

EDITORIAL

We are counting on you so that the City of Sherbrooke's public safety committees quickly take matters into their own hands and put into place dissuasive measures against oppressors.

Manifesto for the safety of women in Sherbrooke

On behalf of Adna, who was catcalled incessantly by three individuals as she stopped her car at a red light at the corner of King and Jacques-Cartier streets; on behalf of Alyson, who was followed into the western part of the town; on behalf of Émilie, who was catcalled incessantly by three individuals in a car as she got off the bus on Saint-Esprit Street; on behalf of Marika and her friend, who were catcalled incessantly by individuals in a car on Des Lys Street, and who had to take refuge with witnesses so that the individuals gave up; on behalf of Stéphanie, who was followed on Ball Street by two individuals in a car who backed up and catcalled incessantly all along the street, and who then spotted her as she was in a bar on Wellington Street; on behalf of Kécia, who was holding her baby in her arms, and of Catherine, who were both hounded from the Faro on Wellington Street North, to the Tremplin, on Wellington Street South, by an individual who also came to shelter from the rain under the same awning where they had taken refuge; on behalf of Bianka, who was followed while she was walking with her dog on Évangéline Street and who had to pretend to go home to a house that was not hers to get rid of the individual who had gotten out of his car to approach and harangue her; on behalf of Myriam, who was blocked on her path by an individual who urged her to get into his car as she was crossing Aberdeen Street, where she had to fake a 911 call to have him let her go; on behalf of Sarah, who was pursued in the sector of Short and Belvédère Streets for several minutes by an individual who caught up with her, stepping quickly, while she was accelerating to escape him and who returned home by making numerous detours to get rid of him and to make sure he didn't know where she lives; on behalf of Roseline, who was watched and followed by an individual in a car for several weeks in her living environment downtown - without being able to obtain support from the

police since the individual had not touched her; in the name of Guylaine, who was walking with her dog and who was approached on Saint-Michel Street by three individuals who got out of their car, then got back in and drove to catch up with her (because she had quickly turned back) and who then chased her as she walked to the door of an unknown house where she took refuge and watched the individuals continue to prowl around the house until the arrival of the police officers - who could not do anything since Guylaine had not been touched; in the name of Annie, who was kidnapped for five hours, beaten, and raped, on Sherbrooke territory, and whose attackers were acquitted for lack of evidence; on behalf of all the women who have been watched, followed, stalked, intimidated, harassed, assaulted, raped, and who have kept their painful experiences silent; on behalf of all these Sherbrooke women who are now circulating with fear in their stomachs while being deprived of their peace of mind and their freedom, we, the undersigned, ask elected officials to prioritize this generalized problem which considerably affects the quality of life of Sherbrooke women, especially since most of the facts related here had unfolded, not over years, but over this past summer.

We are counting on you so that the City of Sherbrooke's public safety committees quickly take matters into their own hands and put into place dissuasive measures against oppressors, because exemption from consequences for their inadmissible behaviour means that these are unduly acceptable and encourages the oppressors to continue. For example, if these individuals knew that they were at a minimum risk of being taken to the police station for questioning, they might be less inclined to act as they do and they would know that they are being watched, while women would not feel that there is no point in denouncing the harassment and crimes they suffer.



In addition, some measures to protect women could possibly prove to be effective. For example, self-defence lessons could be offered for free and keychain whistles could be distributed at the same time as an awareness campaign, which would be launched and widely disseminated to keep people alerted and aware that a woman might be in trouble if they hear a whistle.

It is easy to have ideas, but they are worthless without action. This is why we ask you to mandate your resources quickly, so that they are active in finding tangible solutions to this security problem, so that everyone can take full advantage of our city's infrastructure, regardless of gender, the sector, and the time of day.

This text, signed by Sherbrooke residents, will be officially submitted to the City during the Council meeting on March 15.

Anyone interested in supporting the manifesto can sign it online on through the Facebook group Manifesto for the safety of women in Sherbrooke or contact the author for more information by emailing guylainecliche.auteure@gmail.com.

**By Guylaine Cliche
Sherbrooke**

Letters

DEAR EDITOR,

This winter the Borough of Lennoxville and the Ville de Sherbrooke initiated a pilot project to maintain the bicycle path from Lennoxville to Capelton Road as a winter multi use recreational trail. The trail was double track set for cross country skiing with a path for walking and snowshoeing. Grooming was done regularly.

The trail was used by people of all ages, from babies pulled in sleds to seniors who were eighty plus. It provided a wonderful opportunity to get out and enjoy nature, to exercise and to see and greet others.

Judging by the number of people who used the trail, their enthusiasm and their appreciation of having such a facility available, this project definitely deserves to be repeated next winter.

Thank you to Borough President, Claude Charron, Borough Councillors Bert Collins and Jennifer Garfat.

SINCERELY,
PATRICIA HEATH AND MAUREEN QUIGG
SHERBROOKE

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