

OPINION

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Survey security?

We find it unsettling that a motion that could ultimately have Halton Catholic District School Board trustees acting as censors could be approved with so little background information offered publicly.

Last week's motion introduced by Burlington trustee Joanne Matters calls for staff to draft a policy, "Allowing for trustee approval of surveys and pilot projects, which are morally-sensitive or controversial in nature, conducted under the auspices of the Halton Catholic District School Board."

While Matters believes trustees should be aware of student surveys and pilot projects before they're initiated, some around the board table— including one student trustee— voiced concern about how her motion would be put into practice.

Specifically, Matters was asked who would be deciding which surveys are examined and who would determine what constitutes morally-sensitive or controversial content in a survey.

The trustee offered no specific examples of controversial surveys a new board policy might guard against, offering, "that's something that can be addressed in the policy that will be developed by our staff." We don't envy those board staff burdened with the responsibility of hammering out the details of a policy that Matters herself isn't prepared to put into context.

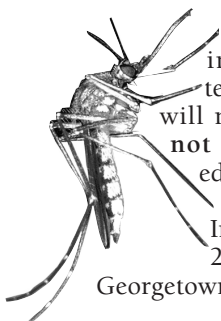
What we do know is that some parents complained to the board and the media following a recent Halton Youth Survey distributed by Our Kids Network. The voluntary survey asked direct questions such as whether students had ever contemplated suicide or used tobacco, drugs or alcohol. Unfortunately, a letter sent home to parents in advance of the survey's distribution didn't provide detailed examples of what kind of questions would be asked. Still, is it the questions students are being asked or their potential answers that Matters is most worried about?

While drug use and thoughts of suicide among our young people are disturbing, ignoring their existence won't make the problem go away.

Censoring these surveys will not put the lid back on Pandora's box. It may, however, negatively skew invaluable data that helps providers of important health and social services for youth determine where the greatest needs exist in Halton.

Something bugging you?

Send us a letter!



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Steve Nease



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Trash talkin'

Do we need to post Clean Up bonds?

Dear editor,

It is a shame that after the great clean up of trash by volunteers recently, users of the soccer, baseball and other facilities at the Gellert Park, can not see fit to clean up after themselves.

Within about 10 to 20 feet of garbage cans, one can find from 10 to 25 empty, plastic drinking water containers and other garbage..

Maybe time has come to require the posting of "Clean Up" bonds by the people making use of this great park.

Rein Pater, Georgetown

Young girls take on Hungry Hollow trash

Dear editor,

Re: Future is now for Hungry Hollow (May 2 letter to the editor).

Reading this has made me reflect on an example of two young girls, who outside the activities celebrated during Earth Week took it upon themselves recently, while coming home from church, to go back through the path they took home to clean the ravine running through Georgetown South.

I was so proud of their actions and more so of the fact that no one asked them to do this. These are two very social, young girls who definitely are not lacking for things to do. They walked by me as I was cleaning up my gardens and said they couldn't get over the garbage in the

ravine. They slipped on latex gloves, took a garbage bag and came back with a bag full of debris, as if it was just a natural thing for them to do.

I can't even get my daughter to clean her room for goodness sakes and she didn't hesitate to go out and clean this ravine! I think this is a perfect example of how our children have been educated about the importance of our environment and it shows that this is a natural instinct for them to just care and do their part to keep it clean.

So to those educators, here is a perfect example of paying it forward and to continue this re-enforcement as this is a sign that our children get it.

Theresa Caruana, Georgetown

Was a ticket necessary?

Dear editor,

I thought the readers would like to know what the Town of Halton Hills charged me to clean up my property this past Earth Day weekend.

On Saturday afternoon at 1:45 p.m., while I was busy cleaning up my property of the dirt, sludge and litter that old man winter leaves behind, I received a \$30 parking ticket. I had parked my car on the boulevard portion of my driveway and a very small portion of the trunk of my car hung over the sidewalk. There was plenty of room to get by.

Now I absolutely agree with people getting parking tickets for blocking the sidewalks, and it is an epidemic in our community, but on a Saturday afternoon while everyone is outside cleaning up our

roads in our neighbourhood that the Town of Halton Hills haven't even assumed yet?

The Parking Enforcement person really needs to use some discretion while doing their job. There are the blatant violators that deserve this type of ticket and then there are people like me, who are just trying to clean up the neighbourhood.

Kathleen Hannah, Georgetown

Pack the poop home!

Dear editor,

Every day I walk my dog in and around the east end of town and most days I bring home someone else's litter and put it out with my home garbage or recyclables.

During Earth Week I go the extra bit and take a green trash bag with me. It doesn't take long to fill it with the expected coffee cups, water bottles, pop cans and cigarette packs but what surprised and upset me this time was the large number of plastic bags, filled with dog poop that I found under bushes and shrubs and in the long grass. Shame on you dog walkers! You stoop and scoop to look good then, when no one is watching, you toss it onto someone else's property, all tied up in plastic so it will take years to decompose! Not only does this look gross but imagine the health implications. So, the few of you dog walkers that are giving the rest of us a bad name, stop it! Stop pretending you are doing the right thing and really do it. Carry that bag all the way home and put it in your own trash can.

Valerie Jordan, Georgetown

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