

Protect your identity

In recognition of Fraud Prevention Month, Halton Crime Stoppers will be hosting Community Shred-It events to give residents of the region the opportunity to have any unwanted private papers or sensitive documents safely destroyed.

Identity theft has become one of the fastest growing crimes in the country and is now robbing the Canadian economy of more than \$2.5 billion a year.

Sergeant Gary Gold, co-ordinator of Halton's Crime Stoppers program, said Fraud Prevention Month is an excellent time for people to learn about the various types of financial crimes and how to protect themselves from being victims.

"Losses can come from someone simply forging your name on a cheque or using your credit card or millions of dollars through complex financial schemes perpetrated by sophisticated criminals," Gold said. "You reduce the possibility of becoming a victim when you are aware of the various frauds that are being committed today, especially those involving identity theft."

"One of the best ways to protect yourself from identity theft is to shred any paper that has your name and other personal information," said Cal Millar, chair of Halton's Crime Stoppers program.

"Criminals can use a few details collected from a discard utility bill or bank statement to fraudulently obtain credit cards, driver's licenses, health cards or other forms of identification in your name," he said. "It can be a nightmare for anyone trying to repair the damage to their credit rating and reputation after becoming a victim of identity theft."

The north Halton Shred-It events will be held on April 2, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Milton Mall and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Market Place Mall in Georgetown.

Kelly Gorven, chair of the project, said this is a fundraising event and Crime Stoppers will be asking for a donation of \$5 to shred a shopping bag of personal papers or \$10 for the equivalent of a banker's box.

Letters to the editor policy

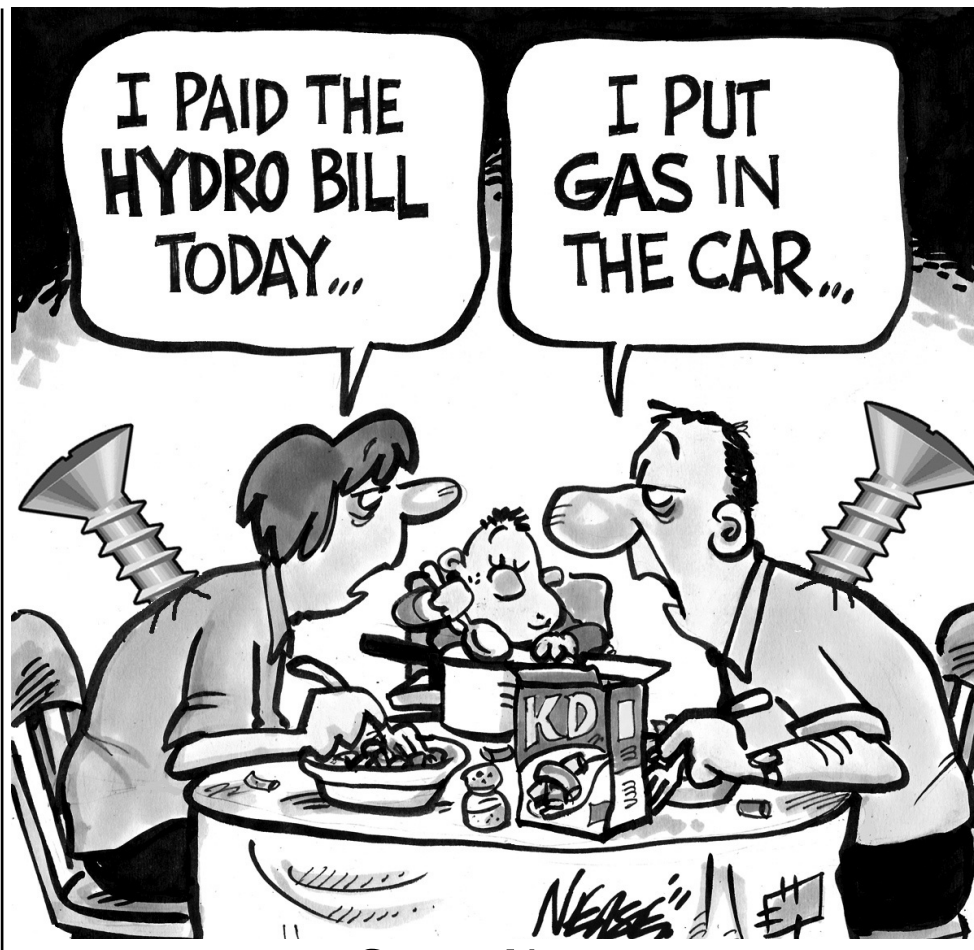
Letters must include an address and daytime telephone number. Anonymous letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 150 words and may be edited for content and/or length. Publication is not guaranteed.

