

# OPINION

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## Vandalism costs us all

In the past several weeks we have reported on the exploits of many local youths and their fine accomplishments.

For example, a Halton Hills field lacrosse team captured a national title in British Columbia, Erinn Brown was crowned the North American Irish dancing champion in her age group and members of POSSE (Peer Outreach Support Services and Education) organized a Diversity March in an effort to combat discrimination in all its forms.

These, and many other efforts of local teens, help to make our community a better place. However, there are other youngsters who do not hold the same regard for their town.

Specifically, some youths have decided to undo the hard work of dedicated volunteers by vandalizing the Old Seed House Garden property at the corner of Maple Avenue and Guelph Street.

This park, which features a gazebo, walking trails, gardens and a pond, was the result of much planning, community involvement and hard work. It was an attempt to keep *some* nature on the old Dominion Seed House property which gave way to homes, stores and a new school.

Unfortunately, in recent weeks the property has become the target of vandals, with rocks thrown in the ponds, lights smashed, spindles in the gazebo railing broken and graffiti carved into the picnic tables.

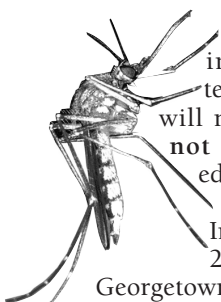
While no one has been caught perpetrating these wanton acts—and at the risk of being accused of ageism—we feel confident in saying this is likely the work of bored youngsters. After all, graffiti is not usually the work of a senior citizen who has just spent time admiring the flowers in the Garden property.

Councillor Jane Fogal—a driving force behind the Garden project—is right in appealing to parents to know what their kids are doing. To date, she says, vandalism to local parks has cost the Town \$10,000—\$2,000 to the Seed House property alone.

We understand kids will be kids and vandalism is something that can't be eliminated. But, perhaps with more diligence from parents in regards to knowing their kids' whereabouts and educating them on the effects of vandalism, these senseless acts can be reduced.

## 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.

Mail or drop off:

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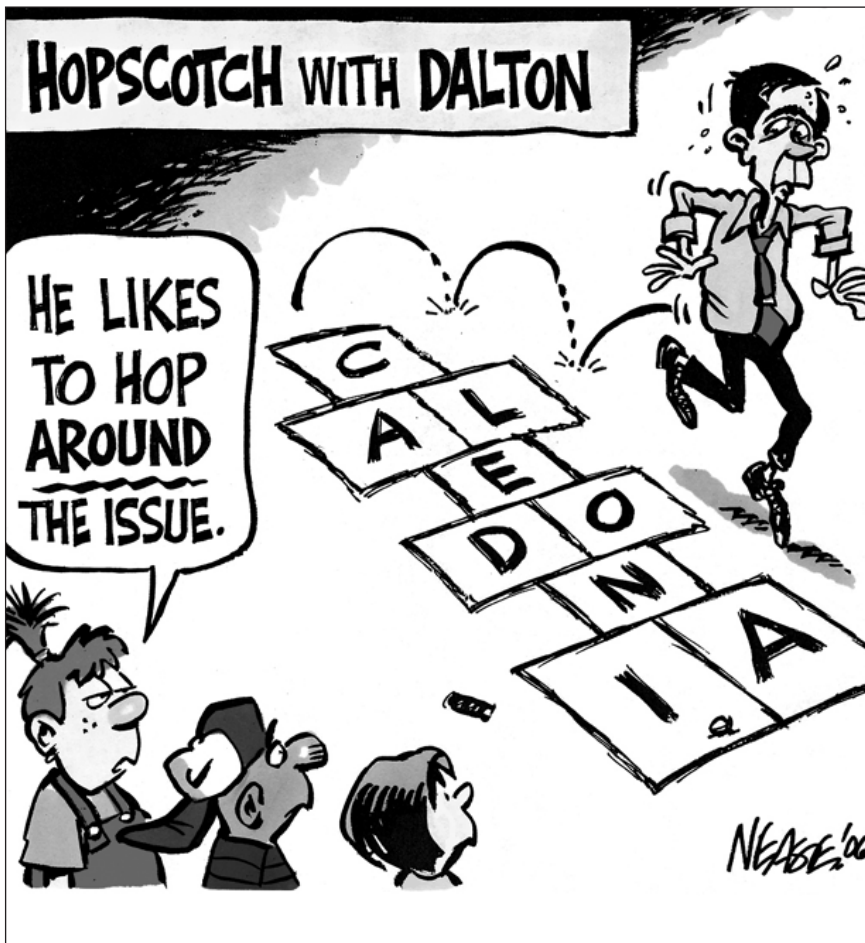
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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Mill should have heritage designation

