

# EDITORIAL

## School's open: obey crossing guards

Tuesday marked the opening of school for most kids in Halton Hills.

While it is a time for parents to breath a sigh of relief, for teachers the headache of educating tomorrow's leaders has just begun.

For all of us it is important that we watch for children around schools and obey crossing guards.

Kids heading back to school will -- for the most part -- be excited about seeing friends and not really paying attention to "rules of the road."

And while we have all been inconvenienced by a crossing guard during our travels, it is vitals that we respect the important task the guards perform.

As sickening as it may be the 23 full-time guards who work the various intersections in our community not only face physical danger but verbal abuse from motorists.

The guards who "frequently subjected to verbal insults from impatient and abusive motorists," Halton Regional Police Sergeant Joe Martin said.

It is abuse the guards do not deserve.

The guards -- almost tirelessly -- stand for several hours both in the morning and afternoon, in all kinds of weather conditions trying to help the young people of Halton Hills get to and from school safely.

Most of us have no problem stopping to let kids cross the street and -- if drivers would take a minute -- it is usually quiet entertaining to watch a group of kids cross a street.

Not only is disobeying crossing guards dangerous, it is also a offense.

Drivers face a \$78.75 fine when they choose to ignore guards.

In fact, according to police, there are some maniacs out on the roads who deliberately take aim at the guards.

It completely offends us to think that some people would actually endanger the lives of not only the guards but their charges -- deliberately.

What kind of person could possibly find any satisfaction from threatening the lives of children or those that watch over them.

Police have pledged full support to the guards and will be making every effort to see that the guards are obeyed.

But the police cannot perform the task without the co-operation of the public.

As Sergeant Martin said, it only takes a few minutes for children to cross the road under the supervision of a crossing guard..."let them cross safely."

As one guard put it drivers "see us standing there but it's like we're not there."

We are all responsible to make the guard feel like they "are there" and that they are being obeyed.

## Cycle helmet law: "idiocy"

The following letter was sent to Halton North MPP Noel Duignan. A copy was sent to Halton Hills This Week for publication.

Dear Sir,

To coin a phrase; my Canada includes freedom of choice, the right to exercise my own common sense, and the freedom to cycle for pleasure, without first being told, under penalty of law, how I must dress for the activity.

The bill currently in Committee proposing mandatory helmet use for cyclists is a major over-reaction to a very minor problem. Head injury is a sad occurrence when it happens, but isolating cycling as a major concern is idiocy!

There are a greater number of child head injuries occurring in grocery store shopping cart than have ever occurred with cyclists. In fact, shopping cart injuries are the nation's leading cause of children's head injuries.

Mandatory helmets will do nothing to prevent cycling accidents, in fact, a helmet will in all likelihood make a young child cyclist fell less vulnerable to injury and result in increased carelessness.

The passing of this law will add yet another burden to already weary parents, who see their children's running shoes, jackets and sports

equipment lost or worse stolen from their school lockers and change rooms. Will the teachers be responsible to see to it that our children are wearing their helmets when they leave school? Will they be held legally negligent and liable if a head injury occurs and they did not ensure that the student was wearing a helmet?

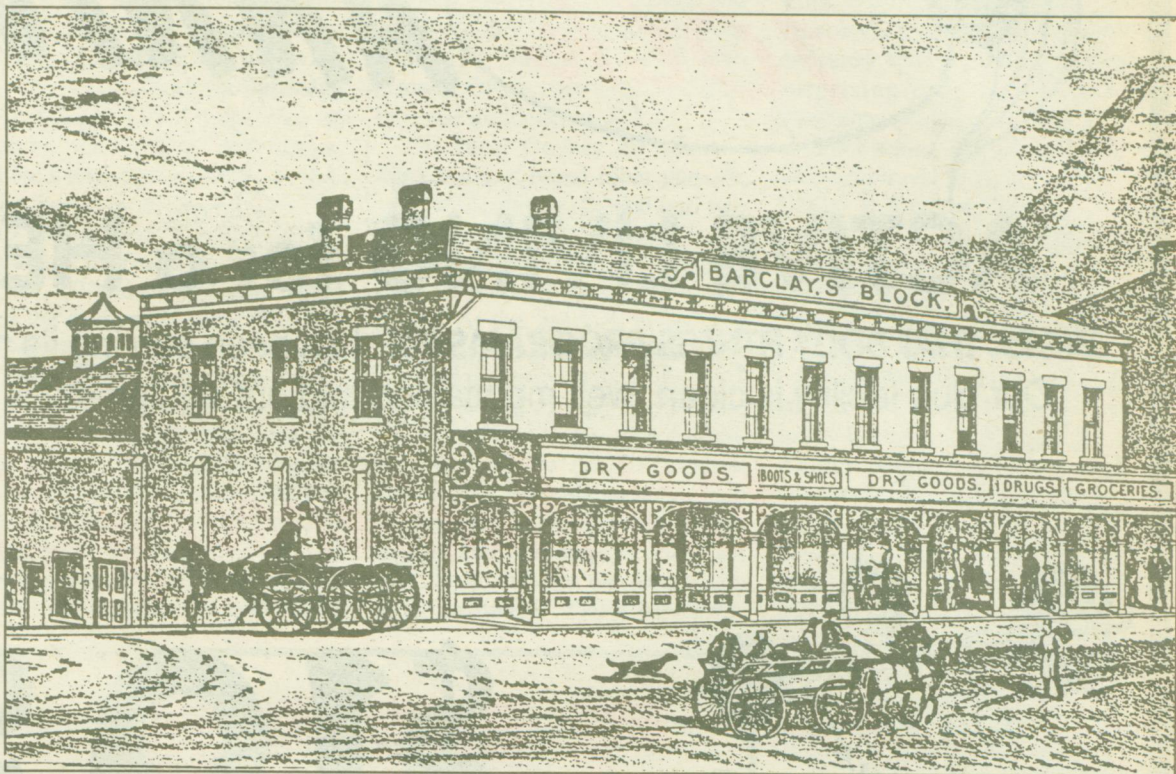
The whole thing is ridiculous and I urge you to abandon the idea and leave the matter to individual choice. Like so many things in this country, if people would exercise common sense and a greater regard for each other, many of our laws would be unnecessary.

