

OPINION

www.independentfreepress.com

Phone: 905-873-0301
Fax: 905-873-0398

Bullies are criminals

It's a no-brainer— cyberbullying should be a criminal offence.

We are 100 per cent behind the Canadian Teachers' Federation in its decision to call on the federal government to take a tough stand on cyberbullying. One hundred delegates endorsed the motion at the powerful group's annual general meeting held in New Brunswick on Saturday. The president of the federation, Emily Noble, said her group is going to be lobbying MPs for their support in addressing weaknesses in the Criminal Code, especially in the area of harassment and bullying that's carried out in cyberspace.

Thanks to instant messaging, posts on blogs and, of course, the ever-growing popularity of social networking sites, cyberbullying is a very real issue that needs addressing sooner rather than later. One can't imagine the sheer torment some young people and educators feel when targeted by a faceless criminal.

The federation says cyberbullying is a growing problem that affects both students and teachers. We would like to take that statement further and suggest that it can potentially affect anyone at any age in any profession at any time.

But like anything else, you can't legislate common sense and our communities would be much safer and kinder if parents paid closer attention to what their child or teen is posting on the web.

While students might not want Mom or Dad reading their e-mails or their postings on Facebook, but that is what is needed if a parent suspects either their child is being bullied or is the perpetrator.

Hateful, threatening words can be frightening. Unflattering or harmful photographs widely distributed are not funny. These are not pranks; it is online harassment.

We hope that the teachers' federation continues to push this important issue and that it does not become 'lost' once the school bell rings in September.

What do you think?

Below are the results of our most recent online poll. For the current poll go to www.independentfreepress.com

The Town of Halton Hills plans to spend \$210,000 in 2008-2009 on "green" initiatives? Is this too much money?

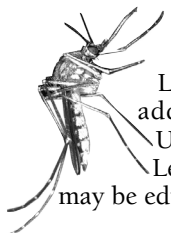
It's too much (27%)

It's not enough (33%)

It's the right amount (40%)

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.

E-mail:

jmcghie@independentfreepress.com

Mail or drop off:

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

THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS

The Independent & Free Press is published Wednesday and Friday and is one of several Metroland Media Group Ltd. community newspapers. Editorial and advertising content of The Independent & Free Press is protected by copyright. Unauthorized use is prohibited.



Steve Nease



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

More staff needed at long-term care homes

(This letter was sent to former Minister of Health and Long Term Care George Smitherman. A copy was made available for publication.)

Dear Mr. Minister,

Although you have taken considerable criticism for your offer to "wear a brief for a day", we do appreciate the attention you have brought to the challenge of meeting the varying needs of residents due to the shortage of staff in Ontario's long-term care homes.

At the Bennett Centre, we don't have the problem of covering the cost for the briefs, but our staff are often run off their feet, especially when illness strikes our residents or emergencies take place. The only way breaks or training take place is if someone else is able to cover for them.

Schools' support of youth centre appreciated

Dear editor,

On behalf of Links2Care-Open Door Youth Centre we would like to offer our sincere appreciation to Bryan Robinson and his auto students at Georgetown District High School, along with teachers and students at Gary Allan High School for their donations to Open Door Youth Centre.

This past spring Open Door Youth Centre was broken into with approximately \$2,000 worth of goods stolen. For a centre that continues to struggle to keep our doors open, this was a big hit to our programs. Both these schools responded by offering support. In May Bryan Robinson's auto students hosted a car cleaning fundraiser to raise funds

Our PSW's provide daily care to 9.4 residents each during the day and 33 residents at night. RN's and RPN's are responsible for administration of medication, assessment and treatment for 33 residents each during the day and 66 at night! These numbers escalate, of course, when we run short-staffed, something that can't seem to be avoided periodically. Perhaps if there were more full-time positions and less part-time employment we would have less problems; such as when part-timers aren't allowed to work in two homes when one is in outbreak.

We know that some provinces provide more hours for staffing than are funded in Ontario. How can our government justify this knowing the needs of its vulnerable seniors whose quality

of life depend on adequate staff resources? We are calling on you to staff long-term care homes so that there is no doubt that the care is there when it is needed. If for no other reason, please help improve this system so that it could provide the level of care that one of your parents might require, or in the future perhaps you yourself. We want no more than this, but certainly no less.

A number of residents, family members and staff who feel strongly about this issue have also signed a petition in support of these concerns.

The Bennett Health Care Centre
Residents' Council

Why change Festival?

Dear editor,
As a long-time resident of Georgetown I am wondering who decided to change the Pioneer Days/Village Festival format?

I used to look forward to it every year and it was a great place to meet friends who I had not seen for awhile.

What I saw this year was nothing more than a flea market. I am sure that the local vendors were not too happy with someone from out of town selling their wares on the street. I am told that the format this year was oriented to families and children. If this is the case why were police officers patrolling Main Street all afternoon?

If there is a reason why the format changed I would like someone to print it in *The Independent & Free Press*.

Barrie Martin, 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)
Brendan Louth (blouth@independentfreepress.com)
Amy Sykes (features@independentfreepress.com)
Andrea Lefebvre (alefebvre@independentfreepress.com)
Brendon Stevenson (bstevenson@independentfreepress.com)

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

Classifieds:
Kristie Pells (classified@independentfreepress.com)

ACCOUNTING
Rose Marie Gauthier, Michelle McEachern

EDITORIAL
Cynthia Gamble: News editor
(cgamble@independentfreepress.com)
Ted Brown: Photography
(tbrown@independentfreepress.com)
Lisa Tallyn: Staff writer
(ltallyn@independentfreepress.com)

PRODUCTION:
Eamonn Maher: Staff writer/sports
(emaher@independentfreepress.com)
Mary Lou Foreman, Kevin Powell,
Shelli Harrison, Dolores Black, Debbie MacDougall

Amanda Kostjuk, Judy Robinson
Open Door Youth Centre
Links2care