

## Tough topic

Suicide is not a subject easily broached.

However, the awkwardness and/or fear of discussing suicide pales in comparison to the damage caused if the complex issue is not brought to the forefront.

For example, did you know:

- 30 suicide deaths occur each year on average in Halton

- In Halton there are more than 420 hospitalizations each year from attempted suicides

- Halton Regional Police receives, on average, one call per day related to suicide

Those are frightening statistics to be sure, however by bringing the issue of suicide into the light, steps can be taken to help reduce those numbers.

Last Friday was World Suicide Prevention Day and Halton Region, along with the Halton Suicide Prevention Coalition (HSPC), wants to raise awareness about the Coalition's updated website that offers easy-to-access information and support for anyone either considering suicide or wanting to help a suicidal person.

The website is [www.suicidepreventionhalton.ca](http://www.suicidepreventionhalton.ca).

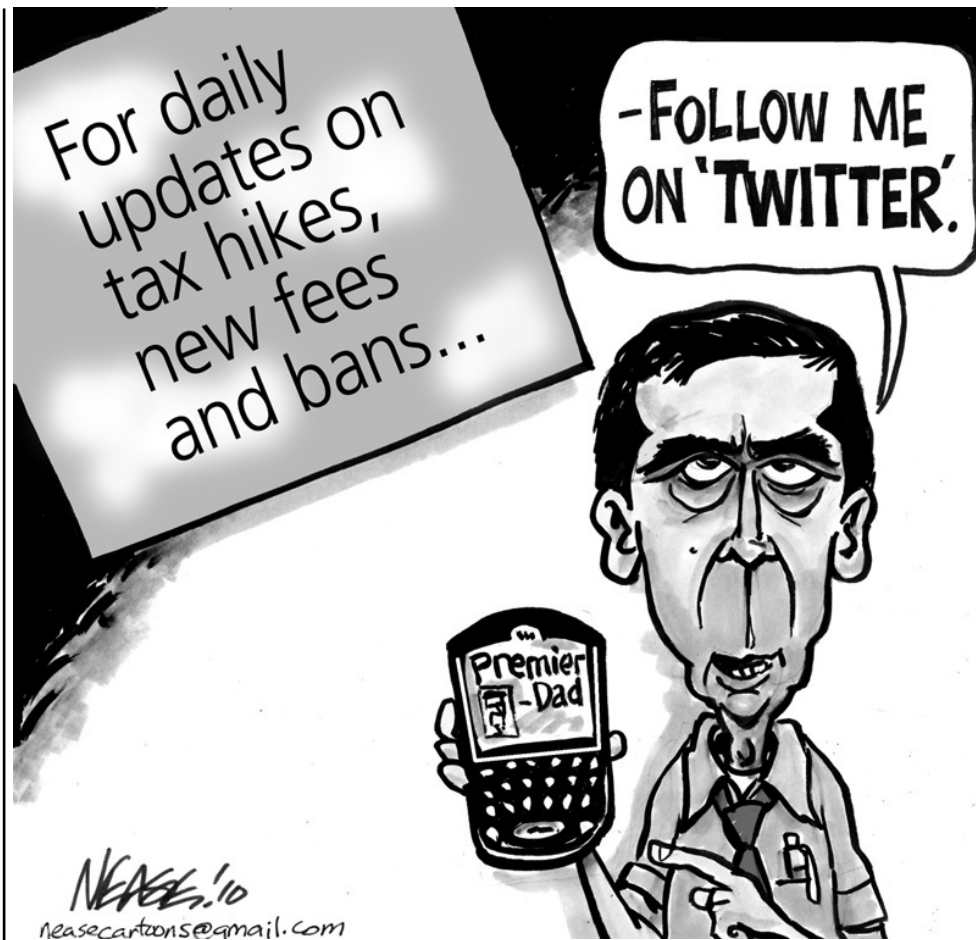
"Taking the lead from the Coalition, we can build a greater understanding in Halton about the warning signs of suicide and the support available to help prevent it", said Regional Chair Gary Carr. "It's a complex issue and I encourage residents to visit the updated HSPC website or call the Region for more information."

The Halton Suicide Prevention Coalition is a coalition of the Halton Region Health Department, local health and social services organizations, and individuals interested in suicide prevention.

In Halton Hills, a suicide prevention group H.E.A.L.— is also available to help. The group was formed three years ago to develop suicide prevention, intervention and advocacy strategies by increasing awareness and fostering links between those who need support and those who can offer help.

By working together and openly discussing the issue of suicide, it is hoped that, in time, the number of suicides and attempted suicides in Halton Region will significantly decline.