Dear editor,

It is with a sense of sadness and overwhelming déjà vu as I read in *The Independent and Free Press* in August how council postponed the designation of the Barber Mill as an historic site.

I commend Councillor Moya Johnson for her efforts in seeking its designation. However, it appears this council, like ones before, is still being controlled by developers, sacrificing our heritage.

I'm simplifying events, but there have been numerous times that Halton Hills council has not been able to protect the heritage resources in the town. This forgotten responsibility of council is disturbing and has been going on for a long time.

About 20 years ago the Town had the opportunity to buy the beautiful Barber home on Maple Avenue for \$1. The deal was the Town had to move the heritage home to another location. Well, future generations will never see it because council turned down the offer and soon after vandals burned the house down. This sounds similar to the Dominion Seed House when one of its barns burned after a "public" meeting.

An art historian columnist for *The Toronto Star* recently outlined a new tactic of developers called "demolition by decay". In this process the developer waits long enough for nature to take its course. By delaying restoration, the weather wears down the buildings until they can't be repaired. This sounded what was happening with the Barber Mill site.

After tantalizing the public by start-

ing to fix up the old buildings and then simply stopping in the middle of the process, the developer appears to be working on the same premise as mentioned above. It sounds like a bully in a schoolyard: "I'll take you the to Ontario Municipal Board if you don't do what I want."

Last month the chair of the Barber Mill Credit River Valley Association, Karl Baker, passed away suddenly.

Over the past two years, since the proposal for a 14-storey condo and all its trimmings on the Barber Mill site, Karl

worked tirelessly to prevent this travesty. I can only hope Karl's efforts were not in vain. What a wonderful tribute to his memory it would be to have town council declare the Barber Mill an historic site and insist the developer adhere to the six-storey bylaw.

I hold hope that this council will go forward with the heritage designation of the Barber Mill as suggested in the Sept. 7 town staff report presented to council.

Gretchen Day, Georgetown

### Diversity march is not 'reclaiming our space'

Dear editor,

Re: Diversity march planned for Saturday (Sept. 13 *Independent & Free Press*).

"Georgetown and a lot of Halton is known for racism". How insulting! I honestly don't believe that this statement is a fair or realistic statement to make of our community. And I'm also sure that none of the residents of Georgetown will agree with it.

It is true that a few members of the Ku Klux Klan made an extremely brief appearance in Acton and Georgetown 13 years ago, but if you will recall, they were quickly chased out of town by the residents. They were not residents of our town and were not welcomed by any means.

I doubt that Delta Hillyard remembers that though, as she was only about 5 or 6 years old at the time. I think it's very admirable that these young people are attempting to "reclaim that space", but the reclama-

tion was done at the time of the KKK's appearance.

There will always be zealots and fanatics making appearances to promote their cause. The Diversity March is no different. We can only hope that this event includes respect for the community and its culture. Georgetown is predominately white- there is no doubt about that—and that is our culture. Do not thrust your beliefs and ethics upon us with little regard for our culture and heritage. Do not make the same mistake the KKK did.

Another interesting note that also appeared in the paper that day was an employment ad for Fraser Direct Ltd. Very clearly displayed in the ad were the words "no students please". Is this not discrimination against age? Yet Fraser Direct's Lois Fraser is a partner in organizing this march. I suppose diversity is a good thing as long as it's not in her backyard?

Sarah McLean, Georgetown