

Letters to the Editor

Readers dispute editorial on need for seatbelts laws

To the editor of The Herald:

I should like to answer your editorial and the letter of Marie Shadbolt in reference to seat belt legislation.

The object of the law is, as with most laws, to protect the majority and not, as you say, an infringement on your freedom of choice. Seat belts are designed to reduce injury and there is no

question that in the majority of accidents they do.

Unlike you and your reader I feel that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the financial burden of multiple injuries is reduced by the wearing of seat belts. Why should the "system" have to support people who deliberately, by their own actions, incur greater than necessary injury from automobile accidents? Do you also refuse

to wear a seat belt on an airplane upon take-off or landing?

The person who throws himself in front of a moving train may well contend that he is only hurting himself, but what about the driver and his passengers - can we be sure they will not be affected by the experience?

The point of my letter is that, contrary to what you

might believe, you do not have the right to take unnecessary risks which may, in the end, result in an extra burden on society at large.

Be reasonable and above all think positively that the wearing of seat belts is not so much an imposition but a technical development which reduces injuries!

Yours truly,
Peter Cashmore,
RR2 Erin

We all pay for injuries

To the editor of The Herald:

Last week's lead editorial on seat belts failed to mention one minor legal technicality: no one in Ontario has the "right" to drive on our public streets and highways.

If I recall correctly, I had to take various tests to earn the conditional "privilege" of driving in

Ontario. Conditions range from the condition of the driver to the condition of the vehicle.

One of the current conditions to maintain the "privilege", is the wearing of a seat belt. By not keeping up your end of the bargain one can hardly expect the ministry of transportation to extend your driving "privilege".

Perhaps what we need is a different system of enforcement. If one chooses to be impaired or not buckle up and gets in an accident one should not expect OHIP to pay the medical expenses.

A temporary increase in subsequent premiums would repay OHIP according to the percentage he was at fault. After

all - why should the rest of us pay their way?

To extend this solution and make it even less palatable for those convicted of seat belt and impaired driving offences, maybe we should have a larger fine and have portion turned over to OHIP.

Kit Woode,
Georgetown

Driving is our privilege

To the editor of The Herald:

I read a letter in your paper recently from an irate woman who claimed her "freedom of choice was invaded" after being charged for failing to wear a seatbelt. Although I genuinely sympathize with her emotional situation (being charged for anything is humiliating), I really can't say I agree with her argument.

God in Heaven knows that our legislative system here on earth is everything short of perfect, but (surprisingly)

there are still a few laws designed for our protection - and I do think the seatbelt law is one of them.

Not that I love submitting to the accused thing! I grumble, too. It's uncomfortable. It's restrictive - especially over a bulky winter coat. The one in my car even leaves its imprint in my neck.

Sure, it's irritating. But it doesn't kill me to wear it. In fact, it might just kill me not to. It has little to do with whether the person behind the wheel is a good driver or not.

Many accidents happen which have little or no bearing on actual driving techniques. What would we choose? To bear the discomfort of a restrictive belt, or meet a sudden, unforeseen emergency and bear the discomfort of a blooded head embedded in a windshield? I should think my life is more precious to me than to forfeit it for the sake of "freedom of choice".

Driving is a choice, as Marie Shadbolt stated, but it is not a right. It is a privilege. And to enjoy that privilege, we must

swallow our pride and our "better knowledge" of the way things should be run, and submit to the laws which govern it. If we maintain such an attitude, I'm sure we'll see our "freedom of choice" in a whole new perspective. And we won't get so mad when we're caught abusing the privilege (and yes, I have been caught before, but I choose to learn from my error).

Thanks kindly for listening!
Sincerely,
(Mrs.) Melanie Nixon
RR1 Norval

Do-gooders out to save us from 'evils' of pay TV

To the editor of The Herald:

Do-gooders are at it again. Now they're challenging the First Choice Pay TV channel's option of offering programming from Playboy Enterprises. They say they're erotic.

Webster's definition of erotic: of or causing sexual feelings or desires. How terrible! The thought of having a sexual feeling is revolting!

A local Halton woman is now asking the board of education to send a letter of complaint. Has she nothing better to do? Or does she simply want to save us? Does she realize she will be able to purchase an electronic device to attach to her TV to cut off programming at a pre-set time. This would eliminate children whose parents allow them to stay

up after midnight to watch such a channel. Why is it always women who are against such programming? I think they are protecting only themselves. Are they in situations where they feel threatened? Must be. I've never heard of men complaining of such programming.

My suggestion to all the do-gooders - don't buy Pay TV, but let me have my freedom of choice, you have yours.

