'Capital City'.

Personally, I don't approve of Mayor Mandel's decision. We already know that Edmonton is the capital of Alberta. Do we have to over emphasize this grade four social study's fact?

When, I think of the name 'Capital City', I think of some wondrous utopia ... a grand place of sepia-toned architecture, glistening gold hues from the reflecting sunlight, and marked with high-reaching water fountains and happy people roaming about.

Alas, I realize that I would be just a resident of

Capital City, simply another number walking about lost within a multitude of a million other city residents. It seems to me that such an existence would be very cold and sterile.

I would prefer to be a champion amongst other champions in the 'City of Champions'. If you consult your dictionary you will find that the definitions describing the words 'champion' and 'hero' are closely related to one another. That being the case; how can the very ingredients of what makes a champion become old, outdated or boring?

If a champion is one who is the defender of a cause, then we have many upon many champions within our city. These champions are the marginalized and the mentally ill, who care enough to volunteer to help even less fortunate people. These champions spend hours in lending an ear or assistance to a friend or stranger in desperate need, despite their own needs.

These champions are the poor who live on our streets, the ones that have decided to say no to drugs and gangs. These champions go even further to spread humour, warmth and well being unto others, despite that part of society that continues to look down upon them.

Now I must ask you again: Are you a champion?

Some people may say: "Well, every city has people like that." "What makes Edmonton so special?"

What makes us special is how we define ourselves and what we are all about.

Back in 1999, I was very passionate about getting into the Guinness Book of World Records. I wrote a letter to Ashrita Furman, a man who is

working on his 100th world record. Mr. Furman replied with the most inspiring letter I could imagine, saying:

"My best advice to you is to get your motivation from within. Do these records for your own growth, fulfillment and progress. Try to get strength from your deeper spiritual self."

If these are not the real ingredients of a champion, then what could they be?

My point is that we need not define ourselves by looking to other accomplished people for inspiration or a sense of what it's like to be a champion. We can be champions by following Ashrita Furman's advice and finding the required ingredients from deep within ourselves.

We can be the 'City of Champions' because we choose to be. In doing so, we can let the world know that our greatness, as individuals, is not based on whether the Oilers win the next Stanley Cup or not. We are great because we choose to be and we have evolved enough to recognize and understand that we have what it takes to be true champions in life.

It is inspiring to witness one who breaks a world record however, breaking our own personal best means so much, much more. Just think about what all of our own personal bests, added up, could mean for our community?

Note to Mayor.Mandel: "Is a rose not a rose by any other name? Then why not call a spade a spade and a rose a rose?"

- Darryl Learie

Good Morning!

A sweet little boy surprised his grandmother one morning and brought her a cup of coffee. He made it himself and was so proud. The little boy anxiously waited to hear the verdict on the quality of the coffee. The grandmother had never in her life had such a bad cup of coffee, and as she forced down the last sip she noticed three of those little green army guys in the bottom of the cup.

She asked, "Honey, why would three little green army guys be in the bottom of my cup?"

Her grandson replied, "You know grandma, it's like on TV, The best part of waking up is soldiers in your cup."

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Performers Wanted!

Family Entertainment Night (Coffee House)

Open Stage! Live Music! Poetry Reading!
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When: Tuesday, Nov. 15, 6:30 pm

Where: Bissell Centre, 10527-96 St.

Contact: Earl @ 423-2285 Ext. 144