

## Dealing with the tragedy of suicide

Reverend Paul Ivany is undoubtedly hoping he doesn't see another year like the one just past.

The United Norval Church pastor conducted funeral services last year for five people (three from Georgetown alone) who took their own lives.

And those were not likely the only suicides in this area in the past year.

Odile Gear knows the tragedy first-hand of dealing with a loved one who has committed suicide. Her 19-year-old daughter Stephanie killed herself last winter.

Recognizing there was a need for intervention and support for those contemplating suicide—as well as support for family and friends dealing a suicidal loved one—Gear and Ivany, along with 25 other local residents, formed H.E.A.L.—The Georgetown Suicide Prevention Group.

Unfortunately, suicide has long been a taboo subject for many. Gear and Ivany stress that it is time for that to change and people must begin raising awareness about depression and other mental illnesses that lead some to consider taking their own lives.

While raising awareness is one mandate of the group so is working with all levels of government to encourage the development of a suicide prevention strategy.

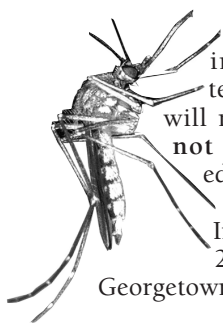
H.E.A.L.—The Georgetown Suicide Prevention Group is holding an information night for the general public on Wednesday, Jan. 23 at Norval United Church (484 Guelph St. in Norval) from 7-8:30 p.m.

We commend Gear for the courage she has shown in dealing with her own personal tragedy and all those involved in forming this much-needed group.

Judging by the number of recent tragic deaths, it is clearly time for more light to be shed on this problem.

## Something bugging you?

Send us a letter!



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Steve Nease



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Board's banning of book 'wrong and unfair'

Dear editor,  
Re: Halton Catholic District School Board's banning of *The Golden Compass*.

Once again if someone or some organization isn't comfortable with something what is their solution? Censorship.

I believe we are all entitled to our opinions but to tell someone they can't read a book because they disagree or find some aspect of it offensive or, in the case of *The Golden Compass*, 'anti-Christian', is wrong and unfair.

I believe censorship comes out of fear. Fear of having an open mind. So many of us have been programmed to think a certain way that when we see, read or listen to something that's a little different we automatically think it's wrong. We fear to think out of the box.

With censorship artists will lose

their ability and their artistic freedom. There are so many great books to be read, songs to be heard and movies to be seen, is it fair that people won't be able to because some group/organization has found the material to be offensive in their minds? Don't let others make decisions for you. Keep an open mind and decide for yourself.

I find it incredibly hard to believe that all Catholics feel the same way. I actually find it a little insulting for the parents. How dare the Catholic school board decide what their children can and cannot read. Parents should be the one to decide. When a children reads a book their minds are stimulated, they are transported into another dimension allowing their imagination to soar. If the Catholic school board continues to ban books children will lose this ability towards imagination.

The Catholic school board is saying that one's religion will be weakened by reading this book. If that's what they believe then perhaps they don't have enough faith and strength in their religion to begin with. The Catholic board trustees are nothing but a bunch of bullies and hypocrites. Growing up I was told God loves every human being no matter what, after all, we are created in his image. But according to the board, God doesn't love atheists.

If anyone from the school board is reading this, I have a message: It's 2008 and not 1508.

Star K. Santiago,  
Georgetown

### Baseball is about the kids

Dear editor,  
I would like to thank all of the members of the Georgetown Baseball Association who came to the special meeting on Wednesday evening.

This meeting not only laid to rest any uncertainty surrounding the financial report that was presented at the AGM, but also generated a lot of good discussion regarding how many volunteers are required to run an organization such as this one.

I hope that many of those in attendance (or anyone else for that matter), will come forward to assist in the running of house league for the 2008 baseball season. Baseball is, and always should be, about our kids having fun, and house league offers them a great opportunity to do so.

Marnie Carey, Georgetown

### UK visitor finds local hospital care excellent

Dear editor,  
My wife and I are over from the United Kingdom, staying with my daughter who lives in Ballinafad. On December 29, 2007, I slipped on the ice. I thought I had just badly sprained my ankle but, after being taken to Georgetown Hospital Emergency Department, it was discovered that I had broken my ankle, tibia and fibula.

I cannot thank Dr. Peter Iracleous enough for his extremely efficient and very kind treatment. After having the necessary X-rays he informed me that I would need surgery to fix my ankle and, as, the surgeon on call that day

was from Brampton Civic Hospital Dr. Iracleous arranged for me to be transferred there.

On arrival there I was quickly admitted and the pre-op tests were started. Dr. Bob Karabatsos conducted the surgery the next day and everything went well. I should be returning to the UK at the end of this week.

The service I received from Brampton Civic Hospital was second to none. The nursing staff were really marvellous and I want to say a big thank you to everyone who looked after me.

Albert J. Ashton, UK resident