EDITORIALS AND LETTERS

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NEIL OLIVER Associate Publisher JILL DAVIS Editor in Chief CHARLENE HALL Circulation Manager ROD JERRED Managing Editor THE OAKVILLE BEAVER IS PROUD OFFICIAL MEDIA SPONSOR FOR:

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The new normal

Tomorrow marks the second anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the U.S. by members of al Qaeda.

People around the world will be bombarded once again with those same surreal images of commercial aircraft slamming into the twin towers of New York's World Trade Center and the subsequent collapse of both office structures.

Two years later, those horrifying pictures continue to evoke a multitude of feelings from fear to sadness to anger.

The U.S.-led war on Iraq and the on-going violence in that country as well as other parts of the world has meant terrorism has never been too far from our hearts and minds.

Locally, the second anniversary of Sept. 11 will be met with both remembrance and a refusal to allow terrorists to put a hold on our daily

For instance, several special Halton youngsters are gearing up to return to Disney World aboard a Sunshine Dreams For Kids dreamlift.

Their original journey to visit Mickey Mouse and friends never materialized because of the terrorist attacks. Their plane was already in the skies jetting to the Magic Kingdom when the terrorists commandeered the doomed flights. The children and their devoted caregivers were stranded in Orlando for three days during an unprecedented suspension of U.S. air travel. For many of these children, it was their first trip away from their parents — a heart-wrenching experience.

The folks at Disney and other kind-hearted Americans did their best to bring cheer to the youngsters under the most of trying of circumstances. But obviously it wasn't the same (it will never be the same.)

On Sept. 25, more than two years after that fateful day, many of these same youngsters and teens will once again be boarding a plane for Florida.

Hopefully what was a disappointing journey for the chronically and terminally-ill children can be turned into a wonderful trip to the Magic Kingdom this time around.

While Sept. 11, 2001 has forever been etched in our minds, we know that life does carry on even if it is "the new normal."

DON'T TURN OUT THE LIGHT! THE DIDN'T YOU? MGUINTY MONSTER WILL GET ME!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Volunteer soccer coach felt 'judged, abused and hurt'

close, I thought it a good time for one of the many volunteer coaches to comment on the experience l had as a coach for a house league team within the Oakville Soccer Club (OSC).

I had the opportunity to coach a program I am involved with. agreed to help the club, as they had recently been very good to a friend of mine.

I had no experience playing soccer in any organized league but had represented the Ontario Field Hockey team for many years. The club assured me that I would do fine (after all no one else was stepping up to commit to what ended up to be in excess of 100 hours of time, four and a half months of summer and over \$100 of their own money).

I had attended a couple of coaching clinics and had done quite a bit of research on coaching philosophies and tactics. As prepared as I thought I was, nothing could have prepared me for the experience I was about to endure. I went into the season with excitement hoping to have a supportive and friendly group of parents to build a powerful team dynamic

All of those hopes were quickly disillusioned after the first game, where I was scolded multiple times and left the game completely alone, without one thank you and no help to carry all of the team's supplies. I was ready to quit at this stage but I knew I had committed myself to my friend and the team. I went home in tears, completely shocked at the lack of grace and appreciation from these

As the season progressed, so did the snide comments from the

As the soccer season draws to a sidelines and the many nights receiving unsupportive comments where I walked to the car alone feeling used and abused. A number of sideline comments had actually left some of the children crying at halftime or after the game.

By about the third game, I team through another volunteer admit, I had given up trying because it took up too much time Having not enough coaches, I and effort to care and no matter what I did I was not going to satisfy everyone.

> I have never felt so alienated, judged and abused and hurt. As a volunteer, I went into this experience with no preconceived notions (I had no exposure to the culture of the OSC) although I did have great expectations. I expected a great season, one where there would be a real team spirit (in all my years of competitive sport, I always remember my teammates and all the great times we had).

> I expected that I would be appreciated and respected for my efforts, while instead I was constantly judged and virtually ignored. I expected a degree of civility where people would call to let me know if they were going to miss a practice or a game, instead I would attend practice with three or four players and games with just enough to play.

> I never expected that this low level of house league would be so competitive or that there would be so little commitment from many of the players and parents. Most of all, I expected that the kids would learn some new skills and have a great time together.

> Despite the score, I always tried to keep it fun by choosing to allow them to try many positions, not relegating the less desirable positions to any particular person or letting the weaker players sit on the sidelines more than their peers. I hope they had fun but

as soon as you make a mistake from people, who are supposed to be cheering you on, doesn't seem like much fun to me.

In fairness to the team as a whole, there were a number of parents (at least five or six sets) that made the experience bearable and should be very proud of their children, as they were the most enjoyable and respectful on the team. It is clear that they are following their parents' positive example, as most kids do.