One last thing, I've been scanning the channels to see if Pay TV has been running any freebies. Haven't found any. Will all these women please tell me where they saw the programming? Surely they're not going on hearsay.

Mary Hacon,
Georgetown

Applaud school board - soft porn only first step

To the editor of The Herald:

I would like to applaud Trustee Arlene Bruce for her motion before the Halton board of education which formally protests Playboy-type programming on pay TV.

Over the past year in particular, the public has had many opportunities to investigate the effects of soft-porn on our society. The National Film Board's "Not A Love Story", presentations by

Project P, the unit of the OPP dealing with pornography, and the many articles written by psychologists, sociologists and the like make us aware of the real dangers, to all members of society, of Playboy-type presentations in our media.

In presenting women as mindless sex objects, worthy only of contempt, soft porn prepares the public mind for the next step in the pornography industry - violence against women. Violence

with sex is the predominant theme of both films and magazines now illegally available. In portraying women as unworthy of respect, as useless except for the pleasures their bodies afford others, soft porn brings us to the brink of enslavement, bondage, gang rapes, bestiality, beatings and even murder and mutilation.

There are four major influences in a young person's life today and all

compete to be the most dominant. They are home, school, peers and the media, especially television. Provincial legislation refers to the school as "an extension of the home". Of the four main influences only the home and school have the best interests of the child at heart. The school board therefore not only has the right but a duty to take a stand against pornography on television. This is not censorship but advice and support for parents as well as teachers who will also have to deal with the effects of soft porn on kids.

In taking a stand, the school board sets an example for students in demonstrating the public's right to protest against undesirable media programming. This should encourage everyone, parents and students alike, to practise greater discrimination in their choices in all media areas.

Trustee Bruce is obviously well informed about the dangers of soft porn. She also fully realizes her responsibility as a trustee to take a stand in the best interest of children. Let us all support Mrs. Bruce in her efforts for the benefit of all our society.

Yours truly,
Gail Rutherford,
Georgetown

Column on bishops was narrow-minded

To the editor of The Herald:

Your Queen's Park columnist's kneejerk condemnation of the Canadian Conference of Bishops' New Year's statement on unemployment demonstrated his narrow-minded, intellectual aloof.

If Derek Nelson lacks either the wit or the time to properly critique such an important subject, I urge a replacement be sought.

The bishops are ex-

pressing the aspiration of the majority of us, whose desires are rarely heard.

We need good paying jobs for every able-bodied person. We want work that is creative and satisfying, not the soul-destroying drudgery most of us are forced to endure. We want to make things of real value, not junk designed to breakdown and be thrown away. We want healthy workplaces and a safe environment, not a cancer epidemic in a pollution-scarred country. We each want more

control over our lives and the institutions that affect us, not to be slaves to corporate machines and bureaucrats.

The only way we'll achieve these goals is thru the "community ownership and control industries and new forms of worker management" that the bishops recommend.

The bishops' message is very clear but it's not one Nelson and his corporate sponsors want to hear.
Grant Pattullo,
RR1 Limehouse

Sweeping disabled under rug?

To the editor of The Herald:

Recently some decision-making by town council indicated that priorities regarding the handicapped have not changed.

Could it be that as a minority group (two per cent of the national population are termed "disabled"), they have no voting clout and do not matter?

Money is always the key word in government circles. Yet there seems to be enough to spend on renovating the appearance of the downtown, purchasing land for a new municipal complex (\$650,000) or building a new cultural centre (\$1.76 million).

In Acton, monies were allotted for a fence to beautify a local park. That was obviously more important than a ramp at the arena to ensure that everyone could enjoy that public recreational facility.

In Georgetown, a new deck at the Dick Licata Memorial Pool takes precedence over an elevator at the Georgetown arena. Cost, again, is the deciding factor. However, I wonder how original estimates can vary so greatly from the actual costs?

Original cost for deck - \$9,000; actual cost - \$18,000. Original cost for elevator - \$6,500; actual cost - approximately \$28,000.

I might suggest that since the elevator is so expensive, the disabled, I'm sure, are not too proud to use a ramp and in a time of recession, it would save taxpayers dollars.

Government is continually arguing that costs must be eliminated or reduced and, in health and social services, it appears they have applied this premise. In March, 1982, the budgets for social services were slashed at the same time the region voted to

approve an increase in chairman Jack Raftis' car allowance.

Ironically, we vote for our members to serve us and meet our needs. Yet very little legislation in the past has been implemented to meet the needs of the handicapped in the community. In Halton Hills, there is no legislation. Maybe council members hope the handicapped will move to another community when they are no longer independent.

