

# OPINION

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## Cyberproofing 101

The recent arrest of a Kingston man on charges on Internet luring, child pornography and extortion is a stark reminder to parents that cyberspace is no place for children to play alone.

Parents who believe their child couldn't possibly be harmed at home in front of the family computer are both naive and playing with fire.

On an almost daily basis come reports of adults being caught befriending minors online— often pretending to be harmless Internet buddies of roughly the same age as their young victims.

These web predators often invest a significant amount of time gaining the trust of their underage victims, before proposing face-to-face encounters.

Of course it's not realistic to expect parents to be aware of every moment their child spends online.

So what's a busy mom or dad to do?

A Government of Canada website ([www.ourmissingchildren.gc.ca/omc/publications/internet-luring-leurre\\_e.htm](http://www.ourmissingchildren.gc.ca/omc/publications/internet-luring-leurre_e.htm)) offers plenty of sound advice including:

- Be informed— Take lessons and learn the Internet yourself. Set up a parent support group and learn from each other. Talk to computer sales clerks to determine which software packages are available to safeguard your child;

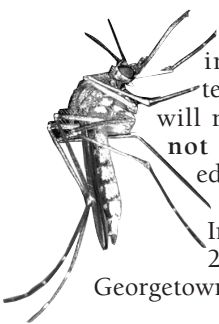
- Be smart— Set house rules for Internet use. Have your child use a code name while online and change passwords frequently. Always maintain access to your child's online accounts and regularly and randomly check the e-mail messages. Always position the computer in a high-traffic area where you can occasionally monitor activity. Advise your child to never provide strangers with personal information.

- Be Alert— Watch for signs of behaviour change in your child such as withdrawal from conversation regarding Internet activities, attempts to be secretive, noticeable signs of embarrassment when asked certain questions about online activities and the use of language uncharacteristic of the child's age group.

While it may be tempting for overwhelmed parents to view home computers as a more educational version of a television babysitter, allowing children to go surfing, chatting or blogging without any supervision or guidelines is risky business.

## 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

### Median supporter's letter was insulting

(This letter, and the one below right, were originally sent to Mayor Rick Bonnette and Town council. Copies were made available for publication.)

Dear Mayor Bonnette,

I am outraged by some of the comments made by David Harley in his letter to the editor in the August 9 *Independent & Free Press*, "Council urged to reconsider decision".

Not only does he insult those who attended the public meeting by referring to them as "outside core users", I beg to differ—very strongly—on his reasoning behind following the consultant's report regarding removal of the center median.

I am not sure what the boundaries are to be considered an "inside core user" or where Mr. Harley got his information from about where exactly

are those boundaries. Does it make a difference whether or not those who attended were outside or inside core users?

Both my husband and myself, along with a number of our neighbours who do live within a minute's walking distance to the downtown stores, were at that meeting. Are we insiders or outsiders?

The bottom line is, referring to anyone in this town as an "outside core user" insults the very foundation of our community, especially when it comes to the "inclusiveness" messages by the downtown businesses, the BIA and Town's tourism services.

During the six years that I worked with tourism services, most visitors commented that they 'loved' our downtown, especially for the unique

quaintness of its streetscape.

I am very pleased that a compromise was agreed upon. For its quaint uniqueness and many safety features I believe that retaining a center median is a very wise choice.

Anne Rogers-Kaczor, Georgetown

### Council decision lauded

Dear Mayor Bonnette,

We would like to congratulate you and council for the recent decisions and finalization of the reconstruction plans for the downtown.

Your council listened to the people and managed a compromise that satisfied everyone.

As we look towards final reconstruction, we find it quite unusual to see local resident David Harley wandering the downtown with a petition to remove the median. He has been circulating bias literature on the project in which he refers to the median as being like the "Berlin Wall".

He has been annoying our customers (who are trying to shop), explaining all the reasons this plan is wrong, along with his ideas of what should be done.

What knowledge does he have that is above those of us who live and work here every day?

Any disruptions that would delay or lengthen the construction time would be difficult to endure by the residents and small businesses alike.

Elizabeth McNeilly, Christine Monteath and Kim Falls, Georgetown

### 'Silent majority' is a vocal minority— reader

Dear editor,

I was surprised to read Mr. Harley's letter about how the "silent majority" want to see the islands downtown removed. I think he is wrong! He is a vocal minority.

I also was surprised how he has been standing downtown collecting signatures telling people the median "is a Berlin Wall". I agreed with councillors that the median should remain.

As far as calling it a "Berlin Wall" I wish Mr. Harley would not use the term so lightly. The spectre of the Berlin Wall is an awful reminder of how Europe was divided. Families torn apart and how people were oppressed.

I had family members who suffered under that regime and who would have loved to have had a democratic debate over a downtown.

Kudos to the mayor and councillors for weighing the facts, asking the public, considering all sides and then making the right decision. Since I live in the ward that covers downtown I am glad that my council reps voted the way I wanted. Well, except one but he is usually on his own.

The loss of the downtown medians would ruin the small town feel that downtown Georgetown has.

Linda Zammit, Georgetown