

OPINION

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Bridging the problem

Infrastructure.

It's a word that just doesn't capture people's attention. However, in the wake of last week's bridge collapse in Minneapolis, it's a word we're likely to hear a lot more and frankly, we should.

Immediately following the U.S. disaster much air time and newspaper space was devoted to the "can it happen here?" scenario. Engineers, architects and various other "bridge experts" were called on to voice their opinions on whether bridges, overpasses and other structures here in Ontario are safe. Not surprisingly, opinions were somewhat mixed.

For the record, Halton Region has followed a provincially-mandated program since 1997 which requires bridges and large culverts to be inspected every two years. The Region is responsible for 76 bridges and 113 culverts which cover 296 kilometres of regional roadway. Individual municipalities are responsible for their own roads.

To be honest, few bridges collapse for no apparent reason. Yes, there have been some instances, such as the collapse of a bridge in Laval last year which claimed five lives and a bridge on the New York State Thruway near Amsterdam, New York, gave way in 1987, killing 10 people, but those instances, like the one in Minneapolis, are rare.

That said, last week's disaster should serve as a wakeup call to all levels of government that aging infrastructure will—and should—be a front-burner issue in coming years.

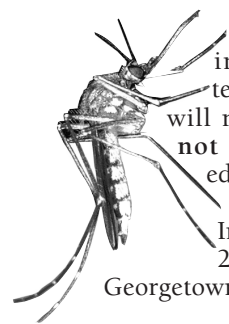
Sewer lines, water pipes, overpasses etc. do not last forever. Our harsh climate and various other factors all result in wear and tear on structures that were built decades ago.

While various levels of government pump millions of dollars into infrastructure each year, in many cases it is just to keep up with regular maintenance—not work that would be seen as proactive.

Infrastructure, and its maintenance, is an expensive venture funded mostly through tax dollars. The Minneapolis disaster may, however, be the impetus for many politicians—and residents—to take a second look at local infrastructure and rethink its importance when it comes time to decide how best to spend taxpayers' money.

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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The Independent & Free Press is published every Wednesday and Friday at 280 Guelph St., Unit 29, Georgetown Ont., L7G 4B1. It is one of several newspapers published by Metroland Media Group Ltd.

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Price: Store copies 50¢ each; Subscriptions \$26 per year by carrier; \$92.50 per year by mail in Canada; \$130 per year in all other countries. Plus G.S.T.

Second Class Mail Registration Number 6869. The Independent & Free Press is a member of The Canadian Community Newspaper Association and The Ontario Community Newspaper Association.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We are all Canadians regardless of race

Dear editor,

I am a visible minority who lives in Georgetown. Recently, a rude person made some belligerent comments towards me and my family because of our skin colour. This episode has made me think about what and who is Canadian.

This 'gentleman' said: "Just because the government let you in, doesn't mean I have to."

I understand that there are many in this community who do not appreciate minorities. To those people, I say, if you have nothing good to say, keep it to yourself.

To be a REAL Canadian, is to accept others regardless of their appearance, beliefs, religion, gender, and sexual orientation. People in

Georgetown need to accept that Georgetown is changing. They need to realize that Canadians come in different shapes, sizes, and colours. Not everyone of a visible minority is an immigrant. Many of us are first generation Canadians and therefore deserve the right to not be discriminated against.

However, a person's immigration status is irrelevant. No one deserves to be discriminated against for that which they have no control over. We all deserve the right to live wherever we want and make full use of all of the privileges that are granted to us by the Canadian Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

To those who witnessed the incident at the mall, I thank you for

demonstrating how much you value the principles our country is based on by choosing to gawk, rather than defend our title as the most multicultural society in the world.

Amber (last name withheld)

Georgetown

Homecoming organizers get kudos from board chair

Dear editor,

Congratulations to the organizers of the Georgetown District High School Reunion for the outstanding job they did last Saturday.

Hundreds of former students, teachers and their families made a return journey to GDHS, to find one another in the 'decade rooms', purchase their old yearbook on CD, partake in the brunch, and enjoy the memorabilia on display.

Thank you to everyone involved, for all your hard work, your commitment, and your vision, when you realized two years ago how important this would be to the many happy people who came back through the doors of our school last weekend.

It is events like the Reunion which define a school and its place in the community, and the organizing committee gave everyone lots to be proud of.

Gillian Tuck Kutarna
Chair and Trustee, Halton Hills
Wards 3 and 4

'Idiots' chastised for stealing cushions

Dear editor,

My family just moved to Georgetown at the end of March. Recently some idiot went into our backyard and stole from us.

They took two cushions from our patio chairs. While I'm glad that it was just the cushions and not anything else, I'm angry about the whole thing.

Our stuff was old hand-me-downs, but it was ours. Though the cushions weren't of value to anyone, it does make me feel less secure in my own house knowing someone invaded my space.

After teaching my five year-old

that stealing is wrong, it's going to be interesting talking to her about how other people have no morals.

So, to those idiots, you might have felt cool taking something that did not belong to you. However, 1) you took from a family of limited means, we don't have extra money to buy those extras and 2) we won't buy new stuff in case you come back.

The probability of you reading this is nil, but on the off chance you do read the paper, I hope this impacts you in some way.

Vera Orsini,
Georgetown