

## Grabbing the attention of distracted drivers

In Ontario, the fine facing motorists caught driving while distracted is about to increase from \$155 to \$280, as of Tuesday, March 18.

While the intent of hiking the fine may be to deter motorists from texting or making non-hands-free phone calls while behind the wheel, we question whether ultimately it is enough to change this disturbing trend fuelled by mobile technology making its way into the hands of more motorists.

According to the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) — which launched its week-long (March 8-14) campaign against distracted drivers Saturday — in 2013 distracted-driving fatalities surpassed both impaired and speed-related fatalities investigated by the provincial law enforcement agency.

The numbers are staggering — 78 people killed in distracted-driving-related collisions on OPP-patrolled roads last year versus 57 impaired driving deaths and 44 speed-related deaths.

According to Allstate Canada, distracted driving is involved in 80 per cent of collisions.

Add to these figures the victims' families and friends, as well as the police officers and other emergency services personnel who attend the scenes of traffic fatalities, and the human impact of distracted driving is overwhelming.

"When you consider the overall impact of these 78 fatalities last year and the 325 other distracted-driving victims who have died since 2010, the number of people these irresponsible drivers have had a profound and devastating impact on is in the thousands," said OPP Deputy Commissioner Brad Blair.

A study from the University of Utah has shown using a cellphone while driving, whether hand-held or hands-free, delays a driver's reactions as much as having blood-alcohol concentrations at the legal limit of .08 per cent.

While public-awareness campaigns like this month's by the OPP will undoubtedly get more people talking about distracted driving, we fear those willing to risk a \$155 fine won't be dramatically deterred by the jump to \$280.

Considering the number of lives being lost on Ontario roadways due to the selfishness of a few, perhaps its time the punishment fit the crime and its potential to kill the innocent.

Introducing demerit points, licence suspensions — even the threat of incarceration — may be the only way to grab the attention of those who refuse to keep their eyes — and mind — on the road.

Halton Region's website has a page dedicated to road safety with tips and resources. For more information, visit [www.halton.ca/drivesafe](http://www.halton.ca/drivesafe).

Take the online pledge to stop distracted driving at [http://webaps.halton.ca/forms/Distracted\\_Driving/takethepledge.cfm](http://webaps.halton.ca/forms/Distracted_Driving/takethepledge.cfm).

## D I V I N G I N F O R F A R E S H A R E



The Oakville Masters Swim Club held its annual charity swim in support of Fareshare food bank Thursday at White Oaks Pool, 1330 Montclair Dr. Fareshare volunteer Tom Oliver, at left, was there representing the food bank, along with swim club coach Mette Novais and swimmer Sylvie Tremblay.

| photo by Chantal Ayotte – Oakville Beaver (Follow on Twitter @halton\_photog or facebook.com/HaltonPhotog)

## Letter to the Editor

### Farm out garbage collection in Oakville

Throughout the years, my wife and I have questioned the cost/benefit of the services offered by the "elite" Town of Oakville.

If you pay more for something, you usually get something more, or better, in return.

My only comparison point is Mississauga and (Mayor) Hazel (McCallion), which is a tough comparison.

My taxes increased by a sizeable amount, and the services declined by a sizeable amount when I moved here six years ago.

I'll make my point with garbage collection.

McCallion farmed this service out years ago. The group chosen (and they are bid for after a time) stays up to date with their equipment for collecting, recycling, and disposal.

We recently had the "blue" recyclable bags left at the end of our yard, yet again.

We like using these because the papers, etc., do not blow all over the street, as I am sure we've all experienced.

A phone call to Halton Region helped us to understand the problem.

Although the bags are recyclable, they gum up the older machines that Halton employs.

The problem of papers and plastic blowing all over the street is not something that Halton is all that concerned about, it is up to us.

I assume buying new machines is too expensive for the service-oriented group, so my suggestion is farm it out.

The service is better, the problems can all be addressed by choosing the right company, and the city/county can maintain control by having a bidding process every couple of years.

**Doug Mosdell,**  
Oakville

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Classified Advertising: (905) 632-4440  
Circulation: 5300 Harvester Rd., Burlington  
(905) 631-6095

Volume 52 | Number 30

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