

# OPINION

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## Have a heart this month

February is Heart & Stroke Month. What better day than Valentine's Day to draw attention to the importance of taking care of our heart health.

In 2002 (the last year for which Statistics Canada data is available) cardiovascular disease accounted for 74,626 Canadian deaths. Among all male deaths that year, 32 per cent were due to heart diseases, diseases of the blood vessels and stroke. Among women, the toll was even higher with 34 per cent of all deaths attributed to cardiovascular disease.

According to the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Canada, stroke mortality statistics for 2002 rate it as the fourth-leading cause of death in Canada. There are about 40,000-50,000 strokes recorded each year with 16,000 Canadians dying from one. More women now die from strokes than men. Canadians spend a total of three million days in hospital each year following a stroke.

Of every 100 people who suffer a stroke 15 per cent die, 10 per cent recover completely, 25 per cent recover with a minor impairment or disability, 40 per cent are left with a moderate to severe impairment, while 10 per cent are so severely disabled they require long-term care.

A comparison of 30-year statistics shows some promise.

Through medical advancements and public education, the number of male deaths from heart disease and stroke dropped 19 per cent between 1973-2003. Disturbingly, over the same period the mortality rate for women actually increased five per cent.

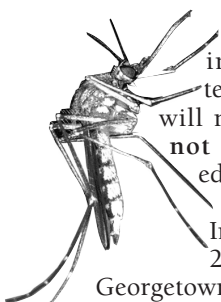
Combining exercise— 30 minutes of physical activity each day of the week is recommended— with a nutritional diet while reducing other risk factors such as stress and smoking are proven ways to increase the likelihood of continued heart health.

When approached by a door-to-door representative of the Heart & Stroke Foundation this month, donate what you can. Donations may also be made online at [www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca).

This Valentine's Day, be sure to have a heart and give a loved one the gift of information that may help prevent theirs from breaking.

## 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 Unsigned letters will not be published.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

### Let's see Canadian flags on Flag Day

Dear editor,  
In recognition of National Flag Day of Canada on February 15 I am writing to you about flag etiquette.

Like most countries we have etiquette on how to properly display our flag and how to do so under special circumstances. I see many Canadian flags flying throughout Halton Hills and seeing them flying in the wind matters more to me that their exact dimensions and angles as required.

It is nice to see so many red and white flags proudly displayed in town. I am a very proud Canadian but something about flag flying bothers me.

Driving through Halton Hills I have noticed many homes flying

their personal country flag and Canada's red and white flag is nowhere in sight. We all came from somewhere but it seems to me that if flying a home-country flag is important then flying the flag of the country you now call home should take precedence. I don't dispute the presentation of pride from people who come here from other countries, but I would like to see their appreciation for our great country by flying our flag alongside theirs.

So, since National Flag Day of Canada is approaching it would be nice to see some Canada flags joined with the other flags of the world in Halton Hills. And, true to our Canadian reputation, adding our flag to your flagpole in February will

mean doing it in the bitter cold.  
Melissa Harvey-Daniell,  
Georgetown

### Twisters' win not a first

Dear editor,  
I was thrilled to read in *The Independent & Free Press* that the Midget BB North Halton Twister team had won the 2007 International Silver Stick Tournament in Sarnia. Congratulations to the players and coaching staff!

I would like to note however that this was not the first Twisters team to win an International Silver Stick Tournament.

In 2003 the Atom BB team, coached by Paul Smith, won the fourth International Women's Silver Stick in Cold Creek. It was an exciting time. These girls are now playing Bantam level hockey and some members of that team, including my daughter, Lindsay McCabe, are celebrating their 10th season playing with the Twister's organization.

Cheers to girl's hockey in Georgetown!  
Michele Proud, Georgetown

### Christmas is over, folks

Dear editor,  
This is a gentle reminder to everyone that Christmas has been over for some time.

It is past time to have taken down lights, wreaths and other ornaments.  
John McPherson, Georgetown

### Thanks for supporting Needs Program

Dear editor,  
On behalf of Links2Care I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all those who helped to make our recent Christmas Needs Program a success.

We have many families in our community that struggle each and every day to make ends meet and our program helps to meet some of those needs during the holiday season.

This past holiday season 134 lower income families, with a total of 284 children, received hampers of new clothing and toys. We are so pleased to be able to offer this program— we certainly could not pro-

vide this many hampers without the help of the churches, businesses and individuals that assisted by sponsoring families and by donating money and gift items. Christmas can be a difficult time of year for many people and often families are very hesitant to ask for help. I can assure you that the families are very grateful and often quite emotional when they receive the hampers.

Thank you so much for the wonderful "gift" that you have given to those in need in our community - your support is greatly appreciated.

Cathy Gerrow  
Community Support Co-ordinator

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