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

Who should be paying for new recreational facilities?

- a) property taxpayers (5%)
- b) private investors and users (34%)
- c) developers (18%)
- d) federal or provincial infrastructure grants (8%)
- e) all of the above (35%)

Go to www.independentfreepress.com

Letters to the editor

Cyclists have right to use full lane

Dear editor,

This letter is in response to W. Valentini's letter to the editor titled, "Some cyclists lack common sense."

Valentini is correct about bicycles requiring lights during reduced visibility conditions. The Highway Traffic Act (R.S.O. 1990, c. H.8, s62. (17)) says that from half an hour before sunset until half an hour after sunset, bicycles must have a white or amber light on the front and a red light or red reflector on the rear, along with white reflective material on the front forks and red reflectors on the rear of the bike covering a surface of not less than 250mm in length and 25mm in width (10" x 1"). Lights and reflectors must be approved by the Ministry of Transportation. The fine for failing to do this is no more than \$20.

Now, about where cyclists are allowed to ride their bikes. It is important to understand that cyclists on the road receive the same rights that are afforded to other road users, including full use of all the lanes. When riding a bicycle, you are not required to ride "off to the side" and are in fact encouraged (and entitled) to "take the lane" when the road conditions

make it safe to do so or when doing so makes it safer to cycle.

When riding from the GO station, travelling south on Mill Street can be difficult. There is no yellow line down the middle of the road and there are several sewer covers and potholes that extend out more than a metre from the curb. Around 6 p.m., Mill is usually fairly busy both ways with car traffic coming from the GO and from Guelph St. Riding "off to the side" creates a dangerous situation for cyclists as drivers do attempt to negotiate between the cyclist and oncoming traffic while racing to the light. Riding in the middle of the lane forces drivers to be more cautious around cyclists and usually discourages them from attempting a dangerous pass. There is also nothing wrong with one cyclist passing another, provided they properly indicate their intentions with hand signals.

That said, I urge motorists to be careful around cyclists when they are not "off to the side," as they are making it clear to motorists that they are trying to be a safe and courteous road user; getting mad or frustrated with them is counter-productive and can result in a dangerous situation for everyone on the road.

Jason Warren
Georgetown

Everyone has equal access to health care

Dear editor,

Apparently Riley O'Neill missed the sensible and reasonable letter to your paper (Feb 8, 2011) from Megan Golden, an Acton resident.

In this great province of ours everyone has equal access to the health care system regardless of where they reside. My family and I have used hospitals in Georgetown, Brampton, Mississauga, Toronto, Ottawa, Haliburton, Guelph... the list goes on, hopefully one gets the picture.

I didn't have to pay user fees at any of these hospitals. In fact hospitals that have accommodated my family in British Columbia and Nova Scotia have not charged user fees. That is what your tax dollars go to and, frankly, despite all the groaning and moaning, that's a good thing.

One last question to Mr. O'Neill (and any others who have written letters to the editor supporting user fees for Brampton residents using the Georgetown Hospital). How exactly did you know the patients waiting to see a doctor in the emergency department were from Brampton?

Steve Frost,
Georgetown