

# Family Violence

## Fearful of returning to abuse

One woman tells it this way: "I'm finally out of that abusive relationship. It's taken all the courage I could muster to make the break from him. I still love him very much but I don't want to live with abuse for the rest of my life. Now, I wonder how it got started, why I let it continue and if it could happen again. While he's gone on to other women I'm afraid to trust another man and afraid I'll end up abused once more".

This woman has been involved in only one abusive relationship yet it was devastating enough to leave her fearful of other entanglements with the opposite sex.

Every time she meets a new man she can't help but wonder if under the surface lurks another violent man. An act of assertiveness may appear to be aggression. She analyzes every statement to see if it is "normal male statement" or abuse and is ever watchful for casual put downs. She watches and compares his outlook to see that it is positive.

She cuts off a relationship before it can begin because she is afraid to trust and believe it can work. Who can blame her? The old adage "Once bitten, twice shy" surely applies to a victim of physical, emotional and sexual assault. She seeks reassurance and validation through therapy.

Overcoming her legitimate fears is not easy. A victim of abuse may fear any intimate emotional or physical relationship. She may segregate her friends into categories and not allow them to become close, preferring superficial and shallow contact with acquaintances to deep emotional commitment.

Counselling may be necessary to reassure her that she is taking all the right steps to be certain she does not allow herself to end up in another abusive relationship. She often worries unnecessarily and prematurely.

Complicating the issue may be her former abusive male partner. It is not unusual for an abuser to hassle his victim for years after the relationship has ended. Where children are involved it is even easier for him to disrupt the victim's new life. She is confused and unsure and may even become hysterical with the occurrence of a relatively minor incident involving her abuser.

Abusers are full of anger and hatred and unfortunately direct it towards their victims. How can a victim call her abuser and ask him to cease and desist with the harassment?

Because the abuser already has low self-esteem and has felt the pain of rejection and loss of love repeatedly he can't deal rationally with the difficulties his victim experiences because of him. His



world revolves around meeting his own needs and he does that through trying to control and have power over those around him. The loss of control or the feeling he may lose it turns him into a maniac. He sees things only from his viewpoint and is not objective enough to realize the agony he is causing.

He only wants the victim's love and care and help. That is all well and good except for the fact that he is clearly hurting those around him. He only cares about how the world affects him. He wonders how he will feel if his victim is living with another man.

Getting on with one's life is difficult because the victim is feeling guilty about the break and rejection. Each time she tries to get on with life, her former abusive male partner arrives to screw it up. The phone calls, watching her, following her are embarrassing enough but the inner pain of caring for him and seeing the mess of their lives is untenable.

All this further reinforces her fear of relationships. As she pities him she sees the pattern of their former life of violence, forgiveness, tension building and worries she could allow herself to be subjected to it once again.

It takes a strong resolve and inner strength to escape from an abusive relationship. It takes as much courage to begin a new relationship! It takes courage to overcome that deep-seated fear.

# Letters

## Tree-saving unemployment plan criticized

Dear Editor:

The NDP, in conjunction with our local councils, are now intending to protect trees on your property, by making it illegal to cut down a tree.

Certainly I personally do not like trees to be cut down. Having said that, when do these planners intend to get off our backs? Looks like we will need permission to do anything, the one exception - pay taxes.

On the other hand, perhaps our masters have found a way for us all to earn more money, and of course, pay more tax. Let me explain.

The law says you will not be able to cut down a tree on your property. Of course, to enforce this certain things will have to happen.

1. Employ aircraft to plot and log all trees.
2. Have hundreds, maybe thousands of tree experts to confirm the air tree catalogue.
3. Have applications made, (5 copies) six months in advance, for a license (\$25) plus Garth's Special Tax, of course, to cut a tree.
4. Create a Tree Department in our local government. This will probably need at least 20 people (50% women, 5% minority groups, etc.).
5. The NDP will need a new law enforcing agency, to prosecute illegal tree cutters. Good for at least one

hundred jobs.

6. After an application is made to cut a tree, have an expert determine if this is okay.

7. Issue license (good for 10 jobs).

8. Issue instructions to all trees, that they may not: (a) get struck by lightning, (b) may not get old and die, and (c) may not get any disease. Should any of these things happen, the owner of the land will be prosecuted for failure to obey the law. He/she must have applied for a license at least six months ahead of time.

9. Appoint lawyers for ensuing court cases.

10. Enlarge the court system, to handle prosecutions.

11. Form a ministry of trees, to oversee new regulations.

12. Set up a transportation system for the above.

If my calculations are correct, we may solve ALL the unemployment in Ontario. Perhaps this could be expanded all over Canada. We could cure ALL our unemployment. Full employment created by trees. Nothing to bark at.

If Canadians had property rights, this nonsense would - could - not happen.

John Shadbolt,

Deputy Leader, Ontario Libertarian Party.

## Special thanks to special volunteers

Dear Editor:

Special thanks are extended to both Neil Young, for his "Classics Against Cancer Car Show," and Bill Smith, for his "Bill Smith Golf Tournament."

Each year, Neil and Bill, and their committees, spend a great deal of time planning these very worthwhile events. We know they start making plans for next year's

show after the current one is finished and always come up with very successful events.

The Georgetown Unit of the Canadian Cancer Society has always been the recipient of the funds raised at both the "Bill Smith Golf Tournament" and the "Classics Against Cancer Car Show."

We want Bill, Neil, and their hard-working committees, to know

how much we appreciate the job they do in hosting these two special events. Thanks, also, to everyone who attends and supports our local Canadian Cancer Society office. You are all very much appreciated. Thank you!

Marlene Kelman  
Communications Officer  
Canada Cancer Society,  
Georgetown Unit

## Businessman lauds town staff

This letter was sent to Halton Hills Mayor Russ Miller. A copy was sent to Halton Hills This Week for publication.

Dear Russ:

On behalf of Sammy's Ice Cream Shop, I would like to thank all of the staff of Halton Hills for their help and support in making Sammy's Ice Cream Shop a reality. Their professionalism was excellent and as you are aware, the task of re-structuring the small

shop into an ice cream shop was no small job and without the help of your staff, it would be impossible.

In these recessionary times, it is people like your staff that really pulls everybody through and helps the small businessman.

In closing, I would once again like to thank you and your staff and I hope to see you down at the Ice Cream Shop some day.

Doug Turner

## ACTIVITY LINE

### Fitness is active living



By Laurie Burns  
Exercise Physiologist

Check any of the following statements that apply to yourself. I would like to:

- look better/feel better
- get more fun out of life
- relax more, sleep more soundly
- have more energy and stamina
- cope better with daily stresses
- enjoy my food more and be less

preoccupied with my weight - have a greater sense of control over my life

How did you do? This little test is designed to let you know that, if you have even one area where you would like to improve, then a little more moving, more often, can help. There are many ways to start feeling better...

With renewed interest in walking, you can find information on this simplest form of exercise in books and magazines. It is surprising that something so simple and natural can be so pleasurable.

There are many reasons for

moving. By walking to the store, to work or to visit neighbors, you can cover a lot of ground. Leisurely outings with family or friends offer quiet times and special moments together. You won't feel like you are exercising, but the color in your cheeks, the spring in your stride and the good feeling after your walk will let you know you are on the right track. Whether it's a city stroll or walk in the country, there is time for reflection and relaxation.

Start moving this week and in no time, you will improve your health and your quality of life.

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