Certainly if one requires housing home care they must move to either Milton or Acton. Although a 77-bed nursing home facility had the final go-ahead last June after eight years of planning, no construction has begun. I expect we'll get a

new municipal complex before we get a nursing home.

At a recent meeting of the long-term committee and seniors information committee, Dr. Anne Martin Matthews from the department of family studies at the University of Guelph argued that available services should be supplemented and put into action to keep more people in the community.

It's a proven fact that it's far less costly to maintain an individual at home as compared to an institution. In most cases, the person is happier as well, but I must remember that we're dealing with costs here, not feelings.

On the positive side, I want to thank those members of council who supported the purchase of the ActiVan, a real boon

to many, and the building of a ramp at the cultural centre. I trust every consideration will be given to the disabled when designing the new municipal complex as well.

How can the budget makers in all good conscience continue to sweep under the rug the needs of

the disabled in Halton Hills? They will no longer tolerate being patronized. Therefore, I urge you, council members, to plan for the future, as it could be you someday, facing a set of stairs and wondering how you'll get your wheelchair up.

Pat Woode,
Georgetown

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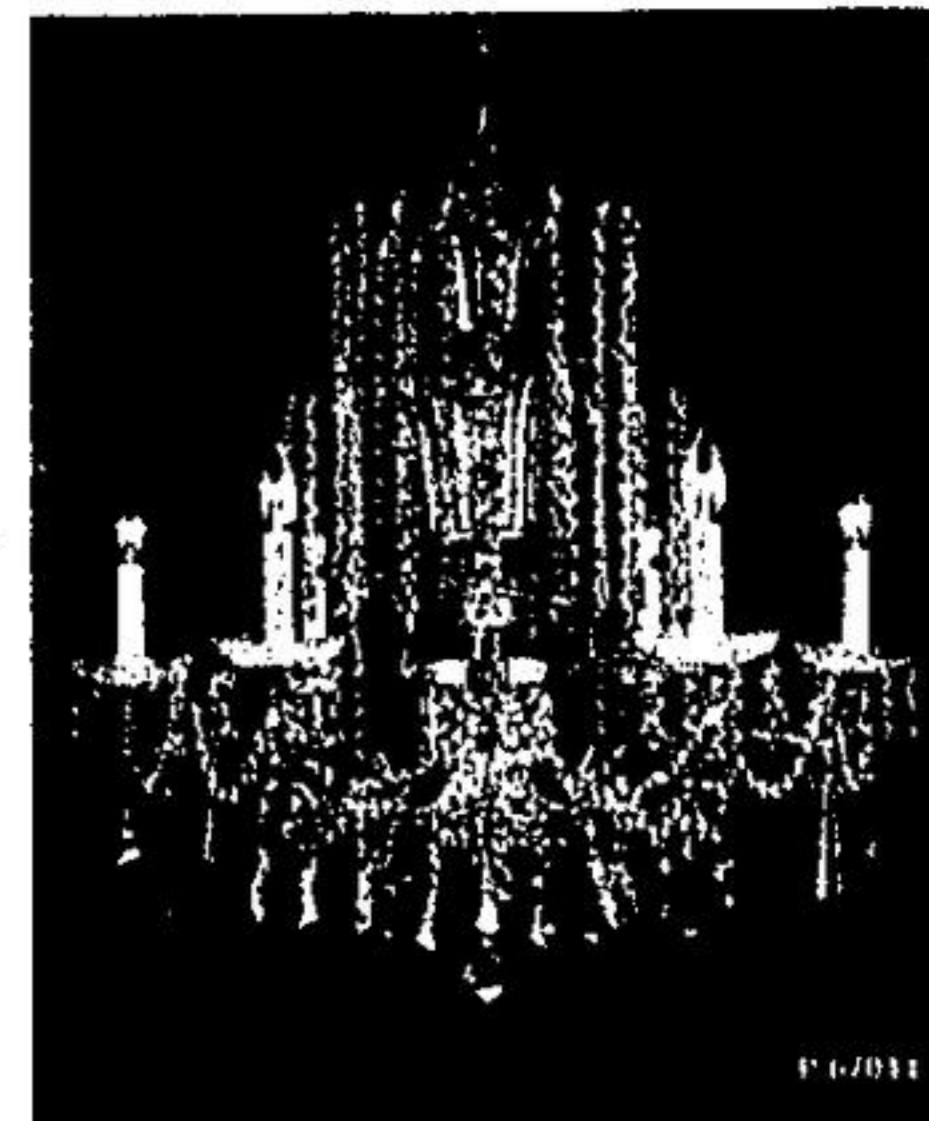
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