

Opinion

Back to school safety

As children get ready to return to school, the Ontario Safety League asks both parents and drivers to try looking at road safety from a child's viewpoint.

Too often we think of children as small adults. But there's a big difference. Walk to the curb, get on your knees and imagine you're about to cross the street. You won't see much! Parked vehicles block your view. You can't see oncoming vehicles.

Children have one-third less peripheral vision than adults. They can't see approaching vehicles out of the corners of their eyes. They can't judge such things as distance, speed of vehicles or gaps in traffic.

Children also have trouble separating what's real and not real. Often they see cars as living creatures. They don't understand death. When watching cartoons, kids readily accept the fact that the Road Runner bounces back to life after it's run over by a steamroller. They tend to believe that the same thing can happen in real life.

Children assume that, because they can see the driver, the driver sees them. When 5-to-6-year-olds were asked what could happen if a car were about to hit them, some said simply: "I would hold up my hand and stop it."

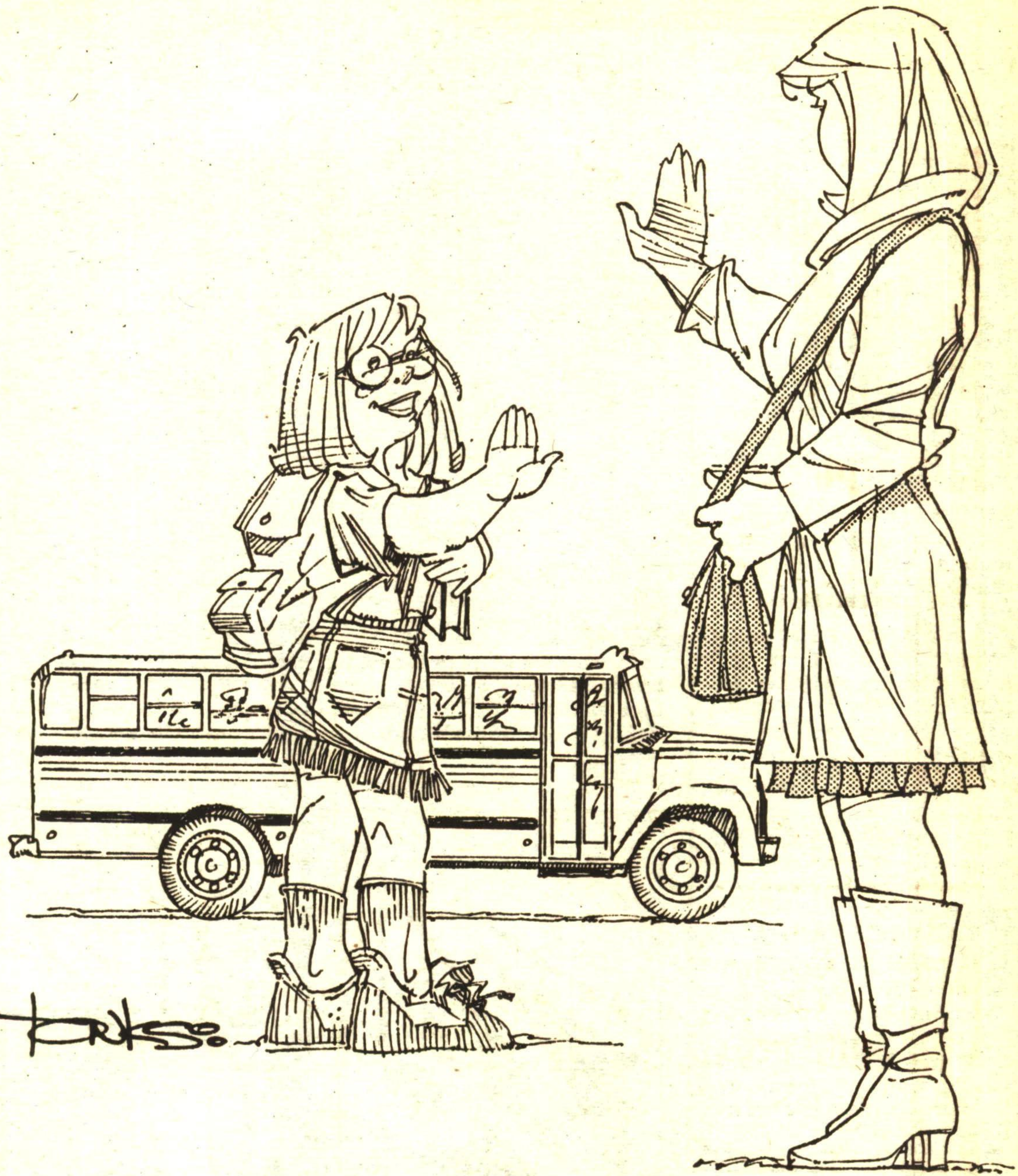
Children interpret traffic signs in literal ways that may mislead them. They may believe a "School Crossing" sign means it's okay to cross the street.

They may think a yellow light simply means be careful, not grasping its warning that the light is about to turn red. After all, "Daddy always drives through the yellow light faster."

It is also difficult for children to tell where a particular sound is coming from. They may be distracted by a friend's call or a barking dog. And, even if they hear a warning sound, they often misinterpret its meaning. When a driver sounds the horn, they may take it as a go-ahead to cross the street.

