

# OPINION

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## 'New blood' needed for Blood Services

Summer is traditionally a slow period for blood donations, but a report last week indicated the Canadian Blood Service (CBS) is facing problems more serious than a typical summer slowdown.

According to CBS polling, while a vast of Canadians believe donating blood is a good thing (71 per cent) and many say they intend to donate (22 per cent), only a small percentage actually give the gift of life.

"The technical number is 3.7 per cent of eligible Canadians actually donate," said Andrew Laycock of the CBS.

Compared to other countries, such as Australia and the United Kingdom in which 5-6.5 per cent of those eligible donate, Canada's numbers are shockingly poor.

The best Canadians have ever done was 5 per cent— during the Second World War! While the number of those donating has actually climbed by 0.2 per cent in the past three years, it's obvious more people are needed to roll up their sleeves.

What's even more distressing is that, when the numbers are broken down by province, Ontarians are even less likely to give than most other provinces. In Ontario, where the province is broken into regions, Toronto (which encompasses the GTA area), has the lowest donation rate in Canada at 2.6 per cent.

But the news gets even more ominous.

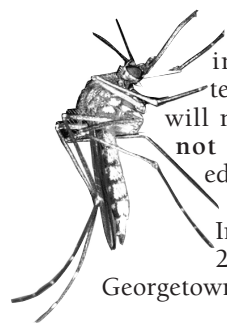
The vast majority of those donating are baby boomers, meaning that the donation pool is aging. While the CBS has held recruitment drives at universities and high schools in recent years, young people need to understand the importance of giving blood and just how easy it is to donate.

Another conundrum facing the CBS is that many people are repeat donors. While that, in itself, is good news, it means the CBS is relying on the same people to keep donating.

What it all boils down to is the fact the CBS could use "new blood"— for the benefit of all of us.

## Something bugging you?

Send us a letter!



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 Unsigned letters will not be published.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

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Steve Nease



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Council urged to reconsider decision

Dear editor,

When I read an editorial it is usually about something the editor agrees with, wants to expand on, or criticize. The editor has addressed all three in the July 14 edition and rightfully so, and since my name appears in the editorial let me respond.

As I understand it, the editor agrees with me that the median should go and the sidewalks be widened in the reconstruction of Main St. in downtown Georgetown. When I conversed with the consultant on this project, he, after having taking a fair amount of time to look at the project, concluded that the median should go and the sidewalks should be widened. Consultants working for the Town, often see the bigger picture. They are very knowledgeable on certain subjects; more so than councillors or the public.

But what of the "silent majority's" input? The editor's concern is its apathy. Why didn't they attend the open house forum to express their concerns? Did they know of the meetings? Did they know the choices? Maybe they thought it was a "no-brainer" and that the council they elected would be giving good leadership as they have done in the past. Not everyone has the time to go to these meetings— that's why they elected these councillors to make these decisions for them not for the "special interest groups", whose input is often worthy but not necessarily to be used.

As the council and mayor are like

the board of directors and chairman elected by the shareholders of a corporation (electors), the electors trust council to do the right thing. But council didn't listen to the Main St. core; they listened to a very small sampling of possible outside users of the downtown.

We have a population of about 50,000 people in Halton Hills, and so 60 outside core users in favour of keeping the median will drive this million dollar project. Council must know that this sampling was too small and flawed and should have therefore done what they were elected to do for this community— use foresight and insight to protect, promote and save this community and to show leadership and courage.

### P.O.W.E.R. appreciates newspaper coverage

Dear editor,

On behalf of P.O.W.E.R. (Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources), I would like to thank you for publishing Sabrina Byrnes' tree-planting picture recently.

Though P.O.W.E.R. was originally born as an advocacy organization to protect the Acton quarry from being used as a garbage dump, we have evolved significantly over time to become Halton Hills' not-for-profit voice for the environment. One of our key goals within this evolution is the promotion of environmental awareness through education, and to provide extensive reforestation in north Halton (our Future Forests program).

However, if council should decide they erred, it still can be changed. People can make wrong decisions with the information they have and can change their minds if they think new information or redirection will result in a more beneficial outcome.

I say to the council, do the right thing. You saw the consultant's recommendations, and many councillors agreed in the beginning but changed their minds for what they thought was being fair with 60 people. But being fair with a few is not being fair with the electorate and the future of downtown Georgetown.

Hopefully the electorate will show this on voting day in November. The issue is not dead.

David Harley, Georgetown

Working with thousands of elementary students, secondary students, and community members, P.O.W.E.R. has planted more than 11,000 trees in 10 local sites (including 1,650 this spring), and established a full outdoor education program (soil, water, and forest studies) for secondary students.

Through the efforts of your paper we are able to extend information about P.O.W.E.R.'s mandate to a greater audience. This helps us to gain recognition, and assists our efforts within the community.

So, thank you again. The picture and the recognition was appreciated.

Ian Barrett, Co-ordinator  
P.O.W.E.R.

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