



Poet, publisher, and former banker Raymond Souster is shown at the Old Mill Bridge on the Humber River in Lambton Park in October 2000. Souster died earlier this year.



Russ Loader of Oshawa is shown preparing to light a bulb from the current under his bedroom floor.



Father Roberto Ubertino, seated centre, at St. John the Compassionate mission on Broadview Ave. surrounded by volunteers and friends.



Father Hernan Astudillo is shown in front of the Church of San Lorenzo, on Dufferin St., south of Lawrence Ave. W.

Fiorito: Warm thoughts to some who have warmed this space



By Joe Fiorito Columnist
Mon., Dec. 31, 2012

Let us offer best wishes for the year ahead to some of the people who have appeared in this space over the past 12 months.

Happy New Year to my two favourite priests, Father Hernan Astudillo of the Church of San Lorenzo, and to Father Roberto Ubertino, of St. John The Compassionate Mission.

Father Hernan and his parish have raised thousands of dollars in aid and supplies, including ambulances and buses, for those who have been harmed by earthquakes in Central America.

This year, among other things, the padre worked as a field hand in the Niagara region, in order to better understand the migrant workers for whom he says mass.

Father Roberto? He runs the mission on Broadview north of Queen. You may also know the St. John's Bakery, which makes some of the best sourdough bread in the city; more importantly, it employs a dozen or so people who would otherwise be on welfare or collecting benefits; instead, they are paying taxes.

I am not, by nature, a religious guy, but these two are an example of faith through good works.

They should meet.

I'll see what I can do.

I now want to wish a happy new year to Nick Lounsbury, who helped to rescue a man who jumped in front of a subway train last spring.

I send best wishes to Russ Loader of Oshawa, who discovered that there was so much electrical current coursing under the floors of his apartment that he could power a light bulb, simply by touching bare wires to the floor. No one but me, and Dr. Magda Havas of Trent University, seems to think this is a serious problem.

Best of the season to you, too, Dr. Havas.

Tashi delek and happy New Year to Pema Choden, who fed me the best momos I have ever eaten.

Now here is a Raymond Souster story. The poet died earlier this year. The last time I saw him, he gave me an armload of his books. I opened one of them recently. It was an orphan; the pages were blank. If I had any nerve at all, I would hand-write some of my own poems between the covers.

I don't have that kind of nerve.

I wonder why the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce does not erect a statue of the banker-poet in the courtyard in front of their head office downtown.

Happy New Year to John West, who dominates the ping-pong tables at the Wellesley Community Centre; also to his happy foil, the recreationist Lucky Boothe.

We are the ones who are lucky.

Nathaniel Banton? We love that man around here. We also send our love to Donald and Alane Simmonds, who mourn the loss of their son Kevin.

Greetings, and thanks, to the person at Toronto Community Housing who arranged for the cover over the canopy at the entrance to 200 Wellesley.

Best wishes to Frank DiGenova, of Butcher By Nature on Annette St. Frank is back in business after the fire. Happy thoughts to my other favourite butcher, Peter Sanagan, of Sanagan's Meat Locker in Kensington Market, who recently expanded.

These two should also meet.

And now to Bob Richardson and Bertie Nakogee. Bertie was a First Nations volunteer who died in Toronto before he could serve overseas in the First World War. He was buried in an unmarked grave. Bob secured him a tombstone.

Thanks Bob.

And thanks, Bertie.

But my kindest thoughts are for you, dear reader, for following me around town the past 12 months.

Happy New Year, one and all!