

Letters to the editor...Letters to the editor...Letters to the editor...

Readers speak out on fall fair riot

Dear editor,

I'm the first to say we have many wonderful, responsible, respectful teenagers today that I would be proud to call my own. Unfortunately, we also have many bad youths.

I grew up in Georgetown and never saw the disrespect I see in today's youth.

Wake up parents! The kids have been getting drunk at the fair for years.

Every kid who stayed around the fair when the fights broke out should be punished. If they had left the park the few police officers could have handled a few fights. Any parent who stuck around with their children, with the chance of their child being hurt, should take a look at their role as a parent and teach their kids responsibility.

Joe Commisso, Georgetown

Dear editor,

I was one of the few parents standing inside the fairgrounds when the incidents occurred.

There were originally only 8-10 teens who were causing problems. This eventually did snowball into many kids being extremely upset and doing the only thing their immaturity allowed them to do—fight back.

The youth of our community were fighting back because of the brutality of the local police. Many of these teens have never seen people being beaten with billy clubs, kicked repeatedly and blinded momentarily with pepper spray. As a parent I was appalled by the police and the way the situation was handled.

I would like there to be some type of apology to the kids who were assisting their friends and defending them in the only way they knew how.

Yes, there were some teens asking for trouble, but the general

population of them are good kids and were scared to death by what they saw and now the trust has been broken.

It is up to us as adults, along with the police, to do something to mend these broken fences.

Nancy Deligiannis, Georgetown

Dear editor,

I am writing in protest of the editorial printed in the Sept. 10 edition of *The Independent & Free Press*.

I would like to send a message to the generation of adults who jump to conclusions before being fully informed about the events of September 6. I know that a large majority of the adults in our community are from the rebellious "baby boomer" era, and we all know what they did back in their youth. So how can that generation blame the youth of this town for standing up for what they believe was right? How can they justify injustice to those who experienced a scenario, which resembles something out of our current history texts? Why are we returning to the police state, which we thought dispersed with the end of the '60s? Those are just a few questions I would like to have answered.

Where does someone get the idea to believe everything they read and take it as factual information? I personally know, growing up in our society, not to believe everything that is written due to the fine art of "propaganda".

How can 500 teens, who witnessed the same event, all have the exact or similar story to tell, whereas the police force, which numbered approximately 50, all claim the teens were violent and hostile?

Ryan Sinnaeve, Georgetown

Dear editor,

This letter is to all parents who complained about the way the Halton Police handled the distur-

bance at the fair. I have heard people complain that the police took too long to react, used too much force, over-reacted, the kids had every right to be there and many other complaints. Let's look at these things one at a time.

1) The police used excessive force. The police never enjoy beating up teenagers, they will use the appropriate amount of force required to disperse a crowd after all other peaceful methods have failed. Considering the amount of rocks, bricks, bottles and debris that was hurled at them, what would you do if you were in their position?

2) The police over-reacted. Once the police have ordered the crowd to disperse and then are subjected to verbal and physical assault they will then use other measures to disperse the crowd. The police have set standards and guidelines for this and follow them very strictly.

3) The kids had every right to be there. After 11 p.m. the kids had no right to be there, plus the fact that a great deal of them had been drinking (under age), plus a 13-year-old was arrested. What was a 13-year-old doing there at that time of night?

4) The police took too long to respond. The absolute worst thing the police could have done was to rush in in singles or pairs. The best thing is to assemble all members and develop a strategy. If they had rushed in, the situation would have been prolonged and there would most likely have been some serious injuries. I believe Halton Police handled this very well under the circumstances.

Parents need to take responsibility for their children's actions!

Teach your kids that everything we say and do in this life has consequences attached, some very serious.

Harold Colpitts, Georgetown

Council's lack of funding led to turf problems—HOPE

Dear editor,

This letter is written on behalf of HOPE (Healthy Options for People and the Environment) to help shed some light on Mr. Wanner's concerns (letter to the editor, August 8) with regards to the Town's Pesticide Reduction Program.

While HOPE may have been instrumental in helping to initiate the program, it was due to growing public concern over the health risks associated with non-essential pesticide use based on Halton's Regional Report of the Halton Intermunicipal Review Committee On the Use of Pesticides On Public & Private Property April 2002. At many committee meetings where the Pesticide Reduction Program was discussed, the pesticide industry did share their views in regards to the program. Therefore we feel it is unfair for Mr. Wanner to say that the town implemented this program on "one-

sided" advice.

