

# OPINION

## Assault and battery

Just a few days past his 18th birthday, a young man walked without concern along the sidewalk in front of his home, returning from a friend's.

Coming the opposite way were five youths of similar age. Instead of allowing the young man to pass they demanded he get off the sidewalk and let them pass. Then they threw him down and repeatedly kicked him on the head and face.

Two younger boys looking on nearby hastily summoned one of their fathers, who rushed out and chased the youths off. Meanwhile their victim lay prone on the driveway of his home dazed by the viciousness of the assault.

The young man's mother arrived, summoned police and drove him to the hospital where he was treated for a concussion, released into the care of his mother. Overnight he threw up, suffering the effects of the concussion, wondering perhaps why he was the victim when he had done nothing to provoke such violence.

Did this happen in Toronto or New York? No, right on Main Street in downtown Georgetown. Time? Midnight? No, in broad daylight around 6.30 pm.

Police have arrested a 16-year-old youth, charging him with assault and failure to comply with probation. Another youth, also alleged to have participated in the actual assault, is being sought. He is believed to be from out of town.

This has happened before in town with gangs of bullies who seek out helpless victims with no means of defending themselves. They're cowards, have to have the support of others or the cover of darkness before they commit these vicious acts.

We'll leave it to the sociologists to explain why these random acts of aggression occur. At one time they blamed it on poverty and poor social conditions. But so often, and this case is another one, they come from homes where economics is not a visible problem.

Sometimes boys will act completely out of character when they are with others and want to "show off," as they used to say. Most of us are familiar with the school yard bullies who try to extort lunch money, or some other valuable, from a victim who is easy prey. Or who may not fit into their idea of how they should look and dress. We can deal with them through the schools but are there any weapons decent citizens can use to control the anti-social acts of these quasi-terrorists on the streets of Georgetown?

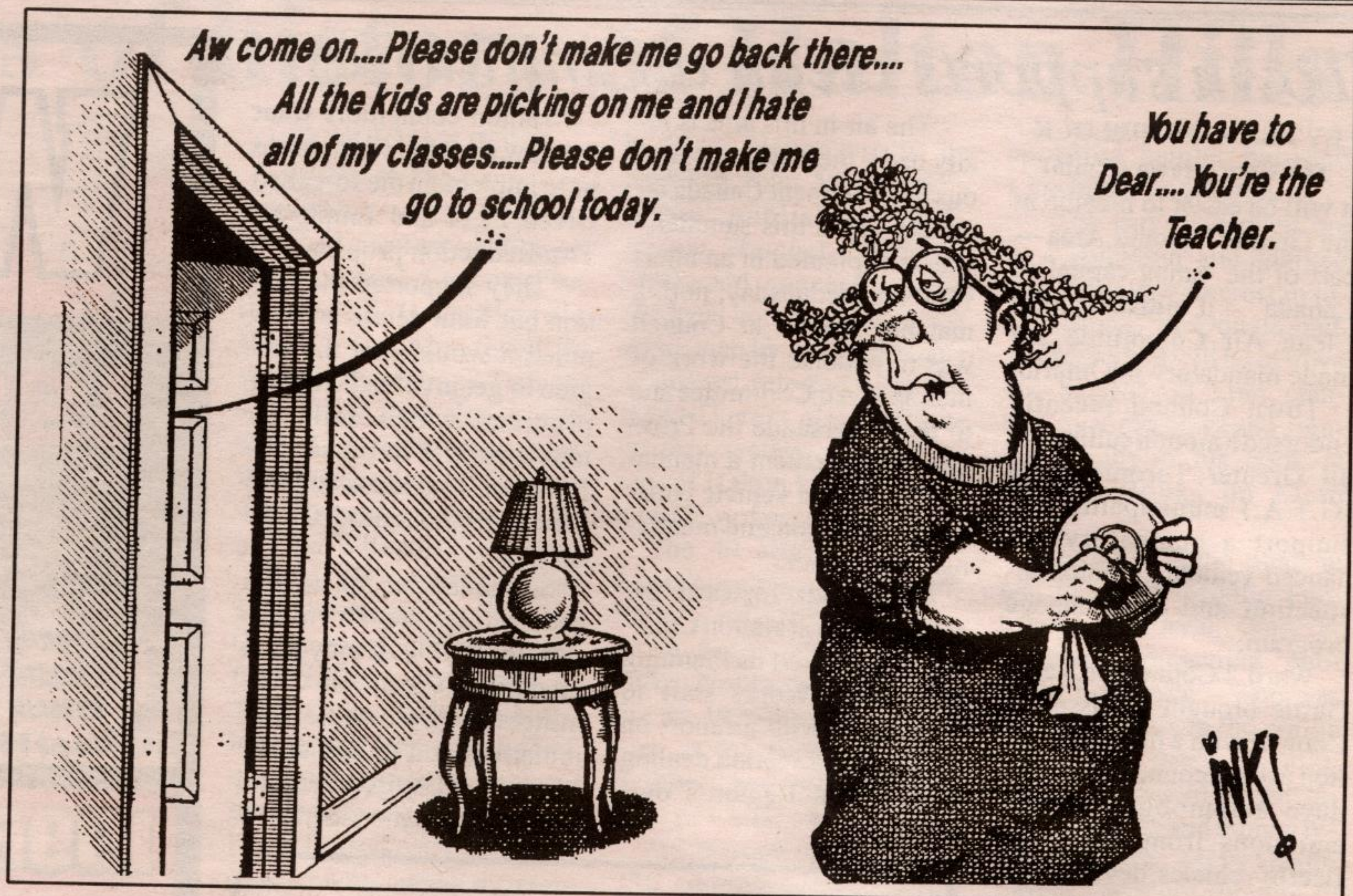
One woman we know well has her own method of dealing with them. Fed up with the actions of youths who clustered around the library, swearing, smoking and generally making a nuisance of themselves, she made nightly visits and told them to go home.

