

Dialed in

Here in Halton we are fortunate to have an array of emergency services at our fingertips. We know that when we dial 911, help is on the way. However, that system only works efficiently and effectively if used properly.

Like other police services across the province, Halton has seen a marked increase in what has been dubbed “pocket dialed” and unintentional 911 calls.

These types of calls can occur when a person’s keypad on a mobile device, carried in a pocket, backpack or a purse, is accidentally pressed.

Halton Police report that from May 1-Nov. 1, 2011 they received 68,175 emergency calls of which 9,698 were considered inadvertent ‘pocket dials’, which represents 14.2 per cent. That total does not include calls to Halton Police that should not have been made through the 911 system.

“Just one (wrong 911) call can tie up our (dispatch/policing) resources,” said Halton Police media relations officer Sgt. Dave Cross.

The nearly 9,700 pocket dials to Halton Police in just half of 2011 is a separate issue from 911 calls that were purposely made to police but aren’t considered emergency calls. Cross suggested those are a significant number as well.

Police say people can avoid pocket dialing by keeping the phone in a holster designed for it. If you don’t have a holster, lock the device’s keypad or put it in standby mode.

If by some chance you inadvertently dial 911, police ask that you don’t hang up. Just admit to the operator you made a mistake otherwise the police have to call back.

Our emergency response system is critical for the people in need. To have someone tying up a 911 operator because their mobile phone bounced around in their backpack is inexcusable. We can put an end to pocket dials by using some common sense.

WEB POLL RESULTS

(Go to www.independentfreepress.com)

Note: The web poll is experiencing technical difficulties and therefore results were unavailable. We apologize for the inconvenience.

A federal Liberal policy resolution has called for severing formal ties with the British monarchy. Do you think Canada should sever royal links?

- Yes
- No

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@theifp.ca)
Retail advertising manager: Cindi Campbell
 (ccampbell@theifp.ca)
Managing editor: John McGhie
 (jmcghie@theifp.ca)
Distribution manager: Nancy Geissler
 (ngeissler@theifp.ca)
Classifieds
 Kristie Pells
 (classified@theifp.ca)
Accounting
 Rose Marie Gauthier
Editorial
 Cynthia Gamble: News editor
 (cgamble@theifp.ca)
 Ted Brown: Photography
 (tbrown@theifp.ca)
 Lisa Tallyn: Staff writer
 (ltallyn@theifp.ca)
 Eamonn Maher: Staff writer/sports
 (emaher@theifp.ca)

Letters policy

Letters must include an address and daytime phone 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.

Email:

jmcghie@theifp.ca

Mail or drop off:

Independent & Free Press, 280 Guelph St., Unit 29, Georgetown, ON, L7G 4B1.

Letters to the editor

Health care systems seem worlds apart

Dear editor,

I recently returned home to Canada from another assignment with medical organizations in Haiti and had to enter hospital for overdue surgery. These back-to-back experiences provided an immediate, sharp and poignant lesson.

While working with our volunteer team, on a shoestring budget at remote outreach clinics, a young woman gave birth two hours away from any hospital, if there had been a need for one.

A man had his leg amputated below the knee because he had ignored a gangrenous toe; a prosthesis was definitely not on his list of possibilities for Christmas.

In a city slum of 20,000, we trained local doctors and nurses, with only enough resources to keep the tiny medical hut open for two days a week.

Haitians would simply find the level of privileged of care I am now receiving unbelievable: major surgery, world-class specialists, expert 24-hour in-hospital nursing care, transportation to and from home

(CAS-HH), drugs and home care program— are all high quality and publicly-funded.

Many Canadians, while proud beneficiaries of a system that is the envy of the world, are anxious about its shortcomings and sustainability. While we need to intensify efforts to improve healthcare for ourselves at home, we can learn to broaden our sense of neighbourhood to include those deprived residents struggling to survive, right in our own backyard. (Haiti is no farther away than my cottage in Quebec.)

As an example, I’m proud to say that the expenses for this mission and others were partly covered by aware Halton Hills donors, family and friends.

*Eric Doubt,
 Consultant, Haiti Village Health
 Georgetown*

Columnist thanked

Dear editor,
History in Newton’s words (Ted Brown’s column Dec. 8).

I deeply appreciate the touching sentiments expressed by Ted Brown concerning my new book.

In his own writing Ted often captures and relates the pioneer spirit of our ancestors. He is truly a “heritage

keeper”; preserving the past for the benefit of the future.

Thanks to all who attended and made my book launch at Limehouse Memorial Hall a success. The efforts of the Hall Committee are also appreciated. It is an excellent facility for such an event.

The book is still available at actondale@sympatico.ca or 519-853-2101.

Jean Somerville, Acton

Clean those walks!

Dear editor,

On behalf of all dog owners who walk in the Delrex Blvd. and Prince Charles Dr. area, as well as all joggers and walkers, I would love to see a feature written on how poorly maintained the sidewalks are after a snowfall.

It is a homeowners’ responsibility to maintain their sidewalks and I can tell you that from my daily dog walks less than 15% of the homes on Delrex and Prince Charles take care of the sidewalks around their home. It is very disappointing.

I would love to see Halton Hills implement a bylaw and start charging homeowners who choose to ignore their sidewalks.

*Kelly Rodd,
 Georgetown*