

ON ONO VZ

**CKLN RADIO
LOSES LICENCE**
Troubled station cited
by CRTC for quality
control, **GT6**



MENTORS' MOMENT
Sentinels of school hallways reach
out to kids and teenagers from the
tough parts of town, **GT3**



Lois Kamenitz wants to know how her health information made it into a foreign government's hands. Civil rights advocates say she's not the only one.

RICHARD LAUTENS/TORONTO STAR

Toronto's courts lost in translation

Ministry urged to hire
more interpreters
as cases get thrown out

PETER SMALL
COURTS BUREAU

A judge in Scarborough throws out a drunk-driving case due to delays in finding a Tamil interpreter. An assault conviction is tossed aside in Brampton because of incompetent Punjabi translation. A judge in downtown Toronto declares a murder mistrial for lack of an interpreter in Oromo, an African language. Across Greater Toronto, justice is under threat from a lack of accredited court interpreters. There are only 73 accredited and 112 conditionally accredited interpreters in Greater Toronto, according to the latest figures.

They serve an area with 1.4 million residents who regularly speak neither English nor French at home. Some 23,000 can't carry on a conversation in either language.

There are only two accredited Portuguese language interpreters, one Italian and one Mandarin. There are none in Korean, Turkish, Tagalog or Cambodian.

"I'm not sure it's a crisis as yet, but it's heading in that direction," says Aston Hall of the Criminal Lawyers' Association.

Last November, Ontario Superior Court Justice Casey Hill reportedly complained that judges are competing for interpreters in almost cutthroat fashion.

The attorney general's ministry is adding 117 new names — both accredited and conditionally accredited, says spokesman Brendan Crawley.

"The ministry is actively recruiting," he says.

INTERPRETERS continued on GT4

'Chilling' disclosures

Toronto woman was shocked after being barred
from entering U.S. because of a 2006 suicide attempt

ISABEL TEONONIO
STAFF REPORTER

When Lois Kamenitz arrived at Pearson International Airport in November, hoping to board a flight to California, she was stunned to learn that U.S. border officials were barring her entry.

The reason: Years ago, she attempted suicide.

The 64-year-old Toronto woman was fingerprinted and photographed. She questioned the U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer about how he accessed her medical records. He said he didn't. Instead, he knew police had attended her Toronto home in 2006

because she had done "violence to self." Kamenitz, who stands just 4-foot-10, was never told exactly why she was prohibited from boarding that flight on Nov. 20. She's not sure if Americans were worried she would do harm to herself or others, or whether they were concerned she was a threat to national security. She wryly raises her hands, which are disfigured from a severe disabling form of arthritis.

"I was shocked and confused," Kamenitz said this week at the office of her lawyer, Barry Swadron. He is trying to figure out how the information was disclosed before deciding whether to take legal action.

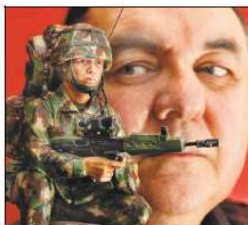
"Why would Canada disclose health information? I think it's the political and digital climate we're living in," said Kamenitz, a former teacher and librarian who struggles with anxiety and depression.

"There's been a shift in our democracy. Suddenly people have access to our information that impacts on our civil liberties."

How and why her personal information was passed to a foreign government is extremely troubling, say advocates for civil rights and the rights of psychiatric patients, who believe Kamenitz's privacy rights were invaded.

It's not an isolated incident, says Ryan Fritsch, legal counsel for the Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office.

ILLNESS continued on GT6



Ken Lloyd and his toy soldier.

Toy soldier grounded at airport

RAVEENA AULAKH
STAFF REPORTER

Julie Lloyd laughs at it now.

"They really thought this four-inch plastic gun could be used as a weapon," says Lloyd.

But when security at Gatwick Airport in England wouldn't let her board an aircraft with a plastic toy soldier cradling a four-inch rifle saying it was a threat to passenger safety, she wasn't laughing.

"It was all very stressful," says Lloyd, 60, of Oakville.

Rules stigmatize mental illness, says lawyer

ILLNESS from GT1

He has heard of about eight similar cases in the past year, all involving non-criminal contact between police and people with mental health issues — records of contact that end up at the Department of Homeland Security.

"These kinds of disclosures and the retention of this kind of information has a chilling effect on persons with mental illness," said Fritsch, who fears people will think twice before calling 911. "A mental crisis should not be a lifelong sentence for stigma and discrimination."

As Kamenitz spoke with the customs officer, she recalled the day in 2006 when her partner found her unconscious after overdosing on pills and called 911. Since that day, she had flown to the U.S. without incident on three other occasions.

Still, Kamenitz was told if she wanted to enter the U.S. this time, she had to get medical clearance from a State Department physician, which cost \$250. Her family doctor provided medical records and Kamenitz signed a form stating she understood the information would be passed to the U.S. government



RICHARD LAUTENS/TORONTO STAR

Lois Kamenitz struggles with anxiety and depression.

and had no control over how it would be used.

Kamenitz was cleared and allowed to fly four days later. It cost her and her partner an extra \$400 for new tickets. She has no idea if she'll have to go through the same process the next time she wants to enter the U.S.

Due to privacy laws, U.S. Customs and Border Protection cannot dis-

miss specific cases.

Under U.S. immigration law, applicants for admission must prove they are eligible to enter and overcome more than 60 grounds of inadmissibility, which include health-related issues, prior criminal convictions and security reasons.

Among the health-related reasons for inadmissibility is a foreigner who has a physical or mental dis-

order and behaviour associated with the disorder that may pose, or has posed, a threat to the property, safety, or welfare of the individual or others.

Kamenitz's lawyer says what happened to her is "another example of the harm that flows from the draconian procedures and practices that seem to equate mental illness with violence and criminality."

"How on earth do we expect people who suffer or have once suffered from emotional or psychological illness to be rehabilitated if we continue to put barriers in their way?" Swadron asked.

He suspects Kamenitz's suicide attempt was entered by Toronto officers into the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC), a central police database that also includes non-criminal matters, such as suicide attempts and missing persons. CPIC is managed by the RCMP and shared with the FBI.

Similarly, the FBI's computerized database is shared with Canadian agencies.

The CPIC system will purge the record of a suicide attempt after a five-year period, unless there are extenuating circumstances requiring it to be kept on record longer.