I want the freedom to enjoy the one non-polluting mode of transportation left, unencumbered. I want to feel the fresh air and the wind in my hair. Yes there is an element of risk, but using common sense can minimize any real danger.

This bill is unnecessary and indeed, if passed, for the first time in my life, I will exercise civil disobedience and encourage my children to do the same. As my representative in the Legislature I expect you to vote against this bill.

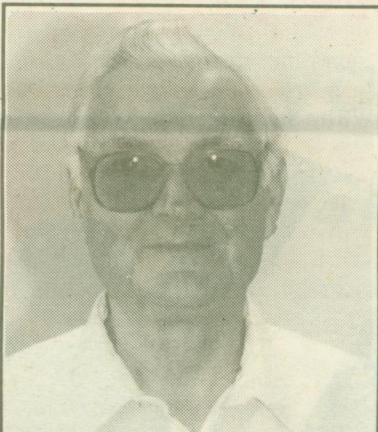
Ken Key  
Georgetown

## That was then...



This drawing of Barclay's Block was taken from the Historical Atlas of Halton and is included in the Esquesing Historical Society's "The Story of Georgetown" book. Francis Barclay (1822-1889) built the store after he decided to venture into the dry goods business in 1848. The drawing is dated 1877. The store was built at the four corners in downtown Georgetown. Photo courtesy of The Esquesing Historical Society

## Have you got a minute?



Wheldon "Steamer" Emmerson  
Advice to persons about to write history -- don't: Lord Acton

I see in the paper I am to speak at the Esquesing Historical Society meeting September 9 at 7:30 p.m. at Knox Presbyterian Church.

Goodness, Lord Acton is probably rolling over in his grave this minute knowing I'm about to disregard his sage advice. I'm not going to write about history, I'm going to talk about it.

So far eleven people have phones to say they have other arrangements and will be unable to attend. Maybe Lord Acton should have said "don't write or talk."

However, it takes a certain amount of gall to accept an invitation to speak on a subject you know nothing or little about. I have attended many lectures, speeches, and talks where the audience -- after a few minutes -- have decided the speaker knew nothing of his topic.

With me on the platform a smart audience will know right away. One night I asked if they could hear me at the back and a instant humorist said: "Yes, unfortunately."

Some wag once wrote "the fine art of oratory is making deep sounds from the chest seem like important messages from the brain."

If you happen to come and you

## Getting ready for history, "hrumph"

hear me going "hrumph, hrumph," you will know I am in desperate need of an important message.

During the course of my talk, when any "hrumphing" starts, I hope you will be kind enough to give me a moment or two -- or even an hour -- to receive this important message.

By George, I can hardly wait for the ninth to roll around. For years I've longed for the day when I would be free to address an audience unencumbered.

Karen Hunter, President of the Esquesing Historical Society has kindly given me that opportunity to stand up and talk about old Georgetown.

My wife is in a dither. There is

the old saying "it's not what you read in the hometown paper that makes life so interesting, it's what you hear." She knows I've heard a lot. Well, I've decided to let her dither and I'm going to talk.

Who knows, maybe the sheriff will serve me with a "bound and gag" order.

Rebecca West wrote, "It's a great pity that every human being does not, at an early stage of his life, have to write a historical work. He would then realize that the human race is in quite a jam about the truth."

I'm going to do my best on the ninth to give the true facts, but I'm not going to let them interfere with a good story.

If I happen to think of one.

## Letters Welcomed

Halton Hills This Week welcomes your letters. Letters must be signed and include your full name and address. Names will be withheld on request.

Halton Hills This Week reserves the right to edit, revise, or reject any letters on the basis of factual errors, punctuation, spelling errors

or as a result of space limitations.

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