

WE NEED AMBER ALERT, FINE-TUNED OR NOT

Whether they were unspeakably heartless or just plain stupid, the people who flooded Brantford police with 911 complaints about an Amber Alert recently were entirely out of line. A two-year-old girl had been taken from her home in that city by a man who had broken down the door. The child's mother was distraught. Fears for the child's safety, even her life, were legitimate.

And so in those desperate, middle-of-the-night minutes, police sent out an Amber Alert to people's cell-phones across Ontario pleading for any information that might lead to the safe recovery of that little girl.

Thankfully, police found the child unharmed in Hamilton, returned her home and made four arrests. But not before fending off the furious flak of fools who had been awakened from their sleep by a shrill Amber Alert and chose to vent their rage by calling 911.

One person called 911 no fewer than 11 times and is rightly being investigated for a possible mischief offence. But everyone who dialed that number to gripe about this Amber Alert behaved reprehensibly.

That number is for emergencies, not complaints. Calling 911 for such a comparatively frivolous reason could delay a serious emergency call and result in tragedy. No wonder there's a petition calling on the Ontario government to make such abuses of 911 an offence.

It's somewhat understandable that people awakened on a work night by an Amber Alert might, at least initially, be annoyed. Their frustration will be particularly pronounced if they live far from where the child has gone missing and could offer no help.

The authorities should be sensitive to this and at least consider modifying Amber Alerts so they can remain effective while causing minimal disruption. That may not be easy.

Some people suggest dividing the enormous land mass of Ontario into regions and targeting alerts to people in specific areas. Perhaps that would be an improvement. But police believe this change could weaken the effectiveness of the Amber Alert, citing the case of a child reported missing in Sudbury who was later located in Toronto.

If Amber Alerts can be fine-tuned, we say, "Good." If they can't, people should learn to live with the occasional inconvenience they create. Or they can turn off their phones. But before they do, they might consider that a child's life matters more than an interrupted sleep.

TO LEARN HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR OWN CONTENT VISIT THEIFP.CA



WE'RE ALL ENTITLED TO AGE WITHOUT VIOLENCE

ABUSE HAS NO AGE LIMIT, WRITES BOZZO



CARM BOZZO
Column

Let's discuss violence as it may affect older women.

Many studies/consultations have taken place over the course of the last few years.

Aging Without Violence, a four-year training project lead by the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH), has developed and presented recommendations re: Consultation submission on Ontario's Senior's Strategy to the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility.

Central to OAITH's work is bringing attention to violence against all women. In 1995 OAITH started a Femicide List; to capture the stories of wom-

en who lost their lives due to gender-based violence, (specifically intimate partner and known relationship femicide) as reported on by the media.

In 2018, women who were over the age of 55 made up 45 per cent of those murdered, with charges laid against the men closest to them. The presence of women aged 55 and over has steadily increased on OAITH's Femicide List over the last few years.

Abuse has no boundaries - not even age. Up to 10 per cent of older adults in Ontario face abuse which can include physical, sexual, emotional and financial, as well as neglect and violation of rights.

Older women may have difficulty accessing serv-

ices. Barriers include believing it is a personal matter that has gone on for so long that nothing will change. They may be financially dependent on their abuser and they may feel shame. Older women may have difficulty finding affordable housing on their own. Marginalized women would experience even greater barriers.

Aging without violence is a right that all human beings are entitled to. Violence against older women has a broad scope which may include (ex) partners, family members, caregivers, neighbours, acquaintances and service providers.

If you know an older woman who is being abused please call us for resources or have the woman call our crisis lines at: Burlington - 905-332-7892 or Milton at 905-878-8555.

Carm Bozzo is the development manager for Halton Women's Place

YOU OPINIONS

SIGN UP FOR OUR WEEKLY NEWSLETTER AT THEIFP.CA

ABOUT US

This newspaper, published every Thursday, is a division of the Metroland Media Group Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Torstar Corporation. The Metroland family of newspapers is comprised of more than 80 community publications across Ontario.

This newspaper is a member of the National NewsMedia Council. Complainants are urged to bring their concerns to the attention of the newspaper and, if not satisfied, write The National NewsMedia Council, Suite 200, 890 Yonge St., Toronto, ON M4W 2H2. Phone: 416-340-1981 Web: www.mediacouncil.ca

nnc
National NewsMedia Council

ocna

newsroom@theifp.ca
IndependentAndFreePress
@IFP_11

WHO WE ARE

Publisher
Kelly Montague
Regional General Manager
Steve Foreman
Regional Director of Media
Holly Chris
Regional Managing Editor
Catherine O'Hara
Managing Editor
Karen Miceli
Distribution Representative
Iouliana Polar
Real Estate
Kristie Pells
Regional Production Manager
Manuel Garcia
Production
Shelli Harrison
Halton Media General Manager
Vicki Dillane

CONTACT US

The Independent & Free Press
280 Guelph Street, Unit 77
Georgetown, ON L7G 4B1
Phone: 905-873-0301
Classifieds: 1-800-263-6480
Fax: 905-873-0398

Letters to the editor

All letters must be fewer than 200 words and include your name and telephone number for verification purposes. We reserve the right to edit, condense or reject letters.

Delivery

For all delivery inquiries, please e-mail lpolar@miltoncanadianchampion.com or call 905-234-1019.

Accredited
FDSA
Accredited