

We won't be silenced

A group of disgruntled city councillors in Brampton seem to be confusing freedom of the press with freedom from the press.

Angry with recent coverage by the local newspaper, some councillors are proposing a motion to scrutinize the media's questioning of elected officials. It's a thinly veiled attempt to intimidate reporters. The motion calls for all media inquiries to be posted on the city website along with provided responses. Further, councillors want future meeting agendas to include time to respond to media coverage.

Meanwhile, at least one member of Brampton council has also taken to Twitter, suggesting the local paper isn't providing real news.

If it sounds reminiscent of the antics of President Donald Trump and his staff, that's because there's a strong and troubling parallel. This is all in reaction to assertive reporting that is critical of the city's leadership. Councillors say they have put the press on notice. Such a statement demonstrates a blatant disregard for, or ignorance of, the checks and balances already strongly entrenched in the Canadian media system.

Accountability starts with the news outlet itself. Complaints can be made directly to a journalist, editor, or publisher. If the response is unsatisfactory, individuals can contact the press council. The National NewsMedia Council deals with matters concerning fairness of coverage, relevance, balance and accuracy. Its members (including this newspaper) abide by its decisions. It's a free and open process for the public.

When media make a mistake, we own it very publicly. That's not something everyone can say.

And there is the law. Canada has very strict libel laws. These laws protect the reputation of individuals and organizations from false and derogatory remarks. Media are bound by these laws. There have been no formal complaints made regarding recent coverage of Brampton. Instead, this is about a group of councillors lashing out because they are upset with what strong local reporting has unearthed. Strong, independent reporting on behalf of the public has led to truthful and unflattering accounts of what has been transpiring at city hall.

These councillors forget that media are not accountable to elected officials. Media are accountable to the public, the same group whose money these councillors are spending. Claiming to put the press on notice is a poorly disguised attack on the fundamental freedoms laid out in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which includes freedom of the press.

Metroland is putting elected officials on notice: Media will not be intimidated by these thinly disguised bullying tactics.

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Letters to the editor

Pot unsafe: student

I agree wholeheartedly that pot is unsafe for our youth.

I am a junior in high school and have had classes where both guys and girls have shown up high out of their ever-loving minds. With the legalization of marijuana, Trudeau's government hopes the strict regulation of its distribution will protect the youth, and I hope that for Trudeau's own sake, it does. We as youth understand the risks and dangers of pot, yet some of us do it anyway.

High school and personal stresses beg for an escape that marijuana and other sources only too willingly provide. We are easily seduced by the possibility that we can be free of the daily constricting pressures we face, but this isn't the way and trying to convince others isn't easy. I only hope that the use of pot doesn't result in the crossing of a line that has no return.

Shealynn Verghese

Same old Tories

Andrew Scheer, the newly elected

leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, declared in his victory speech I believe that the foundation of our democracy is the ability to debate any subject.

And yet a year ago, when the Dufferin-Caledon federal Liberals were busy organizing a forum to inform citizens about electoral reform, that same Andrew Scheer, condemned, in the House of Commons, Liberal organization of this forum.

Andrew Scheer may have a nicer smile than Stephen Harper, and speak in a gentler tone, but the partisan poison remains the same.

Last week Conservative Senator Stephen Greene was kicked out of caucus for accepting an invitation to meet, discuss and dine with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Week after week we are subjected to the poison pen of the Tory brain trust criticizing everything the Liberal government does, including its desire to gain membership on the United Nations Security Council, immigration policy, support for middle class families through income tax reductions

and increased benefits and the handling of trade issues with the Trump administration.

We have seen the fine example of former Conservative prime minister Brian Mulroney, working with the Trudeau government on trade matters with the Trump administration for the benefit of Canadians.

We face challenges both domestically and internationally that requires our leaders to speak the truth, work together to protect and promote Canadian interests and vision both at home and around the world while ensuring a healthy and prosperous future for all, not just the privileged few.

I ran in the 2015 federal election because I believed that I could bring to the role of member of Parliament energy and honesty along with a desire to serve the best interests of the citizens of Dufferin-Caledon by listening, caring and uniting people to achieve our common goals; together we will do better.

Ed Crewson