



Dear Editor,
I would like to commend you for providing us with a fine paper that deals with such timely topics. I would also like to say that having high school students contribute to the paper is a wonderful way to showcase their writing skills and bring a student perspective to some issues. An article written in the December '09 issue by Sydenham High School student Kristen Pye especially caught my eye because it was so appropriate for this time of year when many young people might be receiving cell phones.

Talk to the Phone (pg. 4) is very well written, makes some excellent points and gives some sound advice to cell phone owners. I, too, have watched with chagrin as someone ignored a person in his/her company while writing text messages. Not only that, I have seen adults text messaging during a speaker's presentation instead of giving the speaker their full attention. In my opinion, this is just as bad as carrying on a conversation with the person sitting next to you while attending an event where someone else has the floor. I think this is rude and it never ceases to amaze me how many times I witness this type of behaviour. Kristen has shown a maturity beyond her years when expressing her concerns in this article: she is to be commended for that and her excellent writing skills.

I am saving this article and have already shown it to my latest new cell phone owner; I will be showing it to the others as well. I hope young people (and old) will take Kristen's message to heart and adopt the same standards she has for cell phone use.

Thanks again for having such great contributors and articles in The Scoop - I look forward to receiving further issues!

Barb McLaren, Sydenham

Dear Editor,

A Bridge Too Far

December 28, 2009

The crowd began to gather. Slowly at first, in ones and twos. A little further off a family sat in their car to escape the cold; it was not yet time. Most went immediately to the bridge, just to stand. Some unfurled little flags; others hung larger ones from the abutment. There was very little chatter: some comments about the cold, some muted greetings directed toward strangers. All wanted to be part of something bigger than themselves, all felt very small. The volunteer fire and rescue crews arrived soon after without fanfare, lights only, operating in respectful silence. The police blocked part of the road over the bridge as the crowd swelled; now numbering into the hundreds, united in a solemn purpose. The family in the car had joined the others on the bridge; it was almost time. Cars streamed under the crowd on the bridge, some waving, some giving their horn a respectful tap. They wanted to be part of something bigger too, wanted to acknowledge the sorrow, and the pride, all mixed up in a way that swelled the chest and broke the heart all at the same time. The traffic flowing down the highway slowly thinned, and then died out. Finally the police escorts appeared over the rise followed by the black limousines and that hearse. A soldier was coming home. A family grieved from within the limousines, a community grieved from the bridge and a nation grieved from coast to coast to coast. In Afghanistan a little girl with acid burns on her face dreamed of going to school.

Submitted by Timothy Rigby

Dear Editor,

I was absolutely horror-struck when I saw an article on Cesar Millan's "helpful" meth-

ods of dog training. Millan's methods are outdated and inhumane, and the fact that his show still airs is mind-boggling to me. Millan bases his methods on asserting the owners dominance over the dog. In reality, training that is aimed at 'dominance reduction' is actually useless, and can cause the dog to become more aggressive. Cesar Millan uses punishment methods, as opposed to reinforcement. If you go onto his website you can see the leashes and harnesses he suggests for the dogs are focused on cutting off air supply, and resting on 'sensitive' parts of the dogs body, to cause them more pain when they do something wrong. One must think of it this way; if a child was talking when they weren't supposed to, or doing something wrong, would you consider putting a leash around the child's neck and cutting off their air supply until they did what you said? Would you pin them on the ground when they were frightened? By punishing your dog you teach the dog to be afraid of you. Modern day techniques use positive reinforcement, which causes the dog to begin to offer good behaviours. I encourage Dalton Cowper, the writer of the article 'Hound Advice' to read the following links, and learn that what a TV personality says isn't always true.

This is an article about a study that has shown methods such as those used by Millan do not teach dogs good behaviours, and can in fact worsen them. <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/05/090521112711.htm>

A video by Komo 4 News, with disturbing clips of Cesar cutting off a dog's air supply to try to teach him a lesson. <http://www.komoneews.com/home/video/37440019.html?video=pop&t=a>

This website has links to youtube videos showing methods of training your dog where the dog is not punished, nor is he afraid of the owner. I strongly encourage Dalton Cowper to carefully watch how the dogs act around the owner. They watch her constantly, waiting for their next cue. They work together with her to understand new tricks. These dogs show no fear or aggression, and perhaps Mr.Cowper's dog wouldn't either if he had learned to properly train him.

