

Editorial

Thank you

Have you hugged a nurse or a police officer this week? You should because both groups of these front-line workers are celebrating their myriad of accomplishments.

May 12-18 is Nurses Week and the Ontario Nurses Association wants to remind the public "When we can't care, everyone hurts."

Our ongoing experience with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is a prime example of how society relies heavily on these people who are an integral part of the provincial health care system.

Unfortunately, it took the SARS crisis for the provincial government to take notice of just how overworked nurses are, the need to improve their working conditions and recognize their critical role in providing the best care possible for all Ontario residents.

Anyone who has been hospitalized knows how important nurses are to a patient's recovery. Here in Ontario we are fortunate to have wonderful, dedicated people who decided to tackle nursing as a profession. However, the province needs to stem the flow of hundreds of recent nursing graduates to the U.S. More opportunities must be created for full-time jobs— not casual or part-time nursing employment, says the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario.

We salute the nurses who are there for us— both in sickness and in health.

Our attention is also turned to the men and women who selected policing as career. And what a career choice. They are expected to be marriage counsellors, traffic cops, protectors and ministers all rolled into one compassionate human being.

They are asked to serve and protect 24 hours a day, never knowing what they may be stepping into when they receive a 911 call.

This week is Police Week and we want to thank the men and women in blue for making Halton a great place in which to live.



Letters to the editor....

Teachers' unions seek sympathy, not respect

Dear editor,

More and more one hears about the lack of respect for teachers.

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 Unsigned letters will not be published.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.

Mail or drop off

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After listening today to some teachers' union reps, I am convinced we are not dealing with a lack of respect but rather, a lack of sympathy.

Union management should maybe look outside their own self-serving world. A lot of people have to work extra-long hours at often more than one job and without the benefits and holidays enjoyed by teachers.

Also, with the constant restructuring and downsizing, many people in other professions do not have the benefit of job protection or guarantees, never mind set increases. A lot of retirees have not seen any increase in their payments for years.

Amongst other groups, airline employees have to worry, not about how much of a raise they are going to get, but rather, how much of a pay cut they will have to take. In addition, their pension may not even be there when they retire.

Other people will also have to "work to rule". In contrast, their

working to rule will be the rule of the company paying their wages. They do not have the luxury of having students to hold at ransom until their demands are met. They will get fired if they don't like it. How often have they heard about teachers not performing to standard being fired?

I am sure nobody wants teachers to forego what they enjoy in wages and benefits now, but to have sympathy because they have not seen any increases since last August? Yeah, right.

I personally feel the time has come for the teachers' union to stop acting like the tail wagging the dog. It is still the dog that has to pay.

It would also be nice to hear a bit more about what can be done to help the students. Refusing to even do the testing of students makes me wonder if the results could be something we all have to worry about.

Marinus (Rein) Pater,
Georgetown

Be pro-active in fighting WNV

Dear editor,

I just received my brochures regarding the West Nile virus. Unfortunately, I am stupefied by it as our provincial government actually states that "today, mosquitoes are more than a nuisance." Really.

Mosquitoes kill more than one million people each year, which makes it the deadliest creature on earth. They have wreaked havoc upon humanity as carriers of malaria, yellow fever and dengue fever. They have also become competent carriers of many new diseases. Consequently, any statement that refers to the role of mosquitoes vis-à-vis humanity is not only sophomoric, but dangerously naïve.

Ironically, in an effort to reduce the transmission of the virus— through mosquito infection— the regional department of health has requested residents clean up their yards, yet they are contributing to the problem by creating ponds, protecting tree bases with corrugated pipes and not strictly enforcing anti-litter bylaws.

Instead of reacting, we must be pro-active and address the situation before it is a problem. Cleaning up our yards is important. However, if ponds of stagnant water are not addressed the mosquito will be provided with a blood meal within its flying radius.

Our pro-active approach could include relatively inexpensive water circulation systems. By doing so, areas that residents cannot address will be included in the region's plan. The life cycle of the mosquito will not be completed and the infection rate of West Nile virus will be reduced.

Daniel S. Popowich, Georgetown

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