

Editorial

Where there's smoke, is there fire?

"Within two weeks of my being elected, (local) landowners wanted to take me to lunch. They said they'd take care of my re-election expenses if I'd go along with their development plans."

Those comments appeared in a column in last Saturday's Toronto Star. They didn't come from a member of Toronto City Council but were attributed to Halton Hills Councillor Bill Robson.

While we cannot truthfully say that we were surprised by Robson's statements, we cannot help but wonder why they weren't made public, first and foremost, in a Halton Hills forum rather than in a Toronto newspaper. Admittedly, allegations of bribery aren't very tasteful, but isn't it better to air them in your own back yard rather than in one of Canada's national newspapers?

We don't expect town councillors to jump up at council meetings and start naming names, but if any of them have been approached by developers, landowners, businesspeople, or even dogcatchers, with offers which attempt to compromise their ability to cast a free and independent vote on council matters, we feel the citizens of Halton Hills have a right to know. They have a right to know when it happens, not a year-and-a-half later.

A public announcement, early on, might also have another beneficial result. Developers who made the offers would back off, fearing their identities could be revealed.

Most people in Halton Hills know that a governmental affairs unit, called Project 80 and composed of Metro officers, OPP and York Regional Police, are currently investigating allegations of corruption involving elected and non-elected officials in Halton Region. The investigation has been going on for well over a year but still no charges have been laid.

A similar probe into York Region officials took about two years to complete and resulted in 128 charges of municipal corruption against two city of York aldermen, a Metro councillor and four businessmen.

It's a sad state of affairs when elected representatives of the people are confronted by those who offer bribes. It's even sadder to learn that some of these bribes aren't rejected.

We're not saying that Halton Hills is rife with political corruption. We are merely pointing out that small communities aren't immune from the types of offers that have been made to Councillor Robson.

Robson has already publicly confirmed the accuracy of his quoted comments in The Star. He has also reported the incidents to "investigative authorities."

If he has been approached by landowners or developers offering bribes, what about other members of town council? Have they been approached, as well?

The Town of Halton Hills has no policy on accepting gifts from people with whom the town does business. Not surprisingly, it was Councillor Robson, who just before this past Christmas, rose from his seat at council and suggested that the town should have such a policy. Town staff was directed to look into the matter and report back.

We feel such a policy is long overdue. It should be clearly defined that gifts to town staff, members of town council or the mayor aren't acceptable when they could be viewed as a bribe or a favor which deserves a favor in return.

There is simply no room for latitude on this important issue. If we have dirty linen, let's air it, let's clean house and let's get the message out there that our elected town officials won't be bought, they cannot be bought and anyone who tries to buy them will be placed behind bars where they belong. Let's make the price of bribery so high that it won't even be considered.



Wintery water

A picturesque section of Silver Creek winds its way through a snow-covered wooded area east of the Eighth Line (Main Street) and north of 10 Sideroad. Photo by Dianne Cornish

Proper attire is essential for outdoor winter trekking

by David Featherstone

Last weekend, the 5th Milton Cub Pack embarked on a winter camp. Weather conditions were frigid. Temperatures remained below -10° C throughout the weekend. Winds out of the north added a significant wind chill hazard. Still, none of our Cubs suffered from the effects of this severe winter weather.

Granted, the Cubs slept in heated cabins and ate in a heated dining area. However, most of the days' activities centered around outdoor pursuits such as hiking, tobogganing and skating. I believe that clothing preparations made before the camp ensured that the boys were able to participate in outdoor activities, regardless of weather conditions.

Winter clothing must achieve three things to ensure comfort in cold weather. Ventilation, insulation and wind protection are vital to retaining body warmth.

Clothing should be loose fitting, not binding. Air layers assist in insulation and also create ventilation space which permits perspiration to evaporate. Tight clothing, on the other hand, restricts movement and, even worse, retains perspiration. Remember, the insulative properties of most materials, with

the exception of wool, are lost when damp.

Dress in layers to enhance body insulation. A number of thinner layers allows great flexibility in temperature control. Clothing layers can be shed during exertion to avoid excess perspiration. Additional layers can be added during periods of low activity or as temperatures fall. While hiking, parkas and vests can be unzipped to achieve the same effect.

The outer shell of clothing is essential as it provides protection from the elements. A three-quarter length winter parka combined with snowpants, or nylon wind pants, provides protection from the wind and cold. The outer layer generally provides some degree of water repellency, depending on the quality of the garments.

The protection of our body extremities is critical to winter safety and comfort. A great deal of body heat loss occurs through the head. Warm hands and feet are essential for dexterity, mobility and general comfort.

A wool toque, covered by an insulated parka hood, is the most appropriate headwear to prevent heat loss. Balaclavas, which provide facial protection, are an excellent item during bitter cold and/or

windy conditions.

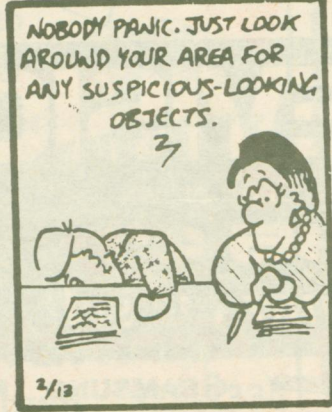
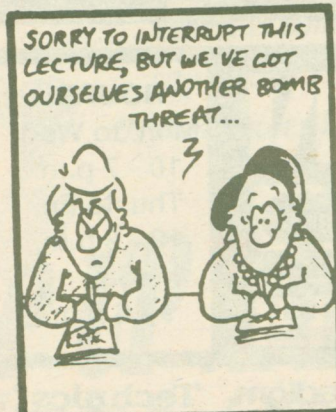
Hands should be protected by mitts, not gloves. Gloves do not provide adequate insulation. In some cases, they may even promote heat loss. Mitts with an insulated inner layer and windproof, water repellent outer layer are best for all around usage.

Feet present two problems in cold weather; they produce perspiration, yet they require excellent insulation to provide warmth. Two pairs of socks should be worn. An inner pair of cotton or wool socks assists in wicking moisture away from the foot. A heavy outer pair of wool socks provides the insulation needed to retain warmth.

Boots should permit the foot to breathe, to rid the foot of excess moisture. They must also provide waterproof protection. Snowmobile boots or sorrel-type boots are great for winter outings. Pant legs should be tucked inside the boots to prevent entry of snow. Devices known as gaiters are great for sealing pant cuffs and boot tops.

Remember, a large part of being warm during the winter months is simply a matter of being dry. Exchange wet garments for dry items at the earliest opportunity. Stay warm and enjoy the rest of the winter!

For Pete's Sake



by Roe

Halton Hills THIS WEEK

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