

OUR READERS WRITE

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

Skewed view of ASL

Dear Editor:

I agree with Carole Sharpe of the Milton Deaf Action Group (Canadian Champion, May 18th) that deaf people face more hurdles in the search for employment than hearing people, due to lack of awareness and understanding by the general population and prospective employers.

It is good to hear of a group such as the Milton Deaf Action Group, who are facing this and actually doing something about it.

I do however take issue with Ms Sharpe's comment about American Sign Language (ASL). Her implication is that using what she calls "the Canadian version", deaf people achieved a better reading and writing level. That just is not so. What I believe Ms Sharpe is referring to is in fact a signed form of English. The implication that learning and using ASL prevents a person from learning and using English is without basis.

Many of your readers are probably unaware that ASL is a language in itself, with it's own syntax and

grammar. I am not simply stating an opinion, linguists have long recognized ASL as a complete language.

It is very misleading and most unfair to translate the English sentence "I am going to the store" with a pidgin style "store going". No language is translated literally like that. Do we translate the French "chez nous" with "at the house of us"? It's like saying French (or any other language) is not as good as English because the syntax and grammar are different.

I have two profoundly deaf daughters, now 26 and 28 yrs old. They were educated in a systems which used a combination of ASL and signed English. They both hold good jobs, are well paid, and my youngest daughter is taking college level psychology courses in her spare time. ASL is their first language, English is their second.

They never put me down or laugh at me when I make (frequent) mistakes in ASL, and I would never do that to them when they make mistakes in English. I believe that mutual respect of each other's language is an essential part of communication.

Maureen Harding
Milton

It's only vandalism, silly

Dear Editor:

I would like to respond to a letter from Paul Quinton from Tuesday's paper, regarding the election sign vandals.

Mr. Quinton I am sorry to hear you so upset over a sign going missing from your lawn. But wake up and face reality. This act of "political intolerance" you refer to has nothing to do with "respect for democracy."

Yes, an act of vandalism, but nothing to do with politics. It's just a fact of some kids having too much time on their hands. Have you not driven around town and seen this. About 60 per cent of the political party signs in town are either pulled out of the ground or ripped off the posts and left hanging. So it's not a matter of "the orange sign defacing the common values of our fair community," it's a matter of a bunch of kids passing the time wrecking signs, while walking around town trying to find something to do.

To them, it's harmless. Some probably don't even know that it's considered vandalism. And, every generation of teens is going to do it.

I can understand you being upset because of the sign being on your private property was stolen and you are feeling violated. Well try explaining to your children "why kids would do that" when they come into your backyard and steal your children's toys right off the back deck, (like I had to do a couple of week ago). That's feeling violated.

So, in short, no one is out to get you and your political party. Free speech is alive and well. You just may have to replace it a couple of times. As for democracy suffering a blow, well we'll find that out on election day.

As for your comments of Jewish people and homosexuals, well I am not going to go there. Everyone is entitled to their opinion and that, no one can take away.

Shelly Cyr
Milton

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