

Courting disaster

Advocates for victims of violence are shedding light on a scenario so bizarre that it's amazing it could be happening here.

According to the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee, over the past 10 years, the criminal and the family courts in this province have refused to share information.

This has led judges to impose contradictory court orders.

Terrible tragedies have resulted.

In 2006, Andrew Osidacz, the abusive ex-husband of Julie Craven, was ordered by the criminal court to stay away from her and their son, Jared, 8.

The family court, however, granted Osidacz unsupervised weekend access to the child a mere three weeks after he assaulted Craven.

He stabbed Jared to death and then went to Craven's house and attempted to kill her before police shot him.

In 2004, a two-year-old girl was murdered by her father, who was on probation for assaulting her mother and had a restraining order against him.

Years after these incidents, there is still no formal mechanism to allow the courts to share vital information, the committee reports.

Abused women who receive contradictory court orders often live a nightmare, said Pamela Cross, legal director of Luke's Place, a support and resources centre.

"Having their lives chopped up and siloed by these two systems is frustrating and they don't understand why the two courts can't talk to each other, or which order trumps the other," she told the Toronto Star. "It's just nonsensical."

Queen's Park has been long aware of this fundamental dysfunction, but seems incapable of addressing it in a meaningful way. And that is nothing short of absurd.

How many more children and women will be put in harm's way before this is fixed?

Victims of domestic violence need support and protection, not bureaucratic procrastination.

WEB POLL RESULTS

(Go to www.theifp.ca)

Saturday is Valentine's Day. Do you have plans?

- No, it's just another day (68%)
- Yes, time with my special Valentine (32%)

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THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS

905-873-0301

Publisher: Dana Robbins

General manager: Steve Foreman

(sforeman@theifp.ca)

Retail advertising manager: Cindi Campbell

(ccampbell@theifp.ca)

Managing editor: Chris Vernon

(cvernon@metroland.com)

Distribution manager: Nancy Geissler

(ngeissler@theifp.ca)

Classifieds/Real Estate

Kristie Pells

(realestate@theifp.ca)

Classified Call Centre

1-855-415-8237

classified@theifp.ca

Accounting

1-866-773-6575

Editorial

Cynthia Gamble: News editor

(cgamble@theifp.ca)

Lisa Tallyn: Staff writer

(ltallyn@theifp.ca)

Eamonn Maher: Staff writer/sports

(emaher@theifp.ca)

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Letters to the editor

Obese cat has nine lives

Nimo, our lovable and slightly overweight house cat, slipped through the door Dec. 19 into the bitter cold of winter.

Our prayers were answered Jan. 26 after 38 days and we would like to recognize and thank those we owe Nimo's life and recovery to:

- Jennifer, within our South Georgetown neighbourhood who found him starved and frozen — you persisted until finding a service who would take him;

- Barb Johnson, volunteer for North Halton Kitten Rescue who came to his aid — without your knowledge and kindness I'm certain he would not be here today;

- Georgetown Animal Clinic doctors and staff — you are the best;

- And, our dear family friend Christine of Wags To Wiskers grooming — you dedicated yourself to his care during his first week home.

Veronica Lester

Vaccines raise questions

Sorry but I think there is a question as to whether or not all childhood vaccines are safe or were safe.

A friend of mine with twin autistic daughters places the blame 100 per cent on a vaccine.

I cannot argue with him.

Given our history of environmental miscues, whether thalidomide, DDT, Carbon Dioxide, Environmental Estrogens, and on and on, it is difficult for any educated person to take the government's word on anything to do with health.

It is simply not good enough for one to ask well then "what causes autism?" and hear "We don't know".

What causes all these new peanut allergies? "We don't know".

In the absence of governments doing their job of identifying the environmental causes exactly, then a parent's judgement is as good as anything else.

I myself, being a student of history and therefore having a mistrust

of the health system — and after having relatively low birthweight children, waited until the last possible moment to vaccinate, in order that my kids mature as much as possible before subjecting their tiny bodies to these chemicals (especially those containing mercury).

In this day and age with our ability to collect and process data around the world, we ought to be able to do much better than "we don't know".

That just isn't good enough.

Adrian Visentin

Letters policy

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Email: cvernon@metroland.com
Mail or drop off: Independent & Free Press, 280 Guelph St., Unit 77, Georgetown, ON, L7G 4B1.

