

# Pre-September stress

I took my regular little walk Tuesday.

It was the same trek that I take most days, from one end of the mall to the other, around lunch time, to find some sustenance to tie me over until supper time.

With the office of *The Independent & Free Press* located in the mall for a full decade, I've done my share of people watching, while making my way to the food court.

It's a people watcher's paradise as shoppers of all shapes, sizes and ages, make their way through the mall in search of something to spend money on.

Some times, the mall is a bustling centre of commerce, other days, especially during the dog days of August, it can be mighty quiet.

But like the seasons in nature, shoppers in the mall take on a dramatic change in sync with the days on the calendar—and this week I witnessed that distinct change.

It's there every year around the final days of August.

The participants are recognizable by the tired, worn faces of parents, accompanied by their exuberant fever-pitched little kids.

'Cuz it's back to school shopping time!

It's similar to the week just before Christmas, only it happens in August, when everyone is out doing their frantic last-minute shopping for school stuff.

The barber shop is conspicuously busier than usual as kids are dragged in by parents to have their back-to-school haircuts.

The department stores are inundated with parents and kids, stocking up on pencils, pens, pencil cases, backpacks and all sorts of other regalia that will probably be lost or traded off by Day Three at school.

I see parents and kids shopping for new shoes for school, as their negotiations reach a fever pitch with the kids complaining 'only a loser would wear THAT!' while the parents counter with the old line about 'who is paying for this anyway?'

Running shoes with three figure prices become the norm, and only the best de-

## Ted Brown



signer brand outfits are acceptable.

Older students are in search of new laptop computers with all the bells and whistles, while the defeated parents footing the bill just relinquish control of their credit card.

There's a stress in the air that isn't there during the summer months.

It's visible on the faces of the parents as their kids' body language screams out in defiance.

Even the older students are stressed, as they do last-minute shopping for items to take back to university.

The only other time I see anything close to this level of stress is around December 20, and the week leading up to Christmas.

While all this activity is taking place in the mall, I'm reminded of those parents who are taking this weekend to move their kids back to university.

You know— poor old dad negotiating three flights of stairs to carry that 'student's refrigerator' up to his kid's dorm room, knowing full well that it will be magically transformed into a bar fridge before the first week is out.

As I watch the annual pilgrimage to the mall for back-to-school supplies, I'm so thankful my kids are all finished with school, and are making their own way in the world.

And after watching the shoppers, I've realized what it's all about.

As parents, we're paying our dues in advance, helping our kids get off on the right foot. In doing so, we can watch them as they eventually make their way in this world as successful young adults.

And after all is said and done, that's our prize for being parents.

# Women charged with theft

Two women were charged in connection with the theft of \$3,000 worth of items from the Real Canadian Superstore Tuesday evening.

Halton Police report about 8:10 p.m. store security saw two women leave the store with two shopping carts filled with a variety of items that hadn't been paid for. The store's loss prevention officer confronted the women outside the store and arrested them for theft. Police were called and continued with the arrest.

Charged with theft is Susan Lorraine Seifried, 33, of Cambridge, and Pauline Barbara Kelly, 44, of Guelph.

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A 65-year-old Georgetown man received minor injuries while crossing

Mountainview Rd. on foot south of Delrex Blvd. Wednesday afternoon.

Police say about 1:20 p.m. the man, remembering he left something at his Mountainview Rd. home, stopped his vehicle on the east side of the road, got out and attempted to cross. He safely crossed the northbound lanes. The driver of the van on the inside southbound lane stopped and waved the man through who was then struck by a vehicle in the curb lane driven by a 45-year-old Georgetown woman.

The man was knocked to the ground and taken to Georgetown Hospital by ambulance. The driver of the vehicle that struck him wasn't hurt, and no charges were laid.

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