

The stop sign goes up on crossing guard's career



Wayne and Catherine Harrison (sister Katie) are proud to announce the engagement of their son, Ellis Harrison, to Rachelle Lamont daughter of Alex and Janice Lamont (brother Mark).

Our Love and Best Wishes!



Sisters Toria (left) and Mallory Stephens of St. Francis of Assisi elementary school were sad to hear that crossing guard Bill Webb is retiring after two decades of ensuring the safety of pedestrians at the intersection of Duncan & Weber Dr. Photo by Eamonn Maher

Bill Webb has been a crossing guard in town for so long that he's now crossing children of the children (now adults) he helped cross the street safely a generation ago.

Webb, 72, is putting away his stop sign for good on Friday after 20 years on the job—17 of those at the intersection of Duncan and Weber Dr. in front of George Kennedy Public School.

The Georgetown resident took on the crossing guard job shortly after retiring early from Northern Telecom at the urging of his late wife Lois because she didn't want him underfoot.

He started out on Guelph St. near Georgetown High School, but about three years later switched with another crossing guard for his current location so they could both be stationed nearer to their homes.

Webb says he's stayed at the job so long because he's enjoyed it. What he'll miss most about it he says are the kids. There are some children he crosses who he actually now refers to as his grandchildren. They told him one day they didn't have any grandparents, so he volunteered to be their grandpa. They now call him that, and give him a hug when they show up at his intersection.

While he enjoys the interaction with the children and their parents, the weather is sometimes a challenge. "Some of the winter days were brutal, but I had a snowmobile suit," says Webb.

He works a T-intersection where he says "you've got to have eyes on the back and the side of your head." There's a small percentage of drivers who ignore his stop sign and drive

right through the intersection. A few years ago a driver actually brushed against him with her vehicle as he was walking off the road back to the sidewalk. Fortunately he wasn't injured. But Webb says most drivers "have learned over a period of time that we're there for the kids and that's the only people we're there for."

He says he's of two minds about leaving the job. "I wish I could do it longer, but I always look at it and say I'm kind of tied down," says Webb, who mans the crossing mornings and afternoons. He's got some things he would like to do—maybe some traveling. He jokes one of the reasons he's retiring is he has no hope of catching up to the service record (29 years) of Glen Williams crossing guard Angie Lamoureux—Halton Hills's longest serving guard. He quipped to her—either she quits, or he will—and since she declined, he has decided to leave.

George Kennedy School principal Erin Bedard says in recognition of Webb's many years of "keeping our kids safe" the school has purchased a book entitled *Crossing Guard* by Joann Early Macken and dedicated it to him. "The book will be available in our library for all of our students," says Bedard.

At an assembly at the school yesterday, Bedard says they talked about Webb "and the kids will be wishing him well when they see him over the next couple of school days and thanking him for his years of service."

Area resident Jean Tapley says Webb is "an amazing gentleman" who will be missed. "He looks out after everyone who crosses at this intersection and we all love him dearly," she says.

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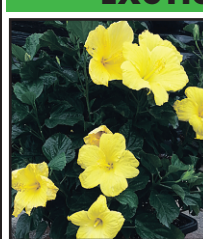
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