

EDITORIAL

with Traci Gardner

Make a noise about bullying

Ontario has taken steps to designate the week following the Third Sunday in November (November 15 – 21) as Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week, in order to assist in promoting safe schools and positive learning environments. During this week, students, school staff, and parent are encouraged to take the time to learn more about bullying and the effect it has on students' learning and over-all well-being. This year's theme is "Make a Noise about Bullying" and the week aims to empower children and young people to do just that – whether bullying is happening to them or to someone else, face to face or online.

Bullying happens in many forms and can include many different behaviours such as: physical violence and attacks; verbal torment; name-calling and put-downs; threats and intimidation; extortion or stealing of money and possessions and exclusion from the peer group, or shaming. A bully can turn something like going to the bus stop or recess into a nightmare for kids, and can leave deep emotional scars.

Technology has allowed bullying to expand beyond the school day and can affect students around the clock. It has brought the issue into homes, cell phones, and computers of bullied kids. It happens on social media and even through text messages. It is the online bullying where kids tend to be even more cruel, as it removes the face to face confrontation and any empathy. Cyber-bullying affects victims in a different way as it can follow them everywhere 24 hours a day – there is no safe zone from cyber bullying.

The effects of bullying on youth can be traumatic and long-lasting. Victims of bullying can show a range of emotional, behavioural, physical and relationship problems causing them to withdraw socially. In extreme cases, bullying can lead to self-harm and suicide. The impact can be detrimental, and must be taken seriously.

If your child is being bullied at school, you need to connect with the school and work with them to intervene and support the child. All schools have codes of conduct and policies that address bullying and inappropriate behaviour, and there are a number of school and community resources that you and your child may have access to for support.

While bystanders can play a huge role in stopping bullying, most young people who witness bullying do not step in. Unfortunately, **doing nothing is actually doing something** – it's making the situation worse. Students also are encouraged not to be "passive bystanders" and to report any episodes of bullying they see. And having the courage to speak up and help stop bullying is the responsibility of every student, teacher, and parent.

LETTERS



Will Prime Minister Trudeau house refugees?

To The Editor;

The Liberals are looking for private sponsors to take in refugees. I wonder if PM Trudeau and his Cabinet members will each be taking a refugee family

into their homes? Perhaps Kathleen Wynne and her Cabinet members could also take in a few.

We will be watching.

Eileen Hutcheson



DAYS OF OLD: Boaters enjoying Fairy Lake, circa 1915. In the background is the Acton Aquatic Club boathouse, built by the Beardmore Tannery at the turn of the century as part of their Athletic Club, a community improvement project. The boathouse was torn down in 1919 to allow for housing development on Cameron Street. - Photograph courtesy of Halton Region Museum archival photo gallery.

Yield full right of way to pedestrians

This past June, Ontario passed Bill 31 also known as Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act. The purpose of this bill is to help ensure that the province's roads are among the safest in North America.

It's pretty simple really. There are different parts to this bill however, there has been much media focus on certain items. There has been a lot of focus on the consequences of distracted driving both monetary, demerit points and life threatening situations. However, there is one part of Bill 31 that needs more attention drawn to it, especially in this town.

Effective January 01, 2016 Drivers must yield the whole roadway to pedestrians at school crossings and pedestrian crossovers. What does this mean? It's simple as well. You can't drive through a pedestrian crosswalk unless the pedestrian has fully crossed the roadway. Current laws state that pedestrians only have to be clear of the half of the roadway you are driving on before you proceed.

I find in our town especially there is a lack of considera-



By
Angela Tyler

tion for the pedestrian at any of the many crosswalks. This week, an elderly woman was struck by a car at a pedestrian crosswalk. Although I think it is human nature to put blame on the driver, at this time we do not know who is at fault. We can only hope that the woman has a quick recovery and that this horrible situation draws attention to the need for all drivers to take greater heed at pedestrian crosswalks.

I find it so odd that one of the worst crosswalks, in my opinion, for drivers not allowing the pedestrian crossing the full right of way, is in front of the police "station" in town. This crosswalk is downright scary.

Being that it is at an intersection that is not aligned and in front of a busy coffee shop/gas station and within a block of one of Acton's schools it is a scary and sometimes dangerous mix. Thankfully during school

times there is a crossing guard, however, at non-school entry/exit times when there is no crossing guard is when it becomes frightening.

This week while I was stopped waiting for a teen to cross, a car that was in the opposite lane decided that it was time to proceed even though the pedestrian was about an inch into the other half of the roadway. It might not have got my attention as much if the car hadn't accelerated at the rate they had.

After the pedestrian fully crossed and I proceeded I started to think about that other car and how, even though still legal to do so, they drove quickly through the intersection where a controlled traffic light intersection was about 300' away where they could be encountering more pedestrians. Was that ten seconds they gained by going through the crosswalk at that point worth it? Did they really gain that much?

It might not be "law" yet, however, I think in retrospect of Monday's event we all need to take better care at all intersections and show some patience.



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