

EDITORIAL

Editorial -- n. 1. an article in a newspaper presenting the opinion of the editor or editorial staff.

The tangled web

The tangled webs we journalists sometimes weave.

The editorial that we published in the Jan. 13 edition of Halton Hills This Week, "Glaring Omissions," met great consternation from the community.

The editorial commented on the citizens MP Garth Turner chose to receive an honorary 125th Anniversary of Confederation medal for "significant contribution to compatriots, community and to Canada."

No personal attacks were intended.

We wholeheartedly salute the efforts of those involved and did not mean to tarnish their achievements with the editorial.

What we did try to convey was that we believe some people who did deserve to be given medals by MP Garth Turner were overlooked.

We did not — as one critic put it — intend to "malign" anyone of the 39 people who received a medal including Bob Malcolmson, Gary Brand or Brenda Payton.

Interestingly, for every negative comment we received regarding our controversial piece we also received some calls of support.

What did concern us was that of the 17 people chosen from Halton Hills, none were young people, none were from a minority, and there were few women.

We can certainly appreciate that it must have been an extremely daunting task for Turner to select 39 worthy people from Burlington to Caledon to be honored with a medal.

The point of the Jan. 13 editorial — as the headline indicates and as already stated — is that we believe there were some people in town who should have been given the commemorative medals for the 125th Anniversary of the Confederation of Canada.



Members of the Halton Hills Blue Fins look like fish out of water as they wait poolside during the club's four team meet Sunday. Photo by Scott Kline

Share denunciation of KKK

Dear Editor:

I share Mr. Turner's denunciation of the Ku Klux Klan and his praise for those who reacted quickly and effectively in ousting them from town, as discussed in his recent Parliament Hill Report.

I find it curious, however, that in his review of Canada's generosity that he should include the welcoming of refugees since his government recently passed a Bill limiting the ability of some such refugees to get fair treatment when putting forth a claim.

Bill C-86 was designed to curb abuses of the former system but may have gone too far in the changing of the Immigration Act.

Human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, fear these changes will undermine genuine refugees' protection and are concerned the Bill will increase the risk of individuals being returned to countries in which they may be subjected to torture, detention and/or execution.

Mr. Turner voted in favour of this Bill, feeling confident of support from the majority of his constituents.

Although the arrival of the Ku Klux Klan alarmed us it also serves as an awakening to the realities of the world.

We, in often complacent, comfortable, small town Ontario can no longer remain isolated from issues which seem remote to us. One such issue is discrimination. It exists on a number of levels, none of which are acceptable.

We must realize that we have a responsibility as global citizens to protect the dignity and freedoms of all individuals. I call on our political leaders to do the same.

Sincerely,
Rosaleen Garneau

Faithful reader

Dear Editor:

I would like to congratulate you and your staff for the honest and forthright stand you have taken on local events in your reports and on your editorial page.

It is encouraging to be made aware of some of the less obvious aspects of a story, giving the community a more balanced view of the circumstances which affect us all.

Please keep us the good work by bringing both sides of the story!

A Faithful Reader
(Name withheld upon request)

Family Violence

Male batterers programs spark controversy

By Jacie B. Palmer

Programs for male batterers have been curtailed in many parts of North America. Although they may have begun less than 20 years ago, these programs have never ceased to be the subject of controversy.

Treating males seems to be a lengthy process giving little conclusive evidence of the success of such programs. Often, treatment is prescribed as part of the criminal justice system, yet there may be no follow-up to ensure attendance by batterers or degree of success.

Women who have a partner in a male treatment program will often remain within the relationship only to experience other forms of abuse as the physical abuse is curtailed.

Escalation of verbal and psychological abuse are common. Yet a woman with a partner in a program may be lulled into a false sense of security because she may believe that he is being helped and that things will improve. Signs of improvement may be there but may not last for long.

Male aggression is often linked to anger management, historical male dominance, low self-esteem and childhood experiences.

Whether the behavior is learned or not, the issue remains the same. Males are battering more often — at least it is documented more often.

The current tough economic times have seen an escalation in both spousal and child abuse as documented through accounts in newspapers.

Some professionals espouse the philosophy that stress reduction can help reduce violence while others believe that if a batterer's self-esteem can be increased that the violence will gradually stop.

What do I think?
Well, I believe that we all need to



become more aware of our current responses to stressful situations and monitor those for signs of violence. As we do so, we must be educated to understand that some behavior patterns are unacceptable. In viewing ourselves we will become more aware of the responses of those around us.

When I read one of the accounts of John Daly's assault of his wife, it stated that she said her husband "just totally lost it".

Why is it acceptable for a man to "lose it"?

This idea that losing control is OK between partners must be changed. If a man remains in control while at work and at leisure,

why is it OK to lose control with his wife and family?

It is not! It is totally unacceptable!

Loss of control also gives some the impression that the behavior is excusable.

No! No! No! There is no excuse for hitting another person.

We have to stop recognizing aggressive and violent explosions as things that males do. These attitudes are sexist and simply perpetuate violence within our society.

Somehow our society must come up with a method of treating perpetrators in a non-threatening way.

A supportive environment for successful treatment must be fostered. It must be an environment where the man can overcome his fears and insecurities so that he can be comfortable enough with himself to find within himself the power to heal both this body and mind.

We, as society at large, must recognize this problem, confront it head on but try to demonstrate compassion and empathy for both victims and offenders in order to promote successful treatment of batterers.

Feel free to contact Jacie in confidence by directing letters to her attention at Halton Hills This Week. All correspondence will remain confidential. Jacie can be reached in person through the Distress Centre at 877-1211.

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