

Break out

Hmmm, it's Tuesday— just the second day of March Break. Are you already tired of hearing, "I'm bored... there's nothing to do!" Is your television overheating from the over-use and are the squabbles over who gets to use the computer have you ready to pull your hair out?

The Pediatricians of Ontario have a solution— turn off the TVs and computer and head outside for exercise— the long-term health of your child depends upon it.

A recent report by the docs shows that children exposed to too much screen time is leading to health risks such as obesity, language delays, and attention problems. In fact, a Stats Can reports says the average Canadian child watches nearly 14 hours of television each week, and by graduation these children will have spent more time watching TV than in the classroom. Just two hours of screen-time use a day doubles the likelihood of obesity, says the Canadian Pediatric Society.

"Unfortunately, research shows that children are spending more time in front of television or computer screens and this is leading to a wealth of preventable health and developmental issues," said Dr. Hirotaka Yamashiro, chair of the Ontario Medical Association's Section on Pediatrics. "It can be very easy to drift into a routine of TV watching or computer game playing. We want to help parents and children break out of this pattern and start building strategies for a healthier future."

The docs are encouraging parents to set a limit on screen time to two hours a day, ensure children exercise daily and eat a healthy balanced diet— and start by planning a few days of activities during March Break.

In this community this week, lots of activities are planned. Some are free— skating or swimming at Town rinks and pools, free drop-in crafts or free movie at the library and a snake show, magician show and drop-in crafts at the Georgetown Market Place mall. The weather will also be conducive for hiking on local trails, playing games in parks or riding bikes.

Raising healthy kids doesn't have to cost a lot, but it sure can pay dividends for the children.

Letters to the editor policy

Letters must include an address and daytime telephone number. Anonymous letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 150 words and may be edited for content and/or length.

E-mail: jmcghie@independentfreepress.com
Mail or drop off: Independent & Free Press, 280 Guelph St., Unit 29, Georgetown, ON., L7G 4B1.

The Independent & Free Press

The Independent & Free Press is published Tuesday and Thursday and is one of several Metroland Media Group Ltd. community newspapers. Editorial and advertising content of The Independent & Free Press is protected by copyright. Unauthorized use is prohibited.



Steve Nease

905-873-0301
Publisher: Ken Nugent
General manager: Steve Foreman
 (sforeman@independentfreepress.com)
Retail advertising manager: Cindi Campbell
 (ccampbell@independentfreepress.com)
Managing editor: John McGhie
 (jmcghie@independentfreepress.com)
Distribution manager: Nancy Geissler
 (ngeissler@independentfreepress.com)
Classifieds
 Kristie Pells
 (classified@independentfreepress.com)
Accounting
 Rose Marie Gauthier
Editorial
 Cynthia Gamble: News editor
 (cgamble@independentfreepress.com)
 Ted Brown: Photography
 (tbrown@independentfreepress.com)
 Lisa Tallyn: Staff writer
 (ltallyn@independentfreepress.com)
 Eamonn Maher: Staff writer/sports
 (emaher@independentfreepress.com)

WEB POLL RESULTS

The federal government is considering allowing police to impose random roadside breath testing to combat drunk driving. Would you support random police stops?

- No. It's a violation of a person's civil rights (46%)
- Yes. If it reduces the number of impaired drivers I have no problem with it (54%)

Go to www.independentfreepress.com

Letters to the editor

Coyote story was meant as warning

Dear editor,
 In response to Sarah Maclean's Feb. 11 letter, "Living near a ravine has its risks".
 As a member of the Buck family, I would like to point out that in the many years and generations our family has lived in this town, we had never heard of a coyote attacking an innocent pet in a completely fenced in backyard. Yes, Georgetown has been encroaching on wildlife for years now, but that does not mean that this should become a dangerous place for animals or small children.

You may think that it is naive to have been unaware of the risks of having a pet on the ravine and that is fine, but the fact is that those living on the ravine are not the only ones faced with this problem. This is why we decided to have the article in *The Independent & Free Press*; to warn other people of the risks, for those who like us, may not have been aware of them. Coyotes have been spotted in many areas and have been present in local headlines recently. They do not just pose a problem for those on the ravine but

for other residents in Georgetown as well.

In response to the question raised in the letter— yes, we were "honestly surprised" that a coyote would jump a fence into our backyard and violently attack our innocent dog.

By sharing our story we were not asking for sympathy but were trying to help other people become aware of the problem. If we saved one loved family pet after raising awareness of the issue then we take comfort in knowing that in losing our beloved Tucker, we were able to prevent it from happening to someone else.

Cheryl Buck, Georgetown

Let there be light

Dear editor,
 As another winter of outdoor skating ends, it should be mentioned that the wildly popular community-maintained ice rink in Maple Creek Park, Georgetown South is still without lighting. What a shame.

The skaters are not looking for much— no big budget items, no feat of engineering— just one simple overhead light and the electrical supply is 15 metres away.

Come on Halton Hills, recognize this nice little project and act now. Families from all over Georgetown

are using the ice and would appreciate the gesture. Let's do what we can to keep children active, especially when its so cheap to do so. No admission fee, no membership, no registration, no official committee, just like the old days.

Special thanks to Georgetown South resident Dave who floods (with a hose loaned by the Town of Halton Hills, thank you) and clears snow almost every evening so the children will have a great time the following day. Others help out but Dave has been doing the heavy lifting for about seven years now.

What a treat to see kids walking home tired, a little cold, and very content following an after-school skate. It's just a shame the kids have to leave when the light fades long before 6 p.m.

B. Paterson, Georgetown

Pro proroguing

Dear editor,
 Re: Proroguing parliament.
 Anything Prime Minister Harper can do to stop the pork barrelling, self-righteous, hot dog-eating Liberals from resurrecting another sponsorship cash cow called an unelected senate is fine with me.

Ralph Maze, Georgetown