

Upcoming Events

CAVEAT

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CAVEAT Alberta

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Community Spirit: Keeping Kids Safe

A Free Showcase for Safe Schools and Communities

Grades 3 — OAC welcome

A CAVEAT event, presented in partnership with Operation Springboard, The City of Toronto, and Graser Enterprises.

Friday, November 6th, 1998
9 a.m. — 4 p.m.

St. Lawrence Market, Toronto, Ontario
For more information contact
Dina at **(416) 538-2950**

Are you harassed by a bully?
By your boy/girlfriend?
By a stranger?

What to Do if You are Stalked

Learn Skills to Stay Safe

Thursday, November 12, 1998
9:00 a.m. — noon.

School Board of Niagara Education Centre
191 Carlton St., St. Catharines, Ontario.

Presented by
CAVEAT Youth Council of Niagara
To register, call Maggie at **(905) 632-1733**
or via email at **info@caveat.org**

THANK YOU

We would like to thank the families who travelled from across Canada to join us at the September press conference in Ottawa. Thank you to Therese Daviau, Noel and Joyce Farion, Mark Hogben, Rob McNamara, and Karen Vanscoy, for their willingness once again to share their pain with the public in the hopes that others will be spared the suffering they themselves have experienced.

Thank you also to Zippy Print & Imaging in Burlington for the printing of this publication.

THE CAVEAT REPORT

NEWS FROM HEAD OFFICE FOR OUR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

NOVEMBER 1998

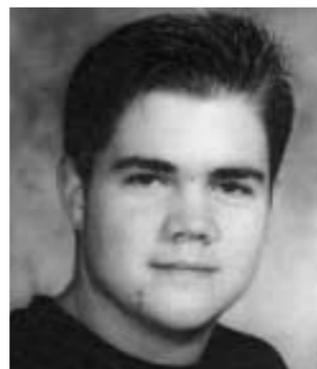
Victim's Rights: Do Acts = Action?



Christie Christie
16 years of age
Murdered, January 1996
Toronto, Ontario



Jasmine Vanscoy
14 years of age
Murdered, September 1995
St. Catharines, Ontario



Scott Farion
17 years of age
Murdered, April 1994
Edmonton, Alberta

A lawsuit launched recently by three Ontario victims could reveal just how toothless the provincial victims' rights legislation really is.

Karen Vanscoy, Linda Even and Tracy Christie, all victims of violent crime, are not seeking financial compensation. Instead, they are seeking a declaration that both their constitutional rights under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and their statutory rights under Ontario's *An Act Respecting Victims of Crime* have been violated.

Karen Vanscoy is the mother of 14-year-old Jasmine Vanscoy, who was shot to death with a stolen handgun by a 17-year-old youth on September 24th, 1995. The youth accepted a plea bargain, of which Karen was not informed. He will spend two years in custody.

Linda Even was the victim of a brutal attack in her home when she was stabbed eighteen times with a pair of scissors in November of 1996. Paul Mercier, her former partner, pleaded guilty to aggravated assault and was sentenced to five years. Linda was not told by the Crown of the plea bargain.

Tracy Christie is the mother of 16-year-old Christie Christie, who was gunned down in their apartment on January 29, 1996. Two of the three young men involved in Christie's murder plead-

ed guilty, one to robbery and the other to manslaughter. At most, the two will spend four-and-a-half years each in jail.

All three of these women have had to endure emotionally difficult times since 1996 and not one has found satisfaction within the criminal justice system.

The women are claiming that during the course of criminal proceedings

Victims' rights legislation looks good on paper. Only rarely does it have teeth.

- they were not treated with courtesy and respect as guaranteed under *An Act Respecting Victims of Crime*; and that

- they were not provided with access to information regarding their cases, nor were they made aware of critical decisions.

In addition, the plaintiffs will be seeking a declaration that preventing victims of crime from suing the government for breach of their rights is unconstitutional.

If successful, these women will have won a great victory not only for themselves but for all victims of violence.

It is hoped that this legal proceeding will serve the best interest of crime victims throughout Canada and will be the first step in ensuring that public officials are held accountable for failure to live up to the promises made by the provinces in their victims' rights legislation.

Gun Control: The Debate is Over

Since the 1989 slaughter of 14 young women at Montréal's École Polytechnique, more than 10,000 Canadians have died from gunshot wounds and almost as many have been injured. Since the 1991 murder of Nina de Villiers, there have been at least four inquests which have recommended strict implementation of gun control law.

The government has responded by introducing tough new gun control laws which include a requirement that all gun owners register any firearms they own, or purchase in the future.

Although Justice Minister Anne McLellan cited a poll showing that over 80% of Canadians support the new *Firearms Act*, there has been opposition to the legislation.

On September 22nd, 1998, several thousand protestors gathered on Parliament Hill to protest the implementation of the new act. To counter this

demonstration, supporters of the act, including CAVEAT, held news conferences to give victims the opportunity to be heard.