The Ontario Safety League suggests we make the effort to enter the realm of the child's mind, and try to understand how they look at the world, in order to teach our youngsters the vital lessons of traffic safety.

Drive defensively and watch out for the mistakes that children make. We need to protect them, as well as teach them to take care of themselves.



... BACK TO SCHOOL ...

WOW wowed by support

Letter to the Editor:

For the past six weeks, we have been running a summer program through the YMCA Youth Employment Service called Work Orientation Workshops (WOW). WOW is a full-time program which gives students, ages 14-17, an opportunity to experience the workplace and learn the importance of school in relation to the job market. As well, the program provides workshops and social activities to help participants meet the demands of the workplace.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the employers in the community who participated so willingly and helped to make the program a success: Hair Creations, Home Hardware, Jack Tanner's Table, Leathertown Lumber, Mobile Sound Systems, Super Lube, Tidy Car, Tuitman's Landscaping, Zellers, WasteWise, Halton Hills Volunteer Centre.

As well, we would like to thank the following businesses who contributed to our graduation ceremony: A&P, Dave's Service Centre, Georgetown Fruit Market, Georgetown General Store, Main Mart, Miller's Bakery, Miracle Foodmart, Queen's Tire, Steak Express, Tim Horton's and Wendy's.

The support and help received from these businesses, and the great people who run them, demonstrates the high level of community spirit so prominent in Georgetown and Acton which made the program a great success. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Melissa Morey and Jayne Weldon,
1991 Georgetown WOW program

Our Readers Write

Poison ivy is no laughing matter

To the Editor:

Ted's story about a friend with poison ivy (*Weekend, August 24*) was intended to be light-hearted or even amusing. Poison ivy is not even remotely amusing to those with a severe case of this allergy. Sensitivity varies from 0 (totally immune and I had such a friend in the 1930's) to 10 (must be hospitalized).

My sensitivity is about 4, but my father was about 8 1/2. Over 32 years at our cottage in Fenelon Falls, where poison ivy in the forest is commoner than grass and in the open is commoner than thistle or burdock, Father had many serious bouts. He tried everything, including 5 per cent and even 10 per cent potassium permanganate as well as everything the doctors and pharmacists could recommend.

Finally, all by himself, he discovered the absolute cure. These tiny ringed and linked pustules break and spread their oily poison immediately upon scratching or within an hour with almost any medication. Father's method with almost unimaginable short-term itch followed by six to eight hours of total relief is as follows: use a very rough wash cloth and soak in water as hot as you can stand, rub over the pustules vigorously till the skin is red

and almost raw, swab immediately with rubbing alcohol. When the itch restarts — do it again!

This rough treatment advances all the pustules that are due to break in the next eight hours or so. The alcohol reduces the itch within a minute and there is a long solid period of relief. This method will absolutely knock down the poison ivy in two to three days, or in terrible cases four days.

It is much easier to teach and to learn to identify the plant and to avoid it; remember that the leaves are relatively dark and shiny and that the stem of the middle leaf is always longer than the almost absent stems of the two outer leaves.

For kids in poison ivy areas, wear long pants as I did all through my teens. If known to have been exposed, wash arms or legs with lots of laundry soap within 20 minutes.

Two other things: poison ivy returns next year only upon re-exposure — it is not like malaria contrary to much popular belief and second, if you are very sensitive, beware of burning brush and herbage, the smoke of poison ivy can trigger an attack — stay upwind or let somebody else tend the fire.

Sympathy to Ted's friend,
W. Murray Wallace,
Georgetown

Halton Hills

WEEKEND

The Georgetown Independent and Acton Free Press

KEN BELLAMY
Publisher

211 ARMSTRONG AVE., L7G 4X5
GEORGETOWN, ONT. (416) 873-0301

The Halton Hills Weekend, published every Saturday at 211 Armstrong Ave., Georgetown, Ont., is one of the Metroland Printing, Publishing & Distributing group of suburban newspapers which includes: The Acton Free Press, Ajax/Pickering News Advertiser, The Aurora Banner, Barrie Banner Advance, The Brampton Guardian, The Burlington Post, The Erin-Hillsburgh Echo, The Etobicoke Advertiser/Guardian, The Georgetown Independent, Markham Economist & Sun, The Milton Champion, The Mississauga News, The Newmarket Era, The Oakville Beaver, Oshawa/Whitby This Week, Richmond Hill/Thornhill/Vaughan Liberal, The Echo-Review, The Scarborough Mirror, The Stouffville Tribune, The Willowdale Mirror. Metroland Printing, Publishing & Distributing is a division of Harlequin Enterprises Ltd.

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Price: Store copies 50¢ each; subscription \$19 per year by carrier; \$52 per year by mail in Canada; \$75 per year in all other countries. Plus G.S.T.

EDITORIAL - 1-800-268-8719
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Robin Insoe
EDITOR: Cynthia Gamble,
Staff Writers: Paul Dorsey, Stuart Johnston, Janet Baine.
Photography: Ted Brown

BUSINESS OFFICE - 1-800-268-8719
Manager: Jean Shewell
Accounting: Pat Kentner, Sherry Mitchell, Bev Nelissen

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