

We must all support gender inclusivity

Wednesday was International Women's Day, and throughout our region everyone was encouraged to attend events that push for greater equality of the sexes and celebrate the achievements of women.

The theme for IWD is #BeBoldForChange and organizers called on people to help forge a better working world a more gender-inclusive world.

However, what we'd like to see is a world without domestic violence.

While Wednesday was a great day to celebrate the accomplishments of women, it's also a time to pause and reflect and remember all those victims of domestic violence not with us.

Most victims suffer in silence. Most hide their pain behind the lies they tell their friends, teachers, and other relatives.

What is the real cost of domestic violence? We just don't know.

Media literacy a vital skill

If, in his bid for the Conservative leadership, candidate Kevin O'Leary suddenly starts describing the CBC or CTV as 'fake news', will his supporters believe him?

Would some blindly defend his claims even if they knew they were not true? If, in the next federal election, WikiLeaks uses its online muscle to go after Justin Trudeau the way it did Hillary Clinton, will people buy in?

Propaganda has been used as a political tool as long as there have been politicians, but the emergence of the Internet as a weapon during the recent U.S. presidential election presents possibilities for misinformation previously unheard of. It's unsettling to think that our faith in and reliance on traditional journalism to keep us informed and to keep the powerful accountable can be undermined by a few tweets by someone with an obvious agenda.

The proliferation of online fake news was a topic discussed recently, when a federal committee met with executives from Google and Facebook.

In a world in which it's accepted that the president of the United States will deem 'fake' any news report that casts him or his people in a negative light, it's become incumbent upon Canadians to consider this issue.

No matter our political leanings (and we all have them), Canadians must demand of our media the highest standards of journalism. We must allow our preconceptions and biases to be challenged by good work.

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Letters to the editor

Don't be afraid to be a rebel

RE: GDHS changing its sports team name.

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines rebel as a person who opposes or fights against a government; a person who opposes a person or group in authority; a person who does not obey rules or accept normal standards of behavior, dress, etc.

The definition of the word nowhere implies prejudice, discrimination, bigotry or racism.

Unfortunately, the term rebel has recently been associated with the Southern Confederates of the U.S. Civil War, whose flag has become an ad hoc banner for white supremacy.

Historically, however, rebels have predominantly been virtuous and ethical individuals or groups fighting against tyranny and oppression, and for human rights and freedoms. William Lyon Mackenzie. Louis Riel.

William Wallace. Mahatma Gandhi. Nelson Mandela. Jeanne d'Arc. Martin Luther King Jr. Even the heroes of the *Star Wars* franchise are rebels.

A rebel is not a racist. A rebel is someone who stands up against wrongs that have become norms.

Stating that the word rebel, in general, has negative connotations or associations is close minded and false.

To claim that rebel is inherently negative terminology in today's society is to bow in the face of all that one believes is wrong.

In light of all that is happening in the world today all the apathy and disconnection, all the atrocities that are becoming normalized, all the use of alternative facts, the manipulation of truth, the alt-right rhetoric and action within our closest ally and trade partner it is now, more than ever, important to have rebels.

The truth of the matter is that racism persists within our society and within our town.

But the name rebel does not cause it, or represent it, any more than changing that name will solve it.

Changing the name will not change peoples prejudices, but will instead hide them under the guise of progress.

What is needed, rather, is a sober discussion about how to foster acceptance and inclusivity within our town, and how to help everyone feel welcome and comfortable at GDHS and throughout the community.

This is not an issue that can be fixed by semantics, by changing a name.

It will require continual commitment, determination, and actions by GDHS students, staff, and alumni, as well as all Georgetown residents.

Discard the Confederate flag. Banish the mustachioed Southern General. Change the colours. But do not shy from the proud moniker that has historically wrought so much positive change.

Do not apologize for standing up for what is right.

Do not wither under the pressure of normality, correctness, or conformity. Do not be afraid to be rebels.

Brad Naylor