

OPINIONS

Toronto's sexual assault squad discouraging for survivors

BY DIANNA DIMOU

TORONTO (CUP) — The sexual assault squad of the Toronto police investigates only 4 percent of 1,600 reported attacks each year. Of the 1,600, only 70 incidents are dealt with.

The squad's mandate is restricted to investigate stranger-to-stranger assaults that involve penetration and attempted penetration, even though most sexual assaults are committed by someone you know.

In fact, half of all sexual assaults are committed by heterosexual men who are known to the victim.

Men who commit sexual assaults are from every type of background: husbands, boy-friends, co-workers, boy-doctors, lawyers and even teachers. It seems that these facts contradict the squads mandate because they only investigate assaults that are stranger accounts.

It's very upsetting because survivors of sexual assault may be discouraged to come out and seek

help, due to the lack of concern for the majority of the victims.

Survivors will not feel confident to come forward, because if they weren't assaulted by a stranger then their cases will be put aside while the stranger-to-stranger assaults are dealt with.

They are sending the wrong message to the survivors who already feel discouraged to talk about what has happened to them. If they continue to narrow their investigations then fewer survivors will come forward.

The system is failing and it

can cause many to go untreated for their physical and psychological problems, which will effect them in every aspect of their lives. If the sexual assault squad doesn't help then someone else will.

For this reason the Sexual Harassment, Education and Complaint Centre (SHEACC) realized a need to have an emergency service available to survivors of sexual assault.

This need created The Sexual Assault Survivors Support Line (SASSL) in 1995, which is located at York University. SASSL

exists to provide unbiased peer support and referrals to survivors of sexual assault.

The sexual assault squad needs to change the way they investigate sexual assaults. We need to encourage the survivors to express themselves and come forward because someone does want to listen.

If the system can't be beaten we as a community have to provide for those that need it. It makes you wonder why sexual assault is one of the most under reported crimes.

CHUCK WAGON BY CHARLES LACERTE

Once again, the holiday season will soon be upon us. It is a time for celebration with friends and family as in the past, food will play an important role. Entertaining does not mean you have to spend hours in the kitchen before and during the party. It is the people that make the party. The food is second so one can entertain with chips and dip or pate and toast points and still have a great time enjoying the company of their guests.

If dinner is in your plans, then try to make as much as possible ahead of time and just reheat for the meal or volunteer your guests to each bring a dish which you coordinate, so you don't end up with all desserts and no vegetables. Another solution is as meal time approaches, have guests help in the kitchen with one person mashing the potatoes and another making the gravy, etc.

Food also makes a great inexpensive homemade gift. Cookies or candies given in a pretty box or wrapped up are always popular and appreciated. But during these days of revelry, one should not forget the true meaning of Christmas, as Ebenezer Scrooge experienced. It is a time of kindness and sharing with those who have a little less and doing what we can to help. Happy Holidays!

SHORTBREAD

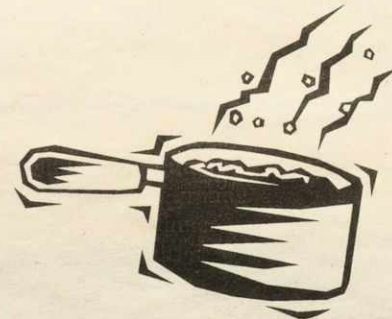
- 1 1/2 cups unsalted butter, room temperature
 - 3/4 cup powdered sugar
 - 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
 - 2 teaspoons almond extract
 - 3 3/4 cups all purpose flour
 - 1 1/4 teaspoons salt
- (makes 6-8 dozen)

In a large bowl, beat butter until light (2-3 minutes). Gradually add the sugar while still beating. Beat in the extracts, add flour and salt and stir until just combined. Divide dough into two flattened disks, refrigerate for 1 hour. Roll dough on floured surface to 1/8", occasionally lifting it as you roll it. Cut out desired shapes. Bake at 325 degrees F, on heavy baking sheets lined with parchment paper, until done (5-15 minutes depending on shapes used.)

Margaritas in a Big Pot by staff

(for when your blender conks out on you)

Don't have a blender but want to have a margarita party? Don't panic. Get a big metal pot, a bag of ice from the local corner store, some tequila, triple sec, and frozen juice mix — lime is good, or whatever suits your fancy. Triple bag the ice and bang it repeatedly on the floor until it resembles something like slush. If you have people below you that might be annoyed, you should probably warn them ahead of time, or take it out to the sidewalk. Keep extra plastic bags on hand because some of them will probably break. Dump most of the ice into the pot, add about a half to three quarters of your bottle of tequila, two or three shots of triple sec, and keep stirring in frozen juice until it tastes good. You can try out other things, like Rose's Lime Cordial or grenadine. Be experimental.



Submit your

POTW
PHOTO OF THE WEEK



Snap happy!

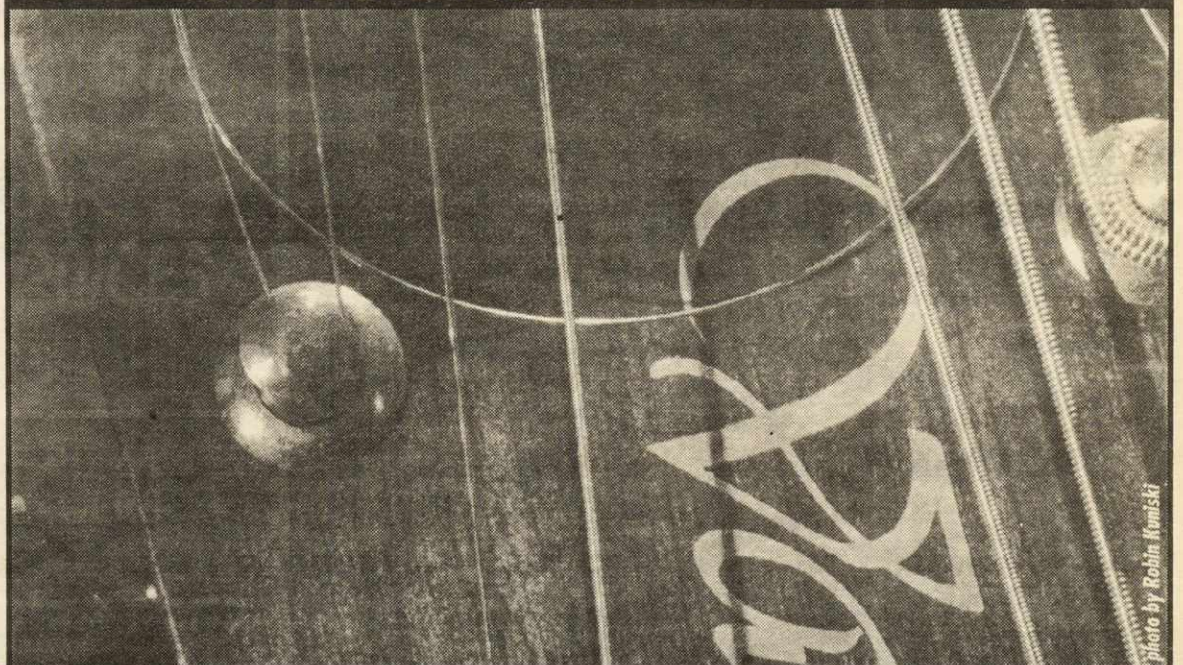
Drop off
photographs
to room

312 SUB anytime.
POTW gets free car every week*!
(drop-off box on the door).

* This offer will not be honoured under any circumstances

THE GAZETTE

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



"What the hell is this?"

Photo by Robin Kimiski