

# YES, NEWSPAPERS MATTER

## COLUMNIST GORDON CAMERON OFFERS A REMINDER TO READERS



GORDON CAMERON  
Column

I find it strange that I had never heard of the name of newspaperman Elijah Parish Lovejoy until I came across it in a video from a popular YouTube history channel. Lovejoy was born in Maine and ran papers in St. Louis and Alton, Illinois where he died in 1837.

Well, not so much died as murdered defending his printing press from a pro-slavery mob who objected to the publication of his abolitionist views.

Lovejoy quite literally died for freedom of the

press. For most of my career, news media in general, and newspapers in particular, were solid, strong and respected in our communities. Sure, we'd get angry letters over an editorial or a story from time-to-time, but for the most part that just showed how engaged our readers were.

But then things started to change. Our business models were undermined by the move to online advertising. Our editorial integrity was undermined by fake charges of being peddlars of "fake news." While we are still important and vibrant voices within our communities, it's starting to feel like the mob is getting closer.

That's why it's necessary

to take the time to stop and recognize National Newspaper Week.

It may seem self-serving to celebrate yourself in your own pages, but we as an industry haven't always been particularly good at tooting our own horn.

Once upon a time, everyone seemed to realize and appreciate the significance of the work we do, but now it's vital to offer a reminder.

After all, who else invests the same time and money into holding our governments and elected leaders to account as we do? If we disappeared tomorrow who would take up that torch?

Who else goes looking for the sorts of stories that make you proud of your neighbours and your community? Is there anyone else who does that to the same level as your local newspapers do? If there is, I

haven't seen it.

Not everyone shares my opinion about the importance of newspapers. Some will say that they don't need us because they get all their news from social media. I wonder where they think that news actually comes from? It strikes me akin to saying that we no longer need farmers because we have supermarkets. Like farmers, we put time and energy into something important, never quite knowing how it will turn out until harvest time. And like food, people don't always appreciate news until it's gone.

That's why journalists and newspaper people alike to stand up once a year and remind the world that what we do is important. And while we're fortunate that we don't have to risk our lives to defend our newspapers, it is important that we defend them nonetheless.

*Gordon Cameron is Group Managing Editor for Hamilton Community News.*

## NEWS



Photo supplied by Halton Regional Police  
Halton police charged the driver of this vehicle Wednesday, Sept. 25 after it was clocked going 50 km/h over the speed limit in Halton Hills on Steeles Avenue.

## STUNT DRIVING CHARGE LAID OUTSIDE CHURCH AND CEMETERY

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Halton Regional Police have charged a driver with stunt driving - meaning their vehicle has been impounded and their driver's licence suspended for seven days - after a car was caught going 50 km/h over the speed limit outside a local church. The incident occurred around 3 p.m. Wednesday (Sept. 25) outside St. Stephen's Anglican

Church and Cemetery on Steeles Avenue near Ninth Line. Police said the vehicle was going 110 km/h in the posted 60 km/h zone.

"Speed is a contributing factor in 1 out of 4 fatal collisions," police said in a tweet. "Please drive to the road and weather conditions," the force said in a tweet. The traffic stop comes as part of Project Rural Impact, which is targeting speeding and aggressive driving in Milton and Halton Hills.

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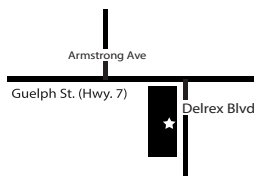
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