Six representatives of families who had lost loved-ones to gun violence took part in the news conference. Noel Farion, whose son Scott was shot to death in 1994, spoke for his family. "The perpetrator had stolen 15 handguns and a couple

of rifles from a gun collector. If these guns had been secured, my son would be alive. It's unbearable."

For the families that participated it was an emotional day. The Justice Minister assured them that there would be no further debate, and that the legislation would be implemented on December 1, 1998: "My goal is to create a society in which there is a culture of safety and responsibility...surrounding the use and ownership of firearms. The debate is over."

One woman is shot to death every five days in Canada.

Inside: Focus on Criminal Harassment

Speaking Out on Gun Control

"They seem to be promoting violence as a means to end violence," she said. "They're saying we need to arm ourselves to protect ourselves. If that were so, the United States would be the safest place in the world to live." — *Karen Vanscoy. Karen's daughter Jasmine Vanscoy was shot to death with a stolen handgun by a 17-year-old youth on September 24th, 1995.*

"I've spoken to experts who say these new laws will help. I'll never know because these laws weren't in place when my father was killed." — *Mark Hogben. Mark's father Michael Hogben was shot to death on August 24, 1992.*

"The human face is lost. We're concerned that the shattered lives, the tragedy, the real effects of gun violence can easily be forgotten in the rhetoric" — *Priscilla de Villiers. Priscilla's daughter, Nina, was shot to death on August 9, 1991.*

What can you do?

Be a Volunteer. Share your time, your talents, your energy! CAVEAT depends on help from volunteers in order to ensure that our office and events run smoothly. Everyone has something to offer! If you are interested in volunteering at CAVEAT, call Diane at (905) 632-1733.

Be a Donor. CAVEAT relies on donations to survive! Please remember that a donation of any size is more than appreciated. If you or someone you know is interested in making a donation to CAVEAT, call Luisa at (905) 632-1733.

A Word From our President

By Priscilla de Villiers

Nineteen ninety-eight has been quite an eventful year around CAVEAT's head office. There have been many structural changes as we try to become a more efficient centre for victims of violent crime. Along with our organizational changes, we are taking steps to secure financial resources that will enable us to serve Canadians on a larger scale.

Changes in our structure and operations are being guided by Wayne Hussey. Through Navion, a highly-thought-of Toronto fundraising organization, Wayne has come to us as our acting Executive Director. The office is well organized and under excellent direction with Wayne's leadership. Also from Navion, Thalia Maughan is helping us to reshape our fundraising activities.

As usual, CAVEAT has been active in the community, building partnerships with other organizations, assembling expertise from around the world, and sharing information and resources wherever we can.

Young people remain a vital component in our education and awareness campaigns. *Keeping Kids Safe: A Showcase for Safe Schools and Communities*, presented by CAVEAT, is being held on Friday, November 6, 1998, from 9 - 4 at the St. Lawrence Market and St. Lawrence Hall. Student participants are also the teachers and facilitators at this unique event. Through workshops, exhibits, entertainment and interactive activities, they'll help show it, teach it, and make it known "how to keep kids safe".

CAVEAT BC organized another successful *Youth Challenge* conference in partnership with the

Focus on Criminal Harassment

There is abundant evidence that criminal harassment, or stalking, is a regular precursor to more serious acts of violence.

In response to an overwhelming need for front-line information and techniques, CAVEAT held a roundtable discussion on criminal harassment in partnership with Halton Regional Police Services.

The goal was to identify existing problems and develop specific recommendations that would effectively address the issues associated with criminal harassment.

A multi-disciplinary team of experts from across Ontario contributed their unique perspective to the June, 1998, discussion on education and training, early identification and intervention, legislation, reporting, research, resources and victim support.

50% of stalkings go unreported

RCMP Held October 21, 1998, at the Squamish Nation Recreation Centre, the event was attended by over 400 students and a number of guest speakers, including B.C. Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh.

In professional education, our criminal harassment workshops and round-table discussions have been tremendously successful (please see below for details). The workshops are directed to professionals in education, justice, health and police services, victim assistants, as well as parents and other interested individuals.

The past year brought deep lows and extreme highs to CAVEAT

As you saw in our cover story, CAVEAT has also been active in keeping the focus on victims during the demonstrations against the introduction of new gun control measures. CAVEAT was there to speak for the thousands of victims who could not speak for themselves: those killed by firearms, for whom the new regulations might have made a difference.

This *CAVEAT REPORT* is the first edition of our newly-designed, regular newsletter. The new format lowers our costs and shortens production time, enabling us to keep you up-to-date on the issues.

We also plan to revamp our web site to serve as a low-cost extension of our publications, increasing the amount of in-depth information available to those who are interested.

Finally, let me thank you again for your ongoing support. The past year brought deep lows and extreme highs for CAVEAT. Your continued involvement and commitment to the issues keeps us focussed on the future.

