

EDITORIAL

with Traci Gardner

To stop or not to stop

Now that it is time for kids to be heading back to school, there have been many police reports and Facebook/Twitter updates reminding motorists of the new pedestrian crossing and school crosswalk laws in Ontario.

The new law states that *as of January 1, 2016, drivers - including cyclists - must stop and yield the whole roadway at pedestrian crossovers, school crossings and other locations where there is a crossing guard. These new rules do not apply to pedestrian crosswalks at intersections with stop signs or traffic signals, unless a school crossing guard is present. Only when pedestrians and school crossing guards have crossed and are safely on the sidewalk can drivers and cyclists proceed.*

Based on the amount of questions being asked on social media, people are still not understanding what this means. So, to break it down:

A pedestrian crossover is a crossing where signs, and/or flashing overhead lights alert drivers that a person is crossing and they need to stop. A crosswalk is used at stop signs and traffic lights and will usually have a white lit walking symbol to inform pedestrians to proceed across, or a flashing orange hand to inform pedestrians they should not enter the intersection.

For drivers this means: when approaching a pedestrian crossover in which the overhead lights are flashing you are to stop and yield the right of way to pedestrians, and you must wait until they are completely off the roadway and safely on the sidewalk before proceeding. When at a stop sign or traffic light, you do not have to yield the whole roadway unless there is a crossing guard present, you may proceed through the intersection when the pedestrian is clear of your lane.

The important thing to remember here is, at pedestrian crossovers, you cannot continue until they have stepped off of the road on the other side. How many times have you sat at a crossing and as the person is just clear of your vehicle they happen to lose their shoe mid step and quickly turn back to grab for it, or a child drops their ball and run back to retrieve it? If we wait and yield whole roadway, we are avoiding such mishaps.

It seems some on social media are under the impression that when approaching a crossover that's not lit, if there is no crossing guard, there is no reason to stop for pedestrians. The comments were that, *if you stop in the middle of the road to allow them to cross, you are stopping suddenly and creating an unsafe traffic situation.* Again, the law states pedestrians do have the right of way, as long as they are obeying the signs and are crossing at a legal crossover, crosswalk, or school crossing. Legal crossings can also be established anywhere across roadways by marking them with signage and lines. The signs are clearly visible to drivers, from a distance, therefore, if you are paying attention to your surroundings, there should be no need for "sudden stopping". If you are not noticing the signs and either driving on through while pedestrians are there, or having to come to a sudden stop, maybe it is your driving that needs evaluated.

Our children will be going back to school, we need to know that they will be safe while crossing the streets. So, if you are still confused about whether or not you "legally" have to stop - it's simple, just stop! Take the few seconds and let our children get safely across the street.



HYDRO TEAMWORK: Crews were busy on Tuesday morning at the corner of Hwy 7 and Meadvale Road performing maintenance at the top of the Hydro poles. - Iain Brennan photo

The demise of the Fall Fair parade

In 2010 I was concerned. In a column following our Acton Fall Fair I wrote "Even though I still enjoy our fair and brag about it and truly admire the ongoing effort of all the fall fair committee members, I was starting to worry about it. I am concerned our fall fair is starting to falter. I think there are a lot of things with our fall fair that are changing and in some cases weakening." and continued with "The parade is definitely not grandeur of our Santa Claus parade, however, if you took out the politicians, there wasn't much left to it."

In 2013 my fears continued. Then I wrote "Three years ago I was worried. I had a very strong sense of concern about our Fall Fair. I love and have always loved our fair. It is one of feel good things in my life. Knowing the fair is upcoming is a comfort to me. It meant family, friends and good times. Yet three years ago I worried about the fate of ours."

However, perhaps I was wrong as I said "My biggest worry about the fair that increased every year was the parade. To me, and this is only my opinion, it seemed to be getting worse. It didn't seem very long, it didn't seem well spaced and it was just lacking. The



By
Angela Tyler

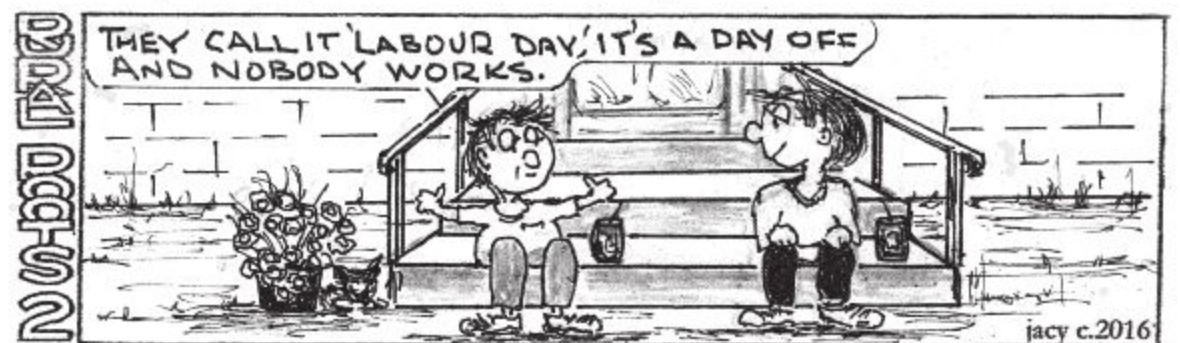
thing it was lacking the most was music. If you want to have a parade, you need to have marching bands and it didn't seem like our parade had much of that in recent years. That was until this year. I'm not sure who was in charge of it this year but boy-o-boy did I notice a difference and it was great. I actually told many people it was the best fall fair parade I had seen in about ten years. We had bands and lots of them. The entrants were well spaced and the politicians were not plentiful which again is only my opinion is a good thing for a parade. Always have the band to politician ratio bigger for the bands and lesser for the politicians."

First, I can't even imagine how hard it is to plan a parade and execute it properly. There are so many things to consider beyond handing out a ribbon for the best float. It takes an immense amount of time, planning, volunteers and money. Bands which are the essential item for a great parade don't march for free. I applaud all

who have done their best and I know the fair board itself must have truly struggled to decide to cancel this year's Acton Fall Fair Parade.

However, I am saddened that with all the effort put into fixing the old drill shed and the band shell at the entrance, pushing the home-crafts, adding a well known band to the entertainment schedule and so many other aspects to push the fair onto the next 100 years that the parade was allowed to spiral downwards into a dark hole and cancelled. How can a parade that was so full of participants from young to old, from school kids to farmers with bands, floats that would literally fill the streets like a piper summoning the towns people to the fair die a slow painful death.

I really thought our parade was being pulled from the quick sand three short years ago. I sincerely felt like it was the re-birth of it. I was ready to see the front gates of the fairgrounds crammed with the hundreds of people who flocked after the parade to pay their entrance for a day of family fun like it used to be not so long ago. I wish I was wrong with my worry. I thought I was three years ago...guess I was wrong.



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