To ignore the issue certainly is not the answer.



**Steve Nease**

**905-873-0301**  
**Publisher:** Ken Nugent  
**General manager:** Steve Foreman  
 (sforeman@independentfreepress.com)  
**Retail advertising manager:** Cindi Campbell  
 (ccampbell@independentfreepress.com)  
**Managing editor:** John McGhie  
 (jmcghie@independentfreepress.com)  
**Distribution manager:** Nancy Geissler  
 (ngeissler@independentfreepress.com)  
**Classifieds**  
 Kristie Pells  
 (classified@independentfreepress.com)  
**Accounting**  
 Rose Marie Gauthier  
**Editorial**  
 Cynthia Gamble: News editor  
 (cgamble@independentfreepress.com)  
 Ted Brown: Photography  
 (tbrown@independentfreepress.com)  
 Lisa Tallyn: Staff writer  
 (ltallyn@independentfreepress.com)  
 Eamonn Maher: Staff writer/sports  
 (emaher@independentfreepress.com)

## WEB POLL RESULTS

The new National Football League season is now underway. Which brand of football do you prefer to watch—the NFL or the Canadian Football League?

- The NFL (36%)
- The CFL (41%)
- Neither...I prefer English football (soccer) (23%)

Go to [www.independentfreepress.com](http://www.independentfreepress.com)

## Letters to the editor

### Where are parents of pumpkin vandals?

Dear editor,

An even bigger disappointment than the kids prowling around Georgetown, stealing from cars and damaging property in the middle of the night are the parents who have no idea where their kids are at 2 a.m.

Note to parents— if your kids are gone all night, wearing black hoodies and carrying backpacks, they're likely up to no good.

Note to the four punks prowling around Stewarttown recently (Sept. 3-4): our four-year-old is very impressed that you fatally damaged one of her 500-lb. pumpkins and did enough destruction in the patch to end our competitive season that requires hundreds of hours of work from April to October. The silly thing is we would give free tours, advice and seeds to anyone who asks to see our giant pumpkins. This kind of senseless vandalism is reserved for only the lowest life forms.

The last time our vehicles were broken into we installed perimeter/driveway alarms which is what alerted us to calling the police that Sunday morning. Unfortunately they

missed the four punks by seconds as they ran off.

It's a sad situation that you have to spend thousands of dollars protecting your own property, but as of this week we will also be installing video surveillance cameras with night vision and 24-hour-a-day recording. So if you decide to come back, make sure you at least smile for the cameras.

*John Nieuwenhoff, Georgetown*

### A stand against poverty

Dear editor,

I just read the food bank's request for help in Tuesday's paper.

I am holding a 'Make Poverty History' event on Saturday, Sept. 18 at the Georgetown Farmers' Market. Make Poverty History is a global advocacy movement that lobbies governments to keep their poverty reduction goals and United Nations commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

This weekend (Sept 17-19) we are urged to take a 'stand' against poverty. Our poverty 'stand' will be outside The Way We Were store, 98 Main St. from 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. during the Farmers' Market. It is sponsored by the Mothers' Union from St. Alban's Church, Glen Williams. We will be collecting donations for the food bank at this time as well as giv-

ing information about Make Poverty History and the work of Mothers' Union International.

*Annette Graydon, Terra Cotta*

### 'Santa' will be missed

Dear editor,

It was with a heavy heart that I heard of the passing of Emmett O'Rourke last week. Mr. O'Rourke was a figure of Acton. He could be seen sunning on his back deck in the summer, and was commonly referred to as "the guy who looks like Santa Claus" with his long white beard.

We would exchange friendly words about the weather or what was going on in the town. When the weather was cooler, he would no longer be on his deck, and I would miss his presence—it was always a sign of spring.

It wasn't until a few years ago that *The Independent & Free Press* took a moving picture of him wiping the tears from his face at a Remembrance Day ceremony and placed it on the front page that I finally knew his name, and I thank you for that.

I will miss him very much. It is amazing how strangers become figures in your life and have such an impact on your life and on your town. Rest in peace.

*Robyn Harrower, Acton*

## 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. Publication is not guaranteed.

E-mail: [jmcghie@independentfreepress.com](mailto:jmcghie@independentfreepress.com)

Mail or drop off: Independent & Free Press, 280 Guelph St., Unit 29, Georgetown, ON., L7G 4B1.

## The Independent & Free Press

The Independent & Free Press is published Tuesday and Thursday and is one of several Metroland Media Group Ltd. community newspapers. Editorial and advertising content of The Independent & Free Press is protected by copyright. Unauthorized use is prohibited.