"I was fed up with the way they blocked the sidewalks, entranceways and the language they used," she said. "Nobody seemed to be doing anything about it. Police are only around during business hours, so I had to act on my own - and got results."

Good for her is my comment. It's too bad more of us didn't act in like matter instead of passing by on the other side of the street like the characters in the Biblical story of the Good Samaritan. Although she did nothing but sit on the benches, she says one of the youths threatened they would tell police they were being harassed by her.

Police today complain they don't have the manpower to look after all the minor complaints in town and elsewhere. There are so many major crimes they are expected to police. Perhaps we should be doing more to assist them but a recent news report from New York City suggests that if the little things are looked after it reduces the major ones as well.

We're not suggesting that police have been derelict here. There are only so many and they can't be everywhere keeping the streets safe for everyone. But we do think their visibility has a lot to do with keeping the peace. The sight of a cop walking the streets could have a lot to do with clearing up a lot of those minor breaches of the law and major ones, too.



## Your LETTERS

### Naturalization project saves \$ and the environment

To the Editor,  
On behalf of the Town Environmental Advisory Committee (TEAC) and the organizers of the Glen Williams Park naturalization project, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the individuals and businesses who contributed to our recent planting.

Thanks should go to: Ray Shivrattan, Picov's Water Garden Centre, Gord Preston, Preston's Lucky Dollar Grocery, Malcolm Black, Black Box Automation, Daphne and Howard Shropshall, Adams Georgetown Rent-All, Hickory Falls Ratepayers Association,

Councillor Kathy Gastle, and Doug and Mary-Lou Brock.

TEAC would also like to thank those individuals who came out to assist with the planting: Jill Johnson, Maria and John Parish, Gerda and John Potzel, Councillor John Day, Diane van de Valk, Steve Wheeler, Ruth Kuchinad, Councillor Kathy Gastle, and the members of the Hickory Falls Ratepayers Association.

TEAC believes naturalization projects are an important way in which the Committee can make a visible contribution to the community. More importantly however, when a naturalized area grows, it requires little if any maintenance, no pesticides and provides better habitat for insect and birds. Plans are now underway for a much more ambitious, five acre project in Willow Park.

Thank you again to the people and businesses that made this project possible.

Bryan Boyce, Chair  
TEAC

### Residents 'betrayed and cheated' by Council's decision

To the Editor,  
Last week I represented a number of homeowners at Council opposing Law Development's Phase III Complex.

This was our last-ditch attempt to stop Council from making a mistake. A mistake that River Road, Maple Avenue and Stewart MacLaren residents will have to live with forever. We proposed to Council, a radical idea: to get the town, the private sector and residents working together to purchase all the proposed land from the builder. Council did not even discuss the idea.

Council did give the go ahead for Law Development to build, although they (Council) did purchase 1.74 acres to turn into park land at a cost of \$274,000.

If memory serves me correctly, Law Development gave the town approximately \$600,000 in 1992 for

cash in lieu of recreational land, for its Phase I and Phase II projects. Some basic math tells me that \$353,000 earmarked for the Kingsmill area is conspicuously missing.

When I spoke to Council last Monday I had no idea that the funds initially taken from a neighbourhood would not find their way back into it.

Once again I ask the question: What has happened to the approximate \$353,000? After three years of petitioning the Town to act on behalf of the residents in the Kingsmill area, our group feels both betrayed and cheated by our representatives.

Once again Council has put the needs of the developers well ahead of the necessary requirements of the community.

In closing all I can say to both the developer and Council is that it is not over yet. We'll be at the Ontario Municipal Board meeting in September.

Mike Foley  
Guelph Street

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