RACIST, OR JUST RACE-RELATED?

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Winnipeg Free Press

Sociologist Jason Edgerton helped the Toronto Star report on the changing demographics of Brampton, Ont. Brampton faces a complex situation. Massive suburban-style growth coupled with a huge influx of new Canadians, mostly South Asian, settling in a community that for decades was mostly white. Brampton has boomed over the past two decades, more than doubling from 234,445 residents in 1991 to 521,315 in 2011. But delving into the just-released National Household Survey reveals a paradox. While the visible minority segment has exploded to represent two-thirds of Brampton’s population, white residents are dwindling. Their numbers went from 192,400 in 2001 to 169,230 in 2011. That’s a loss of more than 23,000 people, or 12 per cent, in a decade when the city’s population rose by 60 per cent. That’s hardly a picture of a multicultural ideal so cherished in this country. Edgerton sees complexity in those numbers. “After you control for retirement, low birth rate, etc. some of the other (shrinking) could be white flight — former mainstreams finding it uncomfortable being the minority. Even for you, 2 per cent is (due to) higher retirement migration, 2 per cent is lower birth rate, 2 per cent is job change; they might only account for one half of the overall decrease, and the other half is unexplained,” says Edgerton. He says more study would be needed to say for sure why people are leaving Brampton.

LAGGING JUSTICE

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Winnipeg Free Press

In 1999 the Supreme Court mandated that judges take an Aboriginal offender’s culture into account. But a report from Hagg and David Milward, who have studied Gladue in Manitoba, say the Supreme Court continues to suggest that the Gladue factor is not significant. In Manitoba, a study by the Canadian Centre for Justice and膘ilization found 90 per cent of Gladue cases were under 25 and 50 per cent of cases, people avoided obstacles in a safer way. That’s up from 20 per cent without CrashAlert!, says Hagg. What’s more, the device doesn’t distract the user from what they’re doing. Hagg’s research shows the user can use it while alongside gaming or texting without any cost to performance. Although CrashAlert is currently a bulky prototype, collision statistics suggest a final version could prevent a lot of accidents.

HEADLINE

“Helping other human rights,” Winnipeg Free Press, May 27, story about Gertrude Hambira who had to flee Harare, Zimbabwe, and ended up in Winnipeg where her daughter was doing a master’s in food science at the U of M. Hambira who had to flee Harare, Zimbabwe, and ended up in Winnipeg where her daughter was doing a master’s in food science at the U of M.

“My life changed, both in Canada and in Zimbabwe,” says Hambira. Without the help of a network of Zimbabweans in Canada and at the Canadian Embassy in Harare she says she would have returned to Harare. She is currently a member of the Canadian embassy’s network in Zimbabwe. Hambira says she is grateful and appreciative of the help she received in Canada. She is also grateful for the opportunity to continue her studies in Canada.

Lululemon’s Chip Wilson receives IDEA award

SEAN MOORE

Thorn Antler

Lululemon’s Chip Wilson, founder and chairman of lululemon athletica Inc. has received the 2013 International Distinguished Entrepreneur Award (IDEA), an annual award presented by the U of M and the Associates, a group of more than 260 prominent business leaders who support the Asper School of Business. Wilson spoke to Asper School of Business students on Tuesday, June 4. He joined past IDEA recipients including, Albert D. Cohen, O.C., Israel H. Asper, O.C., O.Q, Richard Branson, Heather Reisman, Gerald Schwartz, Jim Balsillie and last year’s recipient, Stu Clark.

Forbes has ranked Wilson as Canada’s ninth wealthiest person, with a net worth of $2.9 billion. Lululemon boasts a cult following and revenue of $700 million from 157 stores. The majority of the stores are in North America, but Lululemon has store presence in Australia and New Zealand. There are also showrooms in Hong Kong and Great Britain. Wilson received the IDEA award at a luncheon at the Winnipeg Convention Centre on June 4, 2013.

These occasional notes about my reading are evidence, as I look back on them, of the eclectic nature of my interests — I read books on a wide range of topics that are written by authors I’ve never read. One day I may enjoy the past, that are given to me as gifts by members of my family or close friends, that are recommended by others I know to have interesting tastes, that appear in reviews I stumble upon and occasionally (though less frequently than in the past) that I find while browsing in bookshops. Here are some things I’ve read in the past few months.

The music and poetry of Leonard Cohen have been increasingly appealing to me in recent years. So when I saw a review of Alan Light’s The Holy or the Broken that focuses on Cohen’s song “Hallelujah,” I was intrigued by the idea of it and then pleased to receive it as a gift at Christmas. Light pays attention to the lyrics and what they suggest to him about Cohen’s thinking, but also to the several iconic recordings of the song and their impact. After reading the book it was a particular pleasure to hear Cohen sing it at his Winnipeg concert on April 26.

About 15 years ago I stumbled on The Best American Poetry, a series of annual selections guided by David Lehman, with a different editor each year. I began to watch for the new volumes as they appeared. Being somewhat compulsive, I wanted to complete my collection so after a few years looked for copies of the earlier volumes from sources advertising online, and managed to get a complete series in near mint condition. The Best American Poetry 2012 was edited by Mark Doty. More recently, Molly Peacock became the series editor for a Canadian counterpart, and The Best Canadian Poetry in English 2012 was edited by Carmine Starnino. These annuals always contain some poems not to my personal taste but also some that are worth continuing the collecting.

I began reading the work of the American writer Theodore Roosevelt, dealing with the period prior to, during and after his presidency of the United States, respectively. The second of these, Theodore Rex, chronicles Roosevelt’s work as President, but also shows his energy and endurance. He loved the outdoors — traveling, hunting, hiking, boating, etc. — and wanted to preserve the natural heritage of the country. He also read an amazing amount on many topics and in several languages. That he could do so while carrying such heavy responsibilities can be an encouragement to all of us.