

Helmet saves Heather from serious injury

By JANET BAINE

Staff writer

Nine-year-old Heather Inglis won't ride her bicycle without her bike helmet.

Especially not after a fall this month that could have caused serious head injuries. Instead, Heather escaped with a bleeding nose and some bruises.

"I was putting my feet in the air and one foot got caught in the wheel and I flipped over the handlebars," Heather explained. She landed on her head, protected by her helmet.

Now Heather has become a firm believer on wearing a bike helmet.

"It was cracked on the inside and on the outside, so she would have been seriously injured if she hadn't been wearing it," agrees Tracey Craig, store manager of Canadian Tire. Anyone with a Supercycle helmet, damaged in an accident, can take it back to Canadian Tire to have it replaced by the manufacturer.

Canadian Tire offers a special program called the Canadian Tire Child Protection Program Foundation which promote safe cycling and the use of helmets. The

company had become concerned that more than 5,000 children are seriously injured and more than 60 die in bicycle accidents, mainly from head injuries, in Canada each year. Bicycle helmets, statistics show, can reduce cycling-related fatalities by up to 75 per cent and head injuries by up to 85 per cent.

In promoting the use bicycle helmets Canadian Tire's Foundation donates kits to schools and other organizations.

The kits include an activity booklet, an educational video, a poster, paper measuring tapes and everything necessary to run a successful bicycle safety event. Helmets are available at a discount price of \$15.99 each (the sale price is \$16.99).

Heather Inglis bought her helmet at the Glen Williams School bike rodeo, sponsored by the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). The PTA contributed an additional \$5 making them even more affordable.

"We really wanted to promote bike helmets because there aren't many sidewalks in the Glen," PTA chair Gail McGourtey said.

A total of 125 helmets were sold

through the bike rodeo, and there are 236 children in the school, McGourtey said. A good part of the problem is getting children to wear helmets, she explained, but with an event like this, most children were wearing them by the end of the day.

"It was so neat. All these kids had helmets on their heads and nobody felt funny about it. Now it's a cool thing to do," McGourtey said. By the end of the bike rodeo, the children were even wearing them when they weren't riding.

McGourtey and other parents worked very hard to hold the bike rodeo, and she said that now she feels it has all been worthwhile.

"This is what it is all about. We saved a child from really doing damage to her head," she said.

Heather's mother Mickie said she had known for some time that she should get a helmet for her daughter, and through the bike rodeo it was as simple as writing a cheque. The PTA sent home notices to parents along with an order form and a tape measure so the child's head could be measured to get the right fit.

"People are busy in our day, and some people don't think, or don't

imagine that this kind of thing can happen," Inglis said.

But there is still some convincing to do; even after Heather's fall, Inglis' 14-year-old son won't wear a helmet. He even had a bad fall from his bike a month ago, she said.

"It's more accepted among the younger ones, not for the guys," Inglis said.

The Glen Williams PTA plans to run a bike rodeo promoting helmets every second year. In the years in between, they will hold a helmet exchange, so that people can exchange helmets of different sizes. Three sizes are available, and getting a right fit is extremely important. Craig said the helmet should come down low on the forehead, and it should fit so firmly that you can put two hands on the child's head, ask the child to move their head from side to side and the helmet will stay in place.

"The rodeo was a lot, a lot of fun," McGourtey said. "Over half the students wear helmets now, and it's going to be law, eventually."

She hopes other schools in Halton Hills will begin to hold bicycle safety programs to promote helmets.

