

# OPINION

## Changes welcome

Recently we received both good and bad news about crime in Halton.

The good news is the Halton Regional Police Service reported the 2005 crime rate fell by 7.6 per cent from the previous year to reach its lowest level since 1974. Pretty impressive.

Police officials credit the dramatic drop to the excellent work of front-line officers, along with the service's invaluable partnership with community members and volunteers.

But the bad news is the violent crime rate rose slightly (by 1.6 per cent).

While improved attention to domestic violence, robberies and other violent crimes certainly played a part in the higher figures, few would argue that more criminals are finding it easier to get their hands on a gun.

To that end, the federal

government recently proposed legislation that calls for tougher sentences for gun and gang-related crimes. Included in the Tories' two bills is the elimination of conditional sentences as a sentencing option in cases of serious violent and sexual offences, major drug offences and crimes punishable by jail terms of 10 years or more.

Minimum sentences for gun crimes would see a penalty of five years for a first offence, seven years for a second and 10 years on multiple offences.

While these changes are welcome, the Conservatives must realize that if they want to lock up more criminals they better have a place to put them, and that means more money must be delivered to correctional facilities.



## ReadersWrite

Send us your letters to [miltoned@haltonsearch.com](mailto:miltoned@haltonsearch.com) or drop them off at 875 Main St. E.

### Milton in dire need of upgrades when it comes to its street signs

DEAR EDITOR:

The City of Mississauga has just completed the modernization of its street signs, using large one-size letters to improve the reading capacity for motorists.

Incidentally, Mississauga is now also considering L.E.D. technology and wireless control of their street and traffic lighting. Mayor Hazel McCallion is determined to keep Mississauga ahead of the rest of the GTA.

Here in Milton, the old archaic standards for street signs, lighting and traffic are still being used.

The road signs in Milton are based on the 4/3 inch model. It wouldn't cost any more for Milton to implement the new

standards for signs in our new developments. In time, during replacement repairs, the old signs could also be updated. Likewise, the use of the new technology traffic lights in our new subdivisions should also be considered.

I was pleasantly surprised to learn that certain cities in China and India have already implemented these changes. We seem to be way behind in Milton in keeping abreast of the world.

If this continues, in a few years we could lose our First World standing. It's time for our elected officials to get going, or else be gone.

**DOUG DEANS  
SOMERVILLE TERRACE**

### Letter writer's criticism a bit misguided

DEAR EDITOR:

This letter is in response to Fred Pritchard's letter entitled 'Flag should be lowered to honour soldiers'.

It's good to see someone express love of their country and respect for our armed forces.

However, I believe that Pritchard's expressed outrage may be misguided.

Due to the political and media spin, one would almost think that no flags are lowered when a death in the military occurs.

This isn't the case, and may I suggest that Pritchard read a column written by retired General Lewis McKenzie. He presents a very apolitical point of view on this

subject.

It's clear that Pritchard possesses politically partisan views. This begs the question, where was his patriotic indignation when our boys died serving in Bosnia — or any other part of the world for that matter?

The Peace Tower flag wasn't lowered during those tragic moments. Did Pritchard write to the papers then? Oh that's right, the other party was in power at the time.

Let's respect and honour the military sacrifices as we have for the past 80 years and leave the politics out of it.

**LANCE MARTEL  
MILTON**

### Great care received at our local hospital

DEAR EDITOR:

It was Easter Sunday and I just couldn't handle the pain in my lower back and right leg any longer, so my wife took me to Milton District Hospital's emergency ward.

After an x-ray and examination from the on-duty doctor, I was admitted to the hospital for a further follow-up and what I call some needed repair work. I was well looked after by all the nurses and the doctors, and I soon was well on the way to recovery.

Though under pressure and somewhat overworked due to patient-loading numbers, I can't say enough about the medical professionalism and caring abilities that were always displayed by all the staff at the hospital.

Always with a smile when they entered the room became a calling card that made a difference to my health. They cared and they showed it.

Besides the medical staff, a first place element in my recovery was the attention paid to my needs by the food services' staff.

Not only did I get highly nutritional food, it was extremely well prepared and served as if I was the only customer, yet I was one of many. I actually started to look forward to my meals, and if questioned as to what really made me get better I can honestly say the food and how it was served played a major element in regaining my health.

I'm now on the road to recovery, thanks to all those great folks at our Milton District Hospital.

**BOB BEYETTE  
CAMPBELLVILLE**

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