<http://www.dogmantics.com>

I hope in the future The Scoop is more careful about what they put in their newspaper, and avoid endorsing methods of training that involve forms of animal abuse.

Jayne Knowles, Sydenham

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Philosophizing
With E.J. (Ted) Bond

"NON SUFFICIT ORBIS"

Ted Bond is taking a deserved break from his column to recuperate his health. We wish him well and hope to have him back in the next Scoop.

Working in the Red Zone

Jamaica Base is a gang-run area in the heart of (Boston), Cite Soleil, Port au Prince, Haiti. Boston is home to a population of 75,000 Haitians as well as two strong willed Canadian women, Tammy Babcock from Hartington and Cari Wolsey from Sydenham. Tammy and Cari of Help Tammy Help Haiti have been providing aid in Cite Soleil since March, 2008.

"Some people wonder how we can work in a Red Zone, in an area considered to be one of the most dangerous slums in the world! How? The answer is one day at a time. With an open mind, a bleeding heart and the belief that love can move mountains!

By the 2nd of March 2010, Haiti had experienced nearly 70 tremors, since the 7.0 magnitude earthquake on the 12th of January. Though Cite Soleil didn't suffer the loss of life and infrastructure the rest of Port au Prince suffered, the area is far from being stable.

On January 28th Cari and I, along with volunteer Jaime Wood, left for Cite Soleil, Haiti. We had two weeks to fundraise, pack, and prepare ourselves emotionally for the reality of the high security risk we were facing.

Our goal was to repair any damages to our non profit water tower, provide first aid to the population of Boston and begin organizing the construction for our new medical clinic.

This is one of my blogs, from just one of the 5 weeks I spent in Cite Soleil":

I've had to deal with every struggle imaginable this week!

The "dry gas" the soldiers poured into my car was actually diesel! Yeah my car hates me! Two days ago I woke up to a flat tire and my spare was also flat! By 10am I was crawling around on the ground changing tires, in heat so intense my legs were sweating!

I haven't had security from the UN since the girls left. The struggle with the gangs has been very real, as they are armed with AK's. Just two days ago, from the alley next to the clinic, they were threatening to kidnap me, and kill Robinson, but hesitated. They assume the UN will rip the place apart if anything happens to us. I personally know this is inaccurate but hey..

Considering the fact, I won't be able to use the UN every time I come to Haiti (they have their own operations to carry out) I decided to deal with my security issue in a different way. We have made connection with the majority of gang leaders and thank God, the meetings went well. My guys are and will remain armed for our protection but the leaders have agreed to spare us any violence. I will meet with them personally in a week and offer my solar machine as a "peace offering", as there is no way in hell I will give them a penny. It's necessary they see me as a member of their community and not just another white face. This is the only way we can continue to work, and not be confined to Boston.

Robinson went into Souterre for the first time yesterday and had no problems. This is a huge success!

We are however fighting a battle right now with contaminated water! Everyone in Cite Soleil has diarrhea

and it's almost impossible to treat dehydration. The mothers are falling ill and their babies are clinging to life.

We need water purifiers and vitamins for all ages! The liquid vitamin for babies is in dire need!

Please look at the new site picture... this is an example of what is coming to me EVERYDAY! This picture helps capture the reality of the situation but doesn't help the pain we are all experiencing.

Help me save their lives, and not prepare them for more death.

This is a battle we can't win without help!

Anyone with connections to the Canadian Military/larger NGOs / or the United Nations, please do what you can. I know there are portable water purifiers in Port au Prince and Cite Soleil sits right on the water. Using the sea water would also require a desalination machine as well, and finding this may be difficult, but where there's a will, there's a way!

Mothers are forced to boil the water they drink but I know this is not a long term answer. The people can not afford coal and there is very little wood to burn.

Please help me guys.

My love,
Tam xoxo

This is an example of how intense it gets for us in Cite Soleil, and how important it is for me to be able to release my feelings in a blog. When my friends and loved ones read my words, they are able to feel my pain and send me strength and support to keep going.



Top: Treating fungus. Photo by Larry Roberts.
Bottom: Tammy with a little boy who recovered from a rather serious case of fungus. Photo by Cari Wolsey.

Contact: Tammy Babcock, Founder/Director
Help Tammy Help Haiti
www.helptammyhelphaiti.com