

## Thank a senior

Celebrate a senior in your life this month.

June 2016 marks the 32nd anniversary of Seniors Month in Ontario, which offers an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the immense contribution older adults make in our community.

This is both through their lives past and very much so, perhaps more so, in their present contributions. The theme of this year's occasion is Seniors Making a Difference something we see every day here.

In April, as groups across town celebrated Volunteer Week and the immense contribution volunteers made to our community, many of those hardworking people are seniors. They retire one day and almost the next take up a new, volunteer position.

Many, many local groups are well-served by volunteer seniors, women's clubs, service clubs, animal shelters and rescue groups, to name but a few. This trend is not unique. According to a 2013 report issued by Volunteer Canada, senior adults contributed more than one billion volunteer hours across the country in 2010. And while older adults have a lower volunteer rate than younger age groups, they contribute, on average, more hours per year.

We suspect, as the tide of baby boomers turns to a retirement tsunami, the rate and commitment to volunteering will swell. According to the Volunteer Canada report, baby boomers have consistently high rates of volunteering and they are loyal to their organizations.

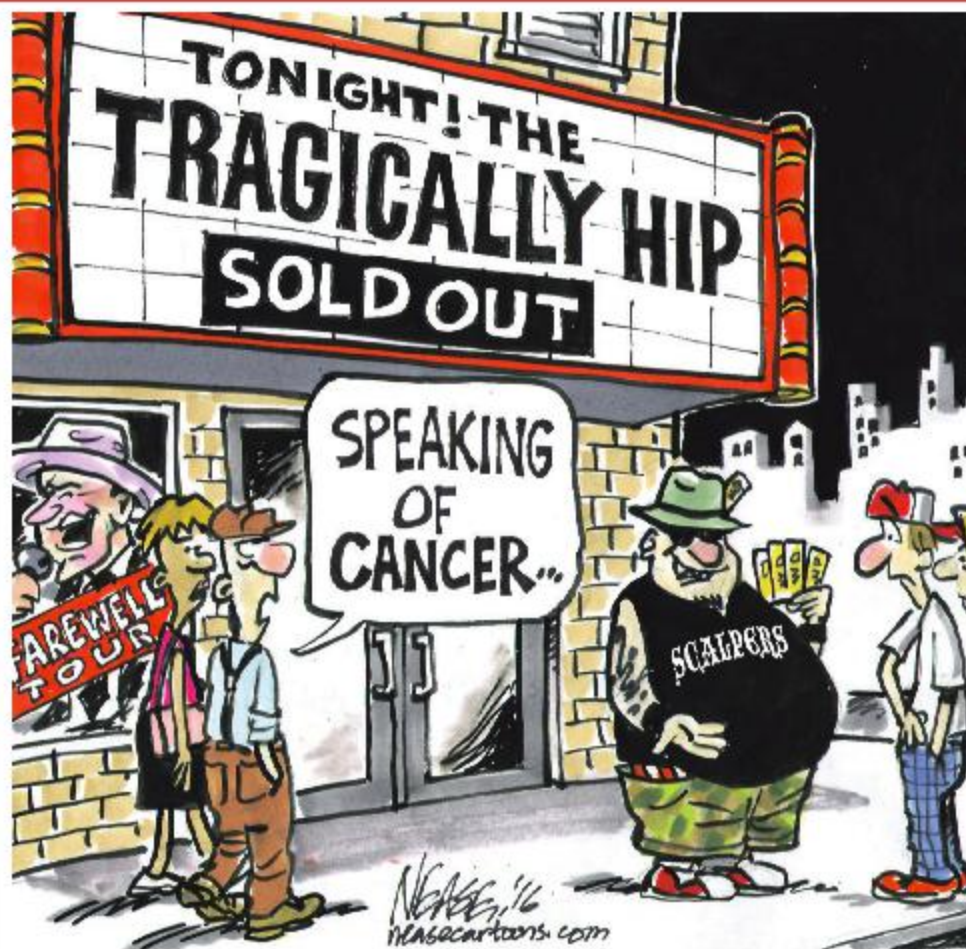
The report also indicates that members of the baby boomer generation have a genuine desire to contribute to the community and are motivated to use or develop the considerable skills they possess and that can only benefit us all.

Aside from public service, seniors contribute to family life, and assist with babysitting, transportation and everyday errands. As well, many help out friends and neighbours.

Despite alarmist predictions in recent years of the strain that the rising number of seniors will put on health care and the economy, we know how much they contribute, and feel that making the senior population stronger can only make our communities healthier and more vibrant.

### The Independent & Free Press

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## Letters to the editor

### Let the kids play

I am always delighted to see children playing outside and interacting with their friends and families through physical activity rather than hiding inside the house playing video games and watching TV.

I have two children, a 10-year-old son, and 19-month-old daughter. My husband and I moved with our son to Milfoil Street five years ago and have always loved the neighbourhood. Part of the charm to us was seeing the kids riding their bikes and playing basketball on the road. Over the course of our five years, we have watched some of those young boys turn in to teenagers, and it warms my heart to see them enjoying time with their fathers shooting hoops at a time most would say are difficult years.

When our neighbour's basketball net broke, my son and his friend two doors down decided that they would combine their birthday money and purchase a net together that could be shared with

the other children on the road. As a mother I could not have been more proud to see my son and his friend make this decision together and took them to Canadian Tire to pick out what net they thought would fit their budget and provide them with hours of fun. The two boys then continued their efforts to help my husband build the net, position the net, and weight the base.

To my surprise last week, I was visited by a municipal bylaw enforcement officer who came to share that a resident on our street filed a complaint about the basketball nets located on the boulevard. He mentioned that he himself was not aware of this basketball net bylaw, and had to research it internally before visiting Milfoil Street for himself. His suggestion to me was not to stop the children from playing basketball on the road, but to move the basketball net to the other side of the sidewalk when the children weren't playing. While in theory this sounds like a great solution, the basketball net is used daily, and is weighted at the base that moving it back and forth to play is simply not realistic. If we remove some of the weight in the base to make for easier mobility it will

then pose a greater safety risk. Moving it to the top of the driveway creates more challenges as we will then have parked cars on the road, children chasing balls on to the road with less visibility to those driving, creating larger safety concerns.

The officer shared with me that if the net is not relocated that the municipality would potentially come by with a truck and take the basketball net away.

Imagine the horror of this idea to a 10 and 11 year old boy, who saved all their money and put so much thought in to what they wanted to do with it. They spent their money on a toy that can be shared with neighbours, friends and family. This pleasure is not only enjoyed by them, but by people like me who can appreciate active children playing outside and living on a street where we know our neighbours names.

I am at a loss about how to deal with this which is why I am sending this letter. I see basketball nets on boulevards throughout the Georgetown community. I would much prefer the children and teenagers on Milfoil to be playing basketball on the road then hanging out at the school and plazas causing trouble.

Kim Stephens,  
Georgetown