

Letters to the editor

# Being Canadian includes tolerance

Dear editor,  
I was disappointed by the letter of September 7, 'New Canadians' must help keep Canada great.

The correspondent, Mr. Dods, implies that immigrants should "dress, speak and act like Canadians" if they wish to avoid discrimination. Since I'm not sure what acting like a Canadian means I will need some guidance. I hope it includes tolerance and the acceptance of diversity.

I'm offended by Mr. Dods's contention that immigrants are "denigrating" Canada. I've taught in Brampton for more than two decades and have been graced by the contact with many, many "newcomers" who are proud Canadians. They speak in various accents, wear a variety of cultural dress and are, in the main, fine, hard-working citizens. Their children are generally very respectful—a joy to teach. They are, Mr. Dods, a credit to this nation.

Mr. Dods also notes that some of these immigrants are law-breakers. This is quite true, but then one can find criminals in any group, even among Mr. Dods's cherished right-speaking, right-dressing, "Canadians."

I agree that we should celebrate and "consider

the sacrifices made by our ancestors in building this country." However to be fair we need to recognize that early settlement in this country wasn't all virtuous. The land that became Canada wasn't empty territory waiting to be filled by tides of British and French settlers. It was fully occupied by native peoples who were swept aside by disease, shady land dealing and, in some cases, violence. Perhaps Mr. Dods should ponder the fact that early European immigrants showed little inclination to adapt to the prevailing norms and customs of the original inhabitants of this land.

Mr. Dods also reminds us of the fact that "Canadians have given their lives for Canada." It is, of course vitally important to remember the valour and sacrifice of Canadians who have served this nation in conflicts such as the Second World War.

And with regards to that particular war, it is also important to remember what sort of regime we were fighting against—a brutally intolerant one that visited terrible violence on people who did not fit into the narrow Nazi definition of what being German meant.

Don Scallen, Georgetown

# Change is part of what makes Canada great

Dear editor:

Again, I am appalled by the ignorance and intolerance of some of the residents of this community. I am referring to a recent letter from David Dods indicating how he thinks visible minorities should behave.

He refers to these "newcomers" as "bringing undue violence upon us", that it would be "wise for them to consider the sacrifices made by our ancestors", he implies that visible minorities could avoid harassment if they were to "dress, speak and act like a Canadian" and that they are too familiar with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Unbelievable.

There is violence all around us in Georgetown, Mr. Dods, as we have seen in this newspaper week after week after week. Do you really feel that threatened to think that it is all the work of visible minorities?

And many visible minorities have given their lives for Canada in the Canadian Armed Forces as well as the fire and police forces. You are right about respect, Mr. Dods. It does go both ways.

What happened to freedom of dress and

speech for all Canadians? Maybe we should harass teenagers for their choice of clothes or our Irish and Scottish descendants for their "non-Canadian accents".

And finally, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Thankfully we have such a document that defends the rights of all people. It could just be, that these visible minorities "throw their rights in our face", as Mr. Dods says, because they feel they have to, to protect themselves against racism in our society. The reason why most Canadians aren't familiar with the Charter is because they've never had to be. Mr. Dods, the website for the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is [www.charterofrights.ca](http://www.charterofrights.ca). You would be well served to have a look. Maybe we should try walking a mile in another person's shoes.

Ignorance and intolerance is unacceptable in this society and should be in this community.

Georgetown is changing, Mr. Dods. It has been for decades and, agree or disagree, change is part of what makes this country so great. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else.

Kevin Turner, Georgetown

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