For some insight, in his report to Halton Regional Council in July 2000, Halton's Commissioner of Health/Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Bob Nosal, suggested a policy of "prudent avoidance" with respect to pesticide use, which suggests that if we don't have to use pesticides, then we should avoid using them. Municipalities within Halton Region have supported this policy. Consequently, the Region of Halton has undertaken a \$100,000 education awareness campaign to inform the public about the risks associated with pesticide use and alternatively encourages the use of natural lawn care practices. Our town contributed \$10,000 to this regional initiative.

Last year council agreed to support the Pesticide Reduction Program which was put in place at the beginning of 2002. Unfortunately, while they agreed to the pro-

gram (supporting the region's policy of prudent avoidance), council did not provide the funds necessary for the Recreation & Parks Department to put the natural turf care alternatives in place, which was necessary for the program to be a success. Not surprisingly, some of the town's turf condition is suffering and despite the health policy of "prudent avoidance", the town is considering going back to spraying.

When properly implemented and supported, our Pesticide Reduction Program will not turn a park into "a weed-infested eyesore" but a place free of pesticides where kids can play, dogs can run and moms can let their toddlers play. HOPE supports the region's policy of prudent avoidance and asks residents to contact their local council members to encourage them to fully support this worthwhile program.

Members of HOPE, Georgetown

Smokers put others at risk

Dear editor,

Regarding the letter from Vince Micallef in the Sept. 17 edition entitled "Smokers are having their rights taken away".

I truly hope that there are only a few people who feel this way. Not even getting into his bizarre comparison of smoking and gay marriage, Mr. Micallef seems to be missing the point. Smoker's rights are not being taken away; you still have the right to poison yourself, your family, and even complete strangers. You just have to do it outdoors or in the privacy of your own home.

As a non-smoker, I have the right to go out with my family and not worry about getting emphysema, lung cancer or asthma because of your addiction. I applaud the decision to remove the smoking rooms from restaurants.

Have you ever watched some poor child try to eat their dessert in one of these rooms while struggling to breathe? I don't understand how a parent would trade their life for their child's if they were in danger, but they think nothing of blowing smoke in their face.

Dave Spencer, Georgetown

Smoking is not 'a right'

Dear editor:

Re: Sept. 17 letter, Smoker's rights taken away.

The premise of Mr. Micallef's argument is false. Smoking is not a right, but breathing clean air should be.

The smog in Southern Ontario is bad enough. It is typical for smokers to argue against obstacles to their 'fix'. Like any addict, they see only the issues of access to the drug, and care not for the consequences.

Gentlemen like Mr. Micallef should lead by example within the community by fighting the demons of addiction and proclaiming the good news of their conquests in a letter to the editor. I challenge Vince to that.

Michael Xanthios, Georgetown

Non-smokers deserve protection

Dear editor,

Re: Mr. Micallef's letter Sept. 17.

As mentioned in Mr. Micallef's letter, Canada is a free country. But there must be limits. That is why we have laws in place to protect those who wish to be protected and to stop those who wish to do harm.

Smoking is one of those things that some Canadians wish to be protected from. Every time I walk into an area where someone is smoking (or recently has been) I get nauseous. It disgusts me to know all the chemicals in cigarettes that are entering my body as I breathe in this cloud of poisons left by the smoker.

For all those children, pregnant women and everyone else who wishes to remain smoke-free, it is only just that they be given this right.

I have no say in the person's decision to smoke, but I'm not going to suffer from it.

Steve Petryschuk, Georgetown

Georgetown fair supporters thanked

Dear editor,

A sincere thanks to all the individuals and businesses who contributed so generously to the Georgetown fair.

Without the considerable donations and sponsorships our local businesses provide, this community event would not be possible. We really do appreciate their support.

A special thank you to the Recreation and Parks Department and town staff for all their assistance.

And last, but not least, thanks and congratulations to all the terrific volunteers we have. All these people work many long and hard hours to organize and present a great fair for all to enjoy.

**Jeff Nurse, president
Georgetown Agricultural Society**