Eighty-three recommendations[†] have been sent to the Department of Justice Canada.

On October 26th and 27th, 1998, we were proud to host a two day workshop designed to provide attendees with current knowledge and practical tools to help prevent and reduce this escalating form of violence. The workshop focused on the impact of victimization, early identification, prevention and intervention strategies, threat assessment and process to prosecution.

We would like to thank all those who participated and assure you that we will continue to offer informative workshops about this important issue. † Contact us for a copy of the recommendations.

Don't Say I Didn't Warn You

The effects of criminal harassment on the victim can be profoundly debilitating. Victims describe their lives as one of total dysfunction. They are consumed with fear, immobilized by a lack of information, and frustrated and demoralized as a result of limited support and resources.

Because stalking often begins with subtle acts of harassment, victims find it difficult to gain understanding with police and even their friends. Their personal terror is aggravated by this lack of comprehension, leaving victims feeling helpless and marginalized, overwhelmed with anger, fear, and a sense of betrayal.

In Senator Donald Oliver's preamble to his proposed amendments to the *Criminal Code* he stated, "Stalking is a horrific crime that is treated far too lightly by the police, prosecutors, lawyers and judges... It is time for us to think about the victims... We must protect the victim and society. A stalker's efforts to control and intimidate often escalate into violence."

On October 3rd, CBC's *Newsworld* aired a documentary dealing with three women who had been stalked by their partners. Featured was

8% of women and 5% of men are stalked in their lifetime

Tammy Fee, a woman with whom CAVEAT BC has worked in the past.

Tammy talks about her relationship with Rick White, her former fiancé. After the relationship had ended, White broke into Tammy's house and beat, raped and terrorized her all night until he eventually fell asleep on her bed while she feared for her life.

What is so disturbing about Tammy's story is that it is not unique. Thousands of women are stalked every year in North America. According to the *Newsworld* documentary, 25% of female homicide victims die at the hands of someone they once loved.

Rick eventually served 16 months of a two year sentence and was released in May of 1997. He is not permitted to return to the town where Tammy resides due to a peace bond against him.

Tammy still lives in fear. "I can only hope and pray, and I have sounded every trumpet that I can, and I have written every letter that I can, and I just hope and pray that I don't end up dead, or my children, or someone else. And don't say I didn't warn you."

CAVEAT's Fundraising Campaign

CAVEAT is changing to serve victims and our members even better!

By Wayne Hussey

As the acting Executive Director of CAVEAT, I am frankly amazed at the incredible amount of important activity that it has undertaken with a very small amount of resources. CAVEAT has made a difference in many individual lives, in so many communities, and in national policy and legislation. Over 93% of our operating revenue comes from donors — individuals, organizations and companies that believe what CAVEAT does really matters.

And so it's time to generate increased support so we can do even more. Priscilla's message in this *CAVEAT REPORT* indicates some of the important projects that we have undertaken in order to make Canada a safer and less violent country and a place that has active compassion for victims of violent crime.

As the great American humourist, Will Rogers once said, "Lots of folks get on the right track but you get run over if you just stand there". Well, we're not standing around waiting for financial support to just walk into our office. We have launched a

Over 93% of our funds come from your donations

major fundraising initiative that is designed to generate \$400,000 in operating funds. These funds will allow us to expand our educational forums, link the hundreds of concerned community groups across Canada and to implement projects like our Virtual Library.

We have asked for and received our first three corporate gifts that amount to \$35,000. And we have recruited talented and committed corporate leaders like Ron Foxcroft, Dick Johnston and others who are prepared to help us make Canada a safer and more just society.

Remember, CAVEAT speaks for the ordinary Canadian about extraordinarily important issues — preventing crime, supporting victims, mobilizing communities and changing legislation. If you value what we do and would like to help us through your time, talent, and treasury, just call me at the CAVEAT office and together we'll "get walking" down the right track.

We will be successful in this endeavour and I look forward to meeting those of you who have the capacity to assist us. *No more fear!*



System Fails Mother of Five

In March, 1996, Arlene May was shot to death by her abusive former lover, Randy Iles.

An inquest, called to examine how to prevent future tragedies, resulted in a demand for sweeping changes in the way Ontario's justice system handles cases of domestic violence.

Their relationship had been turbulent and involved ever-escalating emotional and physical abuse. Arlene tried to end the relationship several times and, fearing for her life, called police dozens of times.

During the months prior to the final tragedy Iles had been in and out of court 14 times facing charges of stalking, assault, making death threats, and unlawful confinement. He had been granted bail several times, each time with the condition that he stay away from Arlene.

He was out on \$200 bail at the time of the murder.

On that very day Arlene tearfully asked her hairdresser, "Isn't my life worth more than that?" The inquest suggested that the whole system, including police, courts and social services had failed Arlene May.

What we learn from the death of one may save the lives of many.