

OPINION

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March still needed

Last night (Thursday) residents from across Halton gathered in Oakville to Take Back the Night.

This is the 18th year for the international event designed to spread the message that women and children have a right to be free from violence in their lives. It's hard to imagine that after all this time we still need to plan for such events. But, when you consider that 51 per cent of Canadian women will experience at least one incident of sexual or physical violence in their lifetime then you can understand why Sexual Assault Violence Intervention Services (SAVIS) knows its work is never done.

In fact, Halton Regional Police recently released its mid-year statistical report on crime in the area and sexual assault has increased while other violent crime is decreasing. According to Halton police, there were 50 sex assaults in 2007 compared to 59 during the same time frame this year. Sadly, Take Back the Night is needed more than ever.

SAVIS ensures that its march is more than simply a campaign against violence. Organizers have turned it into a family-friendly event offering, among other things, entertainment and children's crafts.

However, the march continues to be just for children and women, providing them with the freedom to walk safely at night without having to ask a male family member or friend to accompany them.

SAVIS is keenly aware that violence against women has no boundaries and affects individuals from all walks of life. However, there are certain communities at a higher risk for experiencing violence including, among others, immigrant and refugee women, women of colour and those with disabilities.

SAVIS has numerous partners, including Halton Regional Police Service, Halton Women's Place, Halton Community Legal Services and the Halton District School Board. It is encouraging to note that all these groups work hand in hand to ensure a safer place for all of its residents.

If you know someone who needs the support of SAVIS, they can call 1-905-825-3622, e-mail savis@savisofhalton.org, or visit www.savisofhalton.org.

What do you think?

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

Do you think the country needs a general election this fall?

- Yes (31%)
- No (69%)

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:

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Steve Nease



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Future of dairy farmers a cause for concern

Dear editor,

I am directly involved in a small dairy farm and I am often surprised at the public's perception of how much the farmers earn directly from the products they buy.

Here are some statistics available online: in 2006, the typical cost of a glass of milk at a restaurant was \$2. The Canadian dairy farmer's share was only 18 cents. The processor-distributor's share was 11 cents and the restaurant's share was \$1.71; at the same time, the cost for a medium pizza was on average \$16.25 at a restaurant. Dairy farmers received \$0.69 for the milk used for the cheese on the pizza.

Dairy farmers work 10-15 hour days, 365 days a year. The average Canadian dairy cow produces milk

305 days a year and needs to be milked at least twice a day. That's a lot of work for an 18 cent share.

There are many expenses on a farm and there is no retirement, medical or vacation plan that come with the job, but you do get a strong sense of accomplishment, a variety of tasks to perform and a good environment in which to work.

Unfortunately, fewer young people are taking over their family operations. There are 10,000 fewer farmers than there were in Ontario 10 years ago and the average age of a Canadian farmer is 52.

Dairy farmers provide almost three times as many jobs on farms (57,500) than General Motors of Canada (19,000). The milk production sector in Canada employs, directly and indi-

rectly, slightly less people than the third-largest Canadian employer, Magna International (with 83,900 employees in 23 countries)— but unlike Magna International, all of these jobs are in Canada.

It's been my experience that farmers rarely complain, this takes time away from the work they need to get done. But when they do, you should take note— anything that affects a farmer will eventually effect you.

Debbie McClure, Georgetown

Dog, cats grateful

Dear editor,

Recently your newspaper printed a request to the community for donations of dog and cat food to fill the depleted coffers at the Upper Credit Humane Society.

This unfortunately is an ongoing problem but had reached crisis proportion.

What a community we live in, no sooner did the request appear in the paper, food was arriving at the shelter to the delight of our residents... yummy! "Thank you" is such a simple word, but does not fully express what is in our hearts when confronted by this generosity and outpouring of support.

The animals, often stressed by the situation they find themselves in, find comfort in their meals, which to many are the high spot of their day.

They would like to express their gratitude.

Judith-Anne Kolu, UCHS Volunteer

A lot of people were 'wrong' about proposed school

Dear editor,

Re: Keswick Sutherland School proposal

I felt compelled to write this since reading a submission stating that our Town planning department and regional planning got it wrong, and that council got it right.

Did Credit Valley Conservation, the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, lawyers, and 23 commenting agencies also get it wrong? I guess they did. That is a lot of wrong people.

The recent letter to the editor also suggested that this was an exercise in democracy. Is it just about who is

right and who is wrong? Just wondering.

Another letter mentioned "provincial legislation" and the Places to Grow Act. Did this person read the literature that was referenced? This application has been mired with hysteria, exaggerations, and at times, quite comical statements. To listen to some arguments you lose focus of what this proposal is: a school. With all this hype I thought it was about a bordello.

One thing is certain— once the Ontario Municipal Board has decided, I guess they will also be wrong.

O. Micheals, Georgetown