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Malcolm Kilburn of Georgetown is passionate about the Canadian flag. When he sees a tattered or faded flag flying at a business or home he calls about it and says if they can't fly the flag with respect they should take it down.

Photo by Ted Brown

One-man 'flag police' on a relentless crusade to rid town of torn flags

If you've got a tattered, faded Canadian flag on your flag pole you may be getting a call from Malcolm Kilburn.

Kilburn, of Georgetown, is known to his neighbours as the "flag police". The 60-year-old retired cryptographer is on a one-man mission to ensure all Canadian flags are in good condition and treated with the respect they deserve. If he comes across a shoddy flag flying at a business or residence he immediately gets on the phone.

"If you can't fly the Canadian flag with respect..." Kilburn tells them to take the flag down.

"I've always had a thing for flags," said Kilburn, a proud Canadian citizen who was born in London, England. "Our flag means nothing to many people."

Kilburn, who flies a large Canadian flag on his front porch and a provincial flag outside of his woodworking shop year-round except for in the winter, said Canadians need to take a lesson from their U.S. neighbours.

"We bitch about our neighbours to the south of the 49th (Parallel) but those people are very patriotic," said Kilburn. "We need to adopt some sort of nationalistic pride."

If the businesses or individuals don't take the faded and torn flag down Kilburn is relentless.

"I keep hounding them," said Kilburn who checks out the flags wherever he goes.

He said it doesn't usually take too long before they take down the offending flag and replace it with a new one, and said most of the businesses and individuals he calls replace their flags.

His current target is the faded and torn flag that flies at the Georgetown Post Office. Kilburn has made several calls about that flag and said he'll keep calling until it's replaced.

Brian D'Silva, superintendent of the Georgetown post office, said he has not received any complaints about the flag. He admits staff has noticed the flag's condition and says steps are being taken to replace the flag.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer

Single mom issues plea for affordable housing

An Acton single mom on disability made an emotional plea for affordable housing at a meeting in Georgetown Tuesday on poverty, homelessness and the need for more affordable housing.

Heather, 36, who didn't want her last name published, said she is a marital abuse survivor and due to severe arthritis can't work. She receives \$797 per month on disability and the rent on her one-bedroom apartment is \$707 per month.

"I need affordable housing and I can't

wait five years," said Heather, stifling tears, referring to the waiting list for such housing. She also receives child support for her 11-year-old daughter, and the child tax credit.

"I live in an apartment building where some people are drug dealers and that irks me to no end.

"I never really have a problem with food. I really budget shop," she said after the meeting. But, she said, she and her daughter live month by month and expenses like dental bills and prescriptions

wreak havoc on her budget. She said after paying \$40 to have her 1986 car towed, she cried because she knew that was their grocery money.

Heather is not alone in her plight.

Joey Edwardh, executive director of Halton Social Planning Council, said after the meeting over a 10-year period the number of poor families in Halton Hills has risen.

She said according to Stats Canada statistics the number of poor families in town

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