

V is for volunteer

It may be the teenager who helps stock shelves at the local food bank.

Perhaps it's the senior citizen who drives cancer patients for treatments in Toronto.

It might be the college student running up and down the sidelines refereeing your child's soccer game.

Maybe it's someone offering comfort to hospital patients, or the person cleaning up roadside ditches, or the Big Brother/Sister spending time with a youngster who has no father/mother figure.

Volunteers come in all ages and passions, but there is something they all share in common: a desire to make their community better.

In all likelihood they don't even look at their efforts that way. They simply want to spend time lending a hand or improving something that needs help.

The vast majority of volunteers aren't looking for credit or awards or applause or even a simple pat on the back.

They just volunteer.

With this week being National Volunteer Week we would like to add our voice to that of the Town and Region and other groups in saluting the efforts of all the volunteers who work tirelessly to make our community the special place it is.

Much of the successes Halton Hills can boast can be directly attributed to the work of the thousands of people who each year roll up their sleeves and pitch in for any number of causes.

It is these people, often operating behind the scenes and out of the limelight, that do the real work.

For that, we say thank you.

Letters to the editor policy

Letters must include an address and daytime telephone number. Anonymous letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 150 words and may be edited for content and/or length.

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WEB POLL RESULTS

Hydro rates will be increased by 12 % starting May 1. Are these rate hikes...

Too high; I won't be able to afford my hydro bill (91%)

Okay; I accept electricity is an expensive resource (9%)

Go to www.independentfreepress.com

Letters to the editor

Riding to defence of Halton Place

Dear editor,

Re: March 23 article, Frustrated neighbours and Halton Place.

I was at the March 8 council meeting and what was reported was not my experience. First of all it was the supporters of Halton Place who packed the public gallery—there were 18 of us there along with the three neighbours who are against the Halton Place horse shows.

Had the people against horse shows been registered as speakers before the council deadline, rather than as late additions, then myself and several other people would have spoken in support of Halton Place. But what was on the agenda was a Halton Place progress report and permit process update, which was best addressed by Bert Arnold, the Halton Place lawyer who specializes in the development process.

Horse shows are an accepted use of agricultural land, and a particularly good fit for supporting the greenbelt area of the Niagara Escarpment. Halton Place is a beauti-

fully maintained property increasing the property values of anyone living nearby. The horse shows have a significant economic impact in our local economy—people staying in hotels, eating in restaurants and shopping in our stores.

The few neighbours against the horse shows should have a say, but it should not be a disproportionate voice. I live in Georgetown, am a rider and am thrilled to have a world class, privately funded facility like Halton Place in my community.

Patti Mara, Georgetown

Ted: Spay Paige

Dear editor,

Re: Ted Brown's March 26 column (Mother Nature's on the job).

I found his article a little offensive. Normally I love his columns or, if I disagree, I defend his right to his opinion but as someone who has volunteered for 14 years with an animal shelter I take exception to his column on Paige the barn cat and her offspring.

Is he aware there is a low cost spay and neuter clinic in Newmarket—\$50 a cat.

There is Alley Cats Allies and their affiliates that will help with spay

and neutering. Most offer a TNR program which stands for Trap, Neutered, Release of feral cats (<http://www.alleycat.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=191>)

There are independent no-kill shelters that run low or no-cost spay and neutering for barn cats. I have been volunteering with Cats Anonymous in Orton and we have such a program (www.catsanonymous.ca).

It sure beats letting kittens become fodder for wild coyotes or other animals like red tail hawks. Heck why not throw out a puppy or two for variety on the menu? Or why complain if a coyote eats a family pet. Same difference...Mother Nature and all that jazz.

We are also always looking for new barns for our TNR, (trap/ neuter/release) neutered feral cats as they play an important role in rodent control for farmers. Feral will never be "pet" cats to anyone.

So, if Ted doesn't want to spay Paige that is his choice, but please don't treat her offspring as food. If they can be taken from her early they can be made into wonderful pets. You can Google to see when is the best time to trap the little ones before they become feral too.

Very, very sincerely a fan.

Debra Hayes, Georgetown