

EDITORIAL

Where are we supposed to go?

To whomever cares,

I challenge you to think of this one little question:

Where are teenagers today supposed to go to just "hang out" with their friends?

We are full time employees, part time employees, students, and some of us are both. Some of us are living on our own supporting ourselves, in school supporting ourselves, or saving up for school. We don't have a lot of money to waste on bowling or going to the movies every weekend. We do, however, have money to buy a few coffees while we have meaningful conversations with our friends.

Our options are few: we range in age and some of us are not old enough to be in bars, and even if we are old enough, some don't want to be in there anyway. Public parks are fun, but they close at 11pm. The only place we can think of is a coffee shop. Tim Hortons became our new hangout; first we tried the parking lot. We picked up our garbage, most of the time we didn't even play music and if we did it was barely audible, we didn't think we were being a nuisance but after a while we were told to leave by the cops. Then we tried to meet inside, but eventually we were handed loitering tickets.

I am starting to think the problem is our age, but that's discrimination. My mother will sit in McDonald's for two hours with her friends for breakfast every morning and I don't see her getting a loitering ticket. The elderly regulars at Bakers Dozen aren't told to leave after a few hours of socializing in the afternoons. We give them service and they make a lot of money off us, all we ask for in return is a warm place to sit and chat. Every single time we are told to leave we ask a simple question; where are we supposed to go? We get no reply.

How do you think it makes us feel to be told that we have done something wrong when all we have done is stood around drinking coffee with our friends. So maybe we are there until four or five in the morning, we aren't doing anything illegal. We are each other's moral supports, psychiatrists, sanity, we are more than friends, we are like family.

The reason I am writing this is to suggest that instead of spending more money on big, fancy community centres give us a place where we're allowed to hang out at 3am without the cops telling us to leave, where we don't have to spend a lot of our hard earned money. We just want a place to relax. We don't want to watch TV or go to the bars, we don't want to play sports, and if we do, we go to the park to play. Our lives are busy enough with school, our jobs, and our families. When we are with our friends it is our "down time" as some call it.

For me, my friends are my sanity. When I need to freak out they are there to listen and help me through it. These are the relationships that make us who we are, and by being punished for this, what do you think you are doing to us?

We will find places to meet, but we will consistently be told to leave. We are not bad kids we just need to be trusted. A little trust gains a lot of respect. We don't blame anyone for telling us to leave because, they are just doing their jobs.

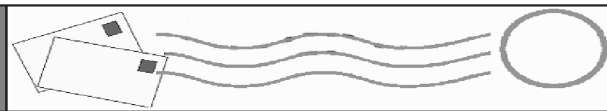
I just want to know one thing, where are we supposed to go?

-Ashley Feth



WINTER'S BEAUTY: Although most of Southern Ontario was busy digging out of the first major snow fall of 2003, temperatures were not cold enough to freeze the swiftly moving Black Creek which runs along Agnes Street, creating a serene scene for the camera's eye.- Danielle McIsaac photo

Letters



Only one way to stop crows

To the editor,

On December 14, The Star published a long article about crows invading Woodstock. Why is this a surprise?

My opinion – our PM has now earned his legacy – thanks to A. Rock and all the Liberal puppets.

It's pretty stupid to think that chasing crows away by noise, etc. will solve any problem. They breed every year – plenty of garbage to eat – here is the makings of a disaster – estimated 39,000 crows in Woodstock. There is only one way to stop these pests – and our government has decided, in its wisdom to destroy it.

Enter the \$1 billion gun registration. It used to be that sportsmen would control pests like crows. It used to be that crows were scared of men – would not come close. Those days are gone – now crows ignore people – they have nothing to be afraid of.

The crows eat the eggs of song birds – as well as the young. Does not seem to me that many young birds will survive. In England gamekeepers used to kill any and all crows to protect young pheasants – and their jobs.

Many friends of mine used to spend a lot of time and money hunting crows. Those days are gone – mainly due to gun control. Just too much government interference – too many licences – too much money.

When our wisemen in Ottawa

passed the gun control into law it was easy to predict that vermin would be a big problem – that is for anyone that thought about this – which obviously the government did not. Perhaps they did not care – after all it's legacy Mr. Chretien is building.

So here we have another giant screw up – it's a great legacy to have. By the way – feel safer now?

John Shadbolt,
Acton.

Write spouses' peeves

To the editor,

Usually in the spring there will be people getting married for the first time. Maybe you can get people to write in about pet peeves about their spouses so future couples know marriage is not perfect.

My pet peeve is when my spouse cleans I can't find things afterwards. My spouse says I know now to leave the toilet seat down.

Thank you for your time.

Yours Truly
Norman



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