I can honestly say that this is the worst volunteer experience that I have ever had and I will never do it again, not even when I have kids of my own and I actually have a reason to take four and a half months out of my summer to go to soccer twice a week.

I hope that some parents read this and realize that although they

have paid money to put their child in soccer, that money is barely enough to pay for the season and the club relies heavily on volun-

Coaches do not get paid and do not claim to do this as their career. Until you have tried to do this job you have no right to comment unless you are willing to follow up your comments by helping out.

I hope that next season, parents make an effort to respect the coach and offer help so that some other volunteer's expectations and spirit do not get crushed.

NAME WITH HELD UPON REQUEST

Ed. Note: Normally, the Oakville Beaver does not run a letter without a name. However, we believe the reasons why the writer did not want us to print her name were reasonable and

Writer shares thoughts on same-sex marriage

This letter, addressed to Oakville MP Bonnie Brown, was submitted to the Oakville Beaver for publication.

I read in the Oakville Beaver that you have not yet decided where you stand on the new samesex marriage legislation. This inspires me to share my thoughts on the subject with you.

I write from the perspective of a person in a traditional marriage. I was married in a church, have remained married and faithful for 23 years, have seven children and do not use artificial birth control.

I wonder how many people who say they want the civil definition of marriage to keep its traditional meaning have really thought about what they are asking for.

Do they want the law to say that people must be married in church? Do they want adultery, divorce and

birth control to be illegal? Should the government enforce that married couples have children? I am reasonably sure that the vast majority of Canadians do not want

Trying to give the civil definition of marriage its traditional meaning at this point is shutting the barn door after the horse has been stolen, lived out its natural life and been dead for a few decades. The reality of the situation is that a civil marriage is different from a traditional or religious marriage.

Civil marriage should be defined in reference to the civil rights of Canadians not in reference to a tradition that the majority of Canadians have abandoned. Clearly same-sex marriages should be allowed under Canadian law.

By STEVE NEASE

JAYNE KULIKAUSKAS

LETTER OF THE WEEK

College student thanks Lighthouse for support

Imagine waking up one morning in a place full of people you don't know. Both young and old surround you. You no longer set your own rules, but now have to abide by those in care of you. The rules range from eating meals at certain times of the day, to letting someone know when you are going out, to coming back in time for curfew. Forget having the time to deal what's just happened because you are also expected to get a job, have first and last and find a home...in two weeks.

What if you had to wake up one morning knowing that a life that took you years to build is now given a deadline to be put back together?

I was one of those people. Only I was just setting out to start a new life. I'm 26 years old and I came here from Timmins on my own, not knowing anyone or anything about a big city. I am enrolled at Sheridan College in Journalism-Print program and following one bad situation after another, I ended up at the Lighthouse shelter. I had moved a total of three times in about six months before making the fourth move to the shelter. I didn't want to be part of a life with alcohol and drugs and because of that choice and not knowing anyone, I had to make lastminute decisions on who to turn to.

To be honest, before going to the shelter, I had my notions of what it would be like; much like what people believe now and it really scared me. During my stay there, however, I met a lot of people who were there for reasons different than mine, but with the same outcome — nowhere to go and no one to turn to. It was much different than I expected. I got to know a lot of good people and no matter how scared and alone I felt, they were, too, and that brought us closer together. There was always someone there to talk to and it held its own certain kind of security. It felt more like part of a home than it did a shelter and it saved me.

I don't know where I would be now if I had to have gone to Hamilton or Toronto. I was still in the middle of school and was just getting to know Oakville, let alone trying to get to know

The Lighthouse saved my life in more ways than one. When I first came to Oakville and heard about the reluctance of residents to have one built, I was appalled. I ended up writing a feature story on it. Who would have known that I would ended up there? Now I've been on the other side.

I've been out of the shelter for a few months now and I've started to put my life back together. I'm heading back into my second year of school, which I didn't think would happen, but I guess I'm still meant to be a journalist. I'm still meant to follow my dream.

Oakville residents need to put themselves in someone else's shoes because, who knows, one day they may wake up and find the perfect fit. The Salvation Army Lighthouse shelter has been saving people across Canada for years; help keep it around for many more to come. Help support the building of the shelter.

RACHEL NADON

Pud

HAT DID YOU DO IN CLASS TODAY, SAMMY NOTHIN







We want your opinion

The Oakville Beaver welcomes letters from its readers. Letters will be edited for clarity, length, legal considerations and grammar.

In order to be published, letters must contain the name, address and phone number of the author.

Letters should be addressed to The Editor, Oakville Beaver, 467 Speers Road, Oakville, On., L6K 3S4, or via email to editor@oakvillebeaver.com.

The Beaver reserves the right to refuse to publish any let-

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