

Showing Pride

Town councillors this week, in effect, were forced to swallow their Pride.

For the past 10 years the Town has had a simple policy when it came to the ceremonial matter of flying flags or issuing public proclamations for various organizations—they didn't do either.

Councillors had several reasons for adopting this policy—chief among them was they didn't want to be put in the uncomfortable position of being seen as endorsing any group that might be offensive to other members of the community. Also, there was the fact they were receiving more than 70 requests a year to raise various flags—that's roughly a request every four days. A bit of overkill one might argue.

However, as councillors learned this week, times have changed and they must change with them.

HOPE (Halton Organization for Pride and Education), a charitable group that promotes an anti-homophobia message, has been persistent in its bid to get council to change its policy and fly the Halton Pride rainbow flag. HOPE argued the Town's policy was discriminatory and couldn't understand why Halton Hills could not follow policy of the other three Halton municipalities which all fly the Pride flag.

Raj Anand, a human rights lawyer hired to review the Town's policy, said, while the 1997 policy was not contrary to the Ontario Human Rights Code, there has been a growing expectation by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) that municipalities demonstrate they are not discriminatory by furthering the rights of minorities.

Anand said, while council allows groups the opportunity to publicize their organization at council meetings, the OHRC would expect council to do more to give such groups "a leg-up".

Had the matter gone to an OHRC hearing it would have been costly for the Town to defend its stand, not to mention be potentially embarrassing.

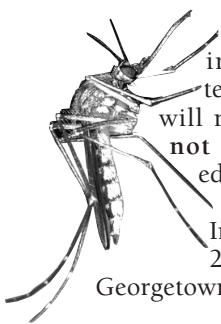
As Councillor Clark Somerville indicated, this is a "human rights amendment" to the policy.

"Our town has changed since 1997 and we have to recognize... how we have to be inclusive of everyone and that they be made to feel welcome here," he said.

That sentiment should be echoed by all residents and if flying a flag helps, so be it.

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:

Independent & Free Press,
280 Guelph St., Unit 29,
Georgetown, ON., L7G 4B1

E-mail:

jmcghie@independentfreepress.com

THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS

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.

Advertising is accepted on the condition that, in the event of a typographical error, that portion of the advertising space occupied by the erroneous item, together with reasonable allowance for signature will not be charged for, but the balance of the advertisement will be paid for at the acceptable rate. In the event of typographical error advertising goods or services at wrong price, goods or services may not be sold. Advertising is merely an offer to sell which may be withdrawn at any time.

Editorial and advertising content of The Independent & Free Press is protected by copyright. Unauthorized use is prohibited.

Price: Store copies 50c 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.



Steve Nease



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Province should now tackle staffing issue

Dear editor,
We are grateful the provincial government is raising the raw food allowance in long-term care to \$7 per day. The old rate of \$5.57 for three meals, three snacks and drinks was woefully inadequate.

Our residents' council can now recommend a second priority. It's time to increase funds provided to hire enough staff to meet the complex needs of residents. There

'New Canadians' must help keep Canada great

Dear editor,
I am writing in response to the August 8 letter entitled "We are all Canadians regardless of race".

I desire to make several points: First, our government(s) have seen fit to force us to accept different cultures and races. These "newcomers" to our country extol (some blatantly) the virtues of their culture, dress and laws denigrating the host country and in some cases disobeying our laws and bringing undue violence upon us.

As the letter states, "people in Georgetown need to accept that Georgetown is changing..." at best, this is heavy-handed. This is bound to create tension, frustration and resentment.

Secondly, respect goes both ways. "Newcomers" (immigrants or their recent Canadian-born generations) often whine that they do not receive respect but it would be both wise and prudent for them to consider the sacrifices made by our ancestors in building this country. In some cases, in the not-

are too many part-time health care aides and personal support workers working for low pay and without benefits. These people must hold several jobs in order to make a living for their families and some wait years for full-time positions to open up. When homes are in outbreak, workers can carry infections to the other homes where they work, jeopardizing staff and residents' health.

Our residents want consistent care so-distant past, Canadians have given their lives for Canada.

My third point involves my wife, who is a "visible minority". She, by her own admission, has never, knowingly, experienced discrimination while living and working here in Georgetown. I just wonder if that is due, in part, to the fact that she dresses, speaks and acts like a Canadian?

Lastly, why do so many "visible minorities" throw their rights in our face when they do not get what they want, when they want? Most Canadians are not even familiar with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Maybe, just maybe, a little less whining and complaining will go a long way toward "new Canadians" becoming part of our family. Also, please be patient with us as we need to adjust to "new Canadians" coming into our country. We have a great country, help us keep it that way—"regardless of race".

David Dods, Georgetown

by workers who know them well and are satisfied in their work. A happy workforce can make a huge difference in providing a warm, caring environment in the home. Less turnover of workers and more time with the same residents improves the quality of care and personal relationships. This results in a win-win arrangement for everyone.

So, if our government wants to know what its seniors in long-term care need the most, they should establish a "standard of care" that ensures adequate hours of nursing support in the form of more full-time positions. For that we will give all the credit, and hold off on the criticism. Our residents in long-term care who built this great province deserve nothing less.

Ruth Donaldson,
on behalf of the residents' council,
Bennett Health Care Centre

Thieves a 'sad' lot

Dear editor,
During the early hours of Sept. 4 someone came onto my property on John Street and stole an ornamental jockey. It had to take two people to lift it and they also tried to remove a very heavy mailbox. Both were gifts to me from my children.

How sad is it that thieves have to sneak around in the dark to steal things to make their property look good?

Margaret Glenn,
Georgetown

STAFF DIRECTORY

Publisher
Ken Nugent

Advertising director
Steve Foreman
(sforeman@independentfreepress.com)

Retail advertising manager
Cindi Campbell
(ccampbell@independentfreepress.com)

Managing editor
John McGhie
(jmcghie@independentfreepress.com)

Distribution manager
Nancy Geissler
(distribution@independentfreepress.com)

ADVERTISING

Advertising co-ordinator
Jennifer Christie (jchristie@independentfreepress.com)

Retail Sales:
Jennifer Spencer (jspencer@independentfreepress.com)
Andrew Key (akey@independentfreepress.com)
Amy Sykes (features@independentfreepress.com)

Real estate:
Sue Spizziri (realestate@independentfreepress.com)

Classifieds:
Kristie Pells (classified@independentfreepress.com)

ACCOUNTING

Rose Marie Gauthier, Michelle Wimmer

EDITORIAL

Cynthia Gamble: News editor

(cgamble@independentfreepress.com)

Ted Brown: Photography

(tbrown@independentfreepress.com)

Lisa Tallyn: Staff writer

(ltallyn@independentfreepress.com)

Eamonn Maher: Staff writer/sports

(emaher@independentfreepress.com)

PRODUCTION:

Mary Lou Foreman, Kevin Powell,
Shelli Harrison, Dolores Black, Debbie MacDougall