

# Editorial Opinion

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## October a reminder of concern about domestic violence



**Your Turn**  
Linda Oberhaus  
Guest columnist

We live in a time when domestic violence seems to dominate our daily headlines. Two local stories recently captured my attention. Both began very much the same, but ended very differently.

The first story was about Rubi de los Angeles Velasco, 18, who was killed Sept. 13. Santiago Burbano, 20, is accused of killing her at his family's apartment in East Naples. A year ago, the two had a budding relationship, but according to her mother, his attempts to control Rubi's life — her make-up, her clothing, her activities — were not for Rubi. We don't know why Rubi went to his home that day, but friends describe her as the kind of person who was always willing to help a friend. She died that afternoon from a knife wound to her throat.

The second story ran just two days later. According to sheriff's reports: David Heinz, 19, drove to Naples from Texas with threats to kill his 17-year-old ex-

girlfriend and shoot up a school. Unwilling to accept her break-up, he sent her more than 50 threatening texts, including photos of guns. She reported the texts to law enforcement. Neighbors later reported seeing him driving in her neighborhood, and he was arrested at a local Publix parking lot. She is pressing charges.

Both stories involve an accused abuser unwilling to accept the loss of power and control over his victim, but only one woman is alive to tell her story. The senseless tragedy of Rubi's death underscores the importance of recognizing and reporting the signs of domestic violence. Although every situation is unique, the young woman in the second story is alive today because she spoke out; her concerns were taken seriously, and the public got involved.

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. This month, and throughout the year, The Shelter for Abused Women & Children calls on every Collier County citizen to take a stand for countless victims like Rubi, as well as survivors, families, friends and communities impacted by domestic violence.

Last year in Collier County, there were

### Guest commentaries

A guest commentary can be 600 words or less on a topical subject. Authors must have considerable experience, public involvement or expertise in the subject matter. A guest commentary may be returned to the author with a recommendation to resubmit it as a Letter to the Editor within the guidelines for letters. It is recommended that authors receive preclearance before submission; call 239-435-3457.

1,794 reports of domestic violence, including two murders, 29 forcible rapes and 317 aggravated assaults. Chances are likely you know at least one of these victims because domestic violence crosses all ethnic, economic and geographic boundaries.

Domestic violence isn't always as obvious as a black eye or split lip. Things like lapses in communication, personality changes, never having money on hand, having to constantly check in with a partner, absence from work, school, or social outings can be red flags of abuse.

If you notice such a change in a friend, relative or co-worker, don't as-

sume that you are over-reacting or that it's none of your business. Call to see why you haven't heard from her. Lack of response can have disastrous and far-reaching results. Many mass-murderers had a history of domestic violence prior to committing their violent public attacks. Failure to recognize and report domestic violence in our homes can put the entire community at risk. If you see something, say something — before it's too late.

Rubi's Facebook page is filled with the things she loved — photos from high school graduation, friends and family and videos of social causes she believed in. Her beautiful brown eyes look out from her cover photo, filled with the promise of a bright future ahead. It was the last post she would ever make.

If you suspect or observe domestic violence, call the Collier sheriff's tips line at 239-252-9300 or go to [colliersheriff.org/how-do-i-/tip-us-off](http://colliersheriff.org/how-do-i-/tip-us-off) (you may remain anonymous). If you are a victim of abuse or feel unsafe due to a violent relationship, call The Shelter's 24-hour Crisis Line at 239-775-1101.

— Linda Oberhaus is CEO of The Shelter for Abused Women & Children

### TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Sunday, Oct. 7, the 280th day of 2018. There are 85 days left in the year.

On this date in:

**1916:** In the most lopsided victory in college football history, Georgia Tech defeated Cumberland University 222-0 in Atlanta.

**1991:** University of Oklahoma law professor Anita Hill publicly accused Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas of making sexually inappropriate comments when she worked for him; Thomas denied Hill's allegations.

**1992:** Trade representatives of the United States, Canada and Mexico initialed the North American Free Trade Agreement during a ceremony in San Antonio, Texas.

### TODAY'S BIRTHDAYS

TV personality **Joy Behar** ("The View") is 76. Musician **John Mellencamp** is 67. Cellist **Yo-Yo Ma** is 63. Gospel singer **Michael W. Smith** is 61. Reality competition judge **Simon Cowell** is 59. Singer **Toni Braxton** is 51. Singer **Thom Yorke** of Radiohead is 50. Actor **Jake McLaughlin** ("Quantico") is 36.