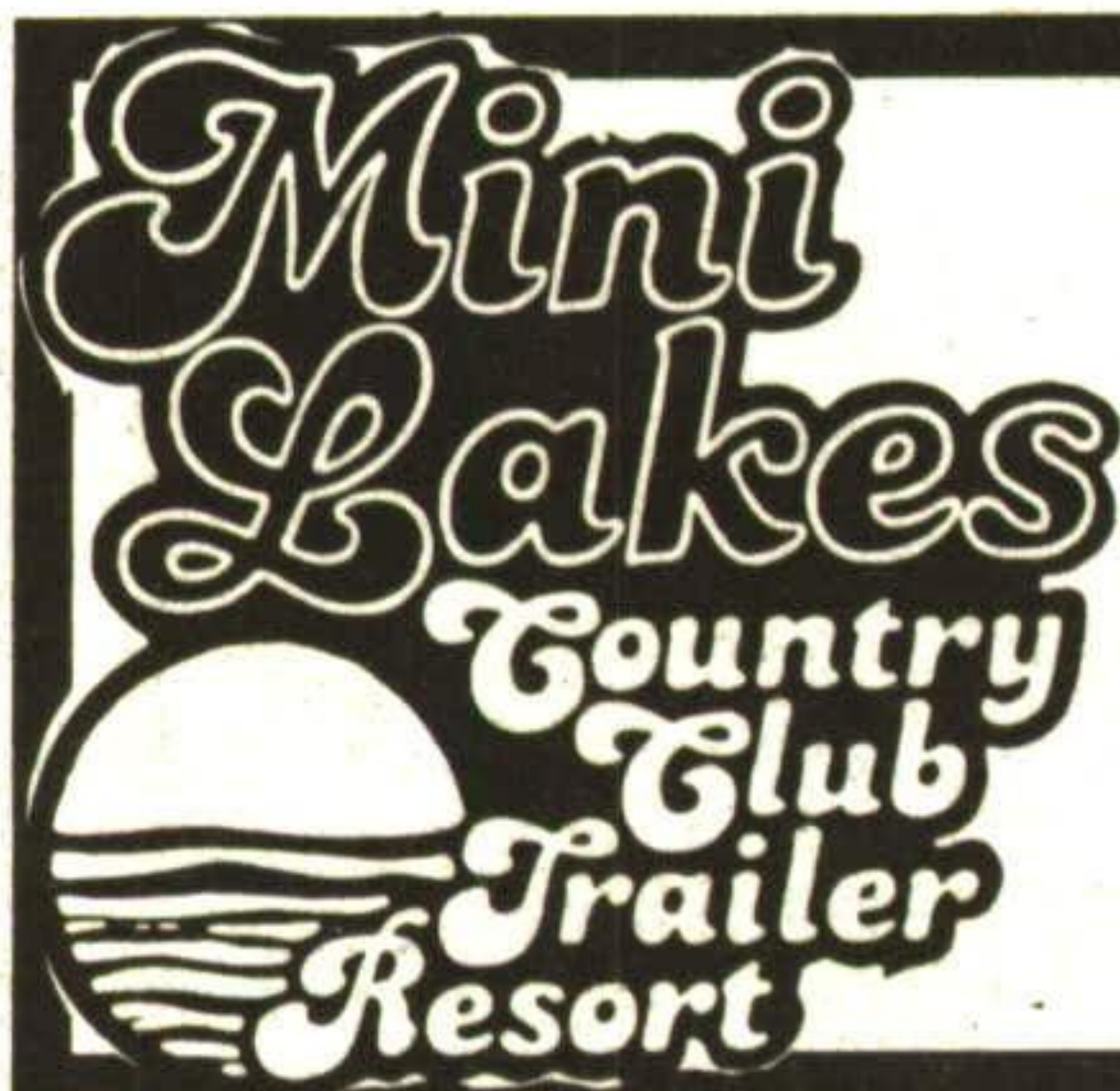
Widening 401

Transportation Minister Gilles Pouliot officially launched construction for the Highway 401 six-laning from Guelph Line Road to Highway 25 at a groundbreaking ceremony Friday, June 11.

The event took place west from Milton at the on-ramp in the northwest quadrant of Guelph Line Road and Highway 401.

Concrete median barrier will be installed and both the median and outside lane shoulders will be paved. The bridges at Sixteen Mile Creek, Appleby Line and Campbellville Road (Regional Rd. 9) will also be widened. The contract awarded to Fermar Paving Ltd., of Rexdale will be completed in August 1994.

"This expansion will support residential, economic and industrial development," said Halton North MPP Noel Duignan. "The result will be a more efficient 401 corridor that will benefit the whole province. This key transportation link will be safer for travellers and commercial vehicles and better able to handle the increased volume of traffic."



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