



Put child-abuse survivors first

With respect to the Oct. 1, front page article praising the county for its work on child abuse, I have the following comments.

Put child-abuse survivors first. As a society, we should first focus our efforts on assisting the abused to heal from this horrendous life-altering crime.

Bringing the perpetrator to a justice that does not further traumatize the survivor should be our second mission.

Unlike the Sandusky case, statistics show most child abuse occurs secretly within a family, including a circle of trusted friends. The perpetrator is usually a respected member within this group and holds power over the abused child to maintain the secret.

Healing can only begin when the survivor is able to expose the secret of the abuse to a trusted person. Giving up this secret is a huge challenge, especially if the survivor feels this action could impact the emotional and financial stability of the family along with its reputation.

The survivor runs the risk of being re-traumatized by being the "troublemaker" who brought down the family by seeking justice through our current legal system. This system does not allow the survivor, with the help of a therapist, to influence the perpetrators penalty.

Any hope for healing the masses of people abused as children in families must begin with an approach to put the survivors interests first

so they can feel free to give up their secret without the fear of being re-traumatized.

Legal- and mental-health professionals need to come together to craft a more comfortable process for the abused to have more control over their perpetrators' destiny in a private arena not accessible to the public.

I believe many more survivors would come forward to heal if they had more say in the process.

I invite everyone, including the mental health and legal communities, to comment on this issue.

William Locker, Manor Township

Halloween article tarnishes mill

In reference to the article written by Tom Knapp, Oct. 12, about Jason's Woods in the Entertainment Lancaster section, what was printed is not true. There was never any violence or mayhem connected to Sickman's Mill.

I am a third generation Sickman, having my grandfather and father as former owners of the mill.

In the history of the mill, there were no untimely deaths within those walls, and no girl was crushed in the mighty gears, and no tussle with vigilante violence on the fourth floor.

The mill was part of the growing up years for my brother and me -- part of our home. And I don't think the mill should be exploited in such

fashion in order to earn money and fame for a scary Halloween place.

Theresa Sickman Henning, Mountville

(Editors' note: The feature in question referred to a haunted Halloween attraction and made several references casting doubt on the veracity of the tales. Nothing in the story was intended to suggest Jason's Woods was providing an accurate history of Sickman's Mill.)

MU missed chance to renovate properties

Millersville University is to be congratulated for raising \$85 million during their "Soar to Greatness" fundraising campaign. It speaks strongly to the high regard that many in the community have for Millersville as it has become an outstanding institution of higher learning. The projects funded, including the library renovation, will serve the students well.

I think it regrettable, however, that MU did not see fit to allocate even a small portion of the funds raised to repair and re-use properties that they own in Millersville Borough instead of neglecting and ultimately demolishing them.

The facility known as "Singing Needles" was demolished when creativity could have been used to make it a useable space. The impending demolition of houses on North Prince Street would not happen had the university spent some funds to repair and re-use these structures.

In her statement to donors, President Francine McNairy said, "By your investment, you have not only strengthened this university but also our community."

Perhaps the larger community is well served by the construction of these large and grandiose projects. But as a resident of Millersville, I must say that our smaller community is ill-served by the policy of neglect and demolition of

properties that help make up the fabric of the town.

Michael Weidinger, Millersville