

Opinion

What others say:

Change for the better

From The MILTON CHAMPION

Sexual assault has no more place in our society than does assault by any other name. We have been slow to realize and appreciate that, but attitudes are changing.

The optimistic side of the coin shows that women are realizing they are victims and fighting back against their attackers by ensuring their rights to justice are preserved.

Under the law, sexual assault is any unwanted act of a sexual nature. Sexual assault is a crime, no matter what the relationship between victim and aggressor. Marriage offers no sanction for this act of violence.

Contrary to an oft-repeated defence that "she asked for it," women are not responsible for such an assault despite the supposed provocation of dressing or acting flirtatiously.

Being drunk or high on drugs are neither legal defences nor excuses, any more than they are for other violent crimes. At best they point to marginally mitigating circumstances.

As it stands now, one in four women is likely to be sexually assaulted at some time in her life. Women are twice as likely to be assaulted by a friend, relative or acquaintance as they are by a stranger on a dark street.

There are many victims who haven't had the courage to stand up and formally face their tormentors (only one in 10 sexual assaults are reported). While in truth they're failing to report a crime and in that sense abandoning what is usually construed as a civic duty, it's understandable in the prevailing climate.

But at least today there are non-judgemental organizations such as the Halton Rape Crisis Centre to provide confidential counselling for victims of sexual assault.

As well, the Halton Regional Police victim services unit offers emotional support and advice to victims and their families. The police also provide information about the often complex criminal justice system.

The emotional scars of a sexual assault can, and usually do, last forever. There's little that can be done to change that by anyone. But in the last few years we've seen a marked increase in the sensitivity of law makers and law enforcers when it comes to female sexual assault, as well as the blossoming of a multitude of agencies geared toward lessening both the stigma and the scars associated with being victimized by such a crime.

In that more nurturing, more progressive climate, we can only hope that more victims will find the courage to confront those who have wronged them so deeply. We can only hope that, as our system has changed, slowly but profoundly, so too will our attitudes and actions change.

We realize that in many ways we are asking much of those most fragile in this process - the victims. But the support safety net for them has widened, the understanding of their plight has deepened. When they are ready to reach out for help, in most circumstances today help will be there. If it isn't, that too is a crime, one that society seems increasingly unwilling to tolerate.

Statsfacts

In 1989, Canada hosted some 15 million visitors captivated by its beauty and tradition, while Canadian residents made over 60 million trips to destinations outside Canada.

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Americans comprise the largest segment of Canada's tourist market. Statistics Canada reports that over 12 million Americans visited Canada for one night or more in 1989, while the combined total of travellers from other countries was only about three million.



Reflections from the past

Park Public School participated in the 1973 parade is today, while Georgetown's parade is Georgetown Lions' Santa Calus parade. Acton's Nov. 30.

Our Readers Write

Community support overwhelming

Dear Editor,

On behalf of the clients, volunteers and Board of Directors of the Love In Christ Food Bank, I would like to express our overwhelming and heartfelt thanks to all those who made the Scout/Guide Food Drive such a huge success. It truly was a great example of community caring and love for your fellow person.

At a time when we seem to be overrun with bad news and vandalism from the younger segment of society, it was reassuring to see so many children, parents and leaders working together for the benefit of others. We need to praise and make known the good deeds of all young people, not just at special times.

We also very much appreciated the extra helpers from the community that came in and sort-

ed, boxed and stored away all the food.

An effort this large would have been impossible without the expertise of such capable people as Ron Birrell, Constable Riddle, the staff of The Independent and the Guide and Scout leaders.

Most of all, we wish to thank all of you who spent that extra money to purchase food at a time when the economy is not kind to the average family; when there is little "extra" cash available or your income is fixed and extra food is a luxury.

I truly believe God has blessed Georgetown with the spirit of a caring community and as we continue to help each other, his blessings will continue to flow. God bless each of you.

Sincerely,
Laura Ellison

Endorsement was disappointing

To the Editor,

As a private citizen going through the paper looking for information on the candidates, I was disappointed to see that the *Independent/Free Press* had chosen to endorse specific candidates. That is not what I expect from one of our local newspapers.

How much better it would have been if your paper had included a short piece on the strengths and weaknesses, as you saw them, for each person running for office. It really should have been left to

the voter with your paper supplying as much information as possible.

The "Election 91" special, on the other hand, was excellent information helping confused voters sort out the ward boundaries as well as the different levels of council and what the candidates said on some of the issues. With many residents commenting on the excellent special it's a shame that you had to get into trying to make the choice for us.

Yours truly,
Barbara Halsall

Remembering a special man

To the Editor and the residents of the Halton Hills area:

As a former patient I would like to testify to the knowledge, skills and kindness of the late Arthur Lorrman to myself and many others.

He helped all the members of our family at various times and myself the most because of a bad hip injury.

Arthur was a generous man in helping the young people and athletes in their injuries from sports, without charge. Although his fees were modest there were many he treated without charge.

Arthur did things his own way, and his way helped many people.

Sincerely,
Jean Mackenzie

Halton Hills

WEEKEND

The Georgetown Independent and Acton Free Press

KEN NUGENT
Publisher

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