### TODAY'S QUOTE

"An expert is a person who has found out by his own painful experience all the mistakes that one can make in a very narrow field."  
— Niels Bohr

### BIBLE QUOTE

There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.  
— 1 Samuel 2:2



## THEN & NOW

Do you know where this is in Southwest Florida. If you think you know, go to [www.naplesnews.com](http://www.naplesnews.com), click the "business" tab and then the quick link "breaking ground" to enter your answer.

**Last week's answer:** Mega Kids, 160 9th St. S.

**Last week's winner:** Charles Libidinsky

App users, go here to fill out form: <http://goo.gl/forms/vdQCcaj9rQgGykh3>

FILE PHOTO

## Christine Blasey Ford's case continues to erode



**Marc A. Thiessen**  
Columnist

WASHINGTON — At a rally in Mississippi on Tuesday, President Trump ridiculed Christine Blasey Ford's testimony last week to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

"I had one beer," Trump said. "How did you get home?" "I don't remember." "How'd you get there?" "I don't remember." "Where is the place?" "I don't remember." "How many years ago was it?" "I don't know." ... "What neighborhood was it in?" "I don't know." "Where's the house?" "I don't know." "Upstairs, downstairs — where was it?" "I don't know -- but I had one beer. That's the only thing I remember."

The crowd roared its approval.

How on earth does Trump think this is helping? None of those cheering will have a say as to whether Brett Kavanaugh is confirmed to the Supreme Court. Only a handful of people will determine Kavanaugh's fate. They include Sens. Susan Collins, R-Maine; Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska; and Jeff Flake, R-Ariz.

They were all justifiably appalled by Trump's performance. Collins said, "The president's comments were just plain wrong." Murkowski said that they "were wholly inappropriate and in my view unacceptable." Flake said, "To discuss something this sensitive at a political rally is just not right. It's just not right."

All three are fair-minded legislators who will not hold Kavanaugh responsible for Trump's toxic remarks. But the last thing Kavanaugh needs right now is for a man who admitted that when he sees

beautiful women, "I just start kissing them" — and worse — to inject himself into the debate. If Kavanaugh is confirmed, Trump will get the credit. Until then, Trump should keep his mouth shut.

But just as Kavanaugh should not be held accountable for Trump's behavior, he should not be held responsible for all of our society's ills. There is no doubt that many women have been sexually assaulted and that much of it has gone unreported. Just because Kavanaugh is a privileged white male does not make him guilty of sexual assault. Just because he wrote asinine things in his high school yearbook and joined a fraternity in college does not make him a sexual predator. And as many Americans can attest, just because he drank beer to the point of vomiting does not mean that he ever blacked-out.

There is no doubt that Ford was a sympathetic witness. When senators look at her, they see their wives, sisters, daughters, friends. But being sympathetic is not the same as being truthful or credible. And Ford's case against Kavanaugh is looking less credible by the day.

First, Arizona sex crimes prosecutor Rachel Mitchell exposed serious inconsistencies in Ford's testimony.

And now a report this week from Real Clear Investigations has undermined another key claim that Ford made before the committee. Ford testified under oath that the reason she finally told a therapist in 2012 about the alleged assault three decades after she says it happened was because, during a renovation of her Palo Alto, Calif., home, she "insisted on a second front door," and her husband disagreed. So, during marriage counseling, she testified, "in explaining why I wanted a second front door, I began to describe the assault

in detail." She confirmed to Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., that the reason for the second door was "claustrophobia." She also never said when the renovation took place, leaving the impression that it coincided with the counseling.

But RealClear Investigations uncovered real estate records and other documents that contradict Ford's sworn testimony. Those records "reveal the door was installed years before as part of an addition, and has been used by renters and even a marriage counseling business." RealClear quotes an attorney familiar with the investigation who said, "It appears the real plan for the second front door was to rent out a separate room." Additionally, building permits for Ford's second home, in Santa Cruz, Calif. — which she applied for in July, the month that she wrote to Feinstein about the alleged attack — include a front porch and decks, but not a second front door.

Taken together with questions about her claims about her ability to fly to Washington to testify, about her familiarity with polygraph tests and about the therapist notes' whereabouts, this revelation further calls into question Ford's credibility.

The FBI has completed additional interviews for an expanded background investigation of Kavanaugh. The senators were right to request it, and it should have been done earlier. But it is important to remember that the FBI gathers information — it does not make judgments about the information's credibility. That is the job of the Senate. Perhaps, in the end, facts will prevail over feelings, due process will be honored and the principle that one is innocent until proven guilty will stand.

We will soon find out, when the Senate votes on the Kavanaugh nomination.  
— The Washington Post Writers Group