

Editorial

A matter of respect

Halton Regional Police have released the crime statistics for the first six months of this year and the news is not good.

Far too many categories are seeing an increase in the number of occurrences and more disturbingly, Halton Hills is not bucking that trend.

According to police statistics, in Halton Hills, domestic assault rose 39.1 per cent (from 23 to 32), robbery 33.3 per cent (from 3 to 4), sex offences 27.3 per cent (from 11 to 14) and assault 26.8 per cent (from 71 to 90).

Also increasing so far this year in Halton Hills was theft over \$5,000 which was up 85.7 per cent (from 7 to 13), auto theft by 75.8 per cent (from 33 to 58) and fraud by 50 per cent (from 24 to 36).

While we hate to see an increase in the numbers of any crimes in our community, the rise in crimes involving violence is particularly alarming. While the police are at a loss to explain this trend, it is evident that these crimes are a result of one thing: respect.

Respect for someone else's property, respect for other individuals and respect for authority. Despite various education programs, the message is not getting through to some people that violence is not the way to solve a problem. It's a coward's last resort.

And this isn't a Halton Hills-only problem—it's a national one. One that can be helped by our lawmakers if they would only stop treating violent criminals with kid gloves when they come before the courts.



Letters to the editor...

Reader should realize dogs are our best friend

Dear editor,

I am writing in response to a letter sent to you concerning Belinda Migue and her volunteer work at the

Toronto Adopt-A-Dog/Save-A-Life organization.

I was incensed to read Mr. Dexter's views on Migue and his opinions of dogs in our communities.

He states in his letter that Migue would "do more for society if she used her energies to save people, especially children, rather than dogs." It is the opinion of this citizen that in Migue's efforts to save dogs, she is improving the quality of life for countless people who stand to benefit from the companionship of these animals through adoption from her organization.

Studies indicate that owners of dogs are more likely to survive a heart attack, have lower blood pressure and lower cholesterol than those without a pet. Also, chronic care patients, the elderly and the emotionally disturbed have all been shown to live longer, retain larger amounts of memory and display healthier overall mental stability when given the opportunity to spend time with animals.

Finally, concerning Mr. Dexter's reference to children, I came to recall a recent article by *New York Times* writer Anita Gates entitled, Good Medicine: The pitter-patter of paws. In the article, Gates refers to a study published by a psychology journal that found children whose families owned pets displayed significantly higher rates of self-esteem and empathy than other children.

So, it would seem that Belinda Migue and her work serve only to enrich and advance society by not only caring for animals and helping people, but teaching her children an invaluable lesson about respect for life and involvement in the community.

As for Mr. Dexter, I think that he could be doing a little more of the same instead of using his "energies" criticizing the few individuals who are working to make our communities a better place to live.

Jennifer Spalding-Martin,
Georgetown

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Spay/neuter your pets

Dear editor,

Re: Letter by Brian Dexter (August 8) condemning Belinda Migue for volunteering to help animals instead of children.

First, let me state that I believe that volunteering on behalf of children is a very important cause. As well, we must acknowledge the fact that we share this planet with species other than our own. We create a better society when we teach our children to respect all living creatures rather than creating the image that it's okay to kill something when it's too old or inconvenient.

A more positive and tactful approach Brian Dexter could have used for solving the pet overpopulation problem would be to advise people to spay or neuter their pets, to adopt from pounds and to encourage adoption of older pets rather than creating a demand for new animals. A pet is a long-term commitment, a lifetime to your pet. These animals are NOT disposable.

Finally, what kind of example do you set when you condemn someone publicly for using her free time to do something positive? It's her right to choose a cause that is close to her heart. Thankfully there are people like Belinda, who see our aging friends as creatures who deserve companionship and respect, for it's people like her who create the path to a better future.

Angi and Shwaggy Goodkey, Georgetown

Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor must be signed and include an address and daytime telephone number. Unsigned letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 200 words and may be edited.

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