

# Editorial

## Make the sidewalks safe!

Ah yes, the temperate climes are with us once again. Time to get the dog a haircut - or a mate - time to seriously sit and watch the grass grow on lazy, hazy weekends and also time to renew your insurance coverage if you dare to venture out on the sidewalks of Halton Hills.

It used to be, you could wander aimlessly with either your mate or your brood on the sidewalks and walkways of Halton Hills - but that is no longer the case.

Now, even pedestrians would be well-advised to wear crash helmets.

The problem seems to centre on the fact that our boys in blue seem extremely hesitant to either lay charges under the Highway Traffic Act or enforce a local by-law. Also, we might add, an apparently lackadaisical attitude on the part of residents of Halton Hills who seem willing to bequeath the sidewalks to the maniacal bike riders, skateboarders, roller bladers and occasional fruit loop who glides by on skis (poles flying) equipped with homemade wheels trying to emulate North Bay's Kate Pace - sometimes in drag.

The unwritten law seems to be: "Pedestrians beware - or be dead."

When you consider the number of collisions - and near collisions - which occur daily between pedestrians and cyclists etc. it seems ridiculous that the town by-law which states "No person shall drive a motor vehicle or bicycle along any sidewalk or boulevard except at a driveway," is not enforced. The fine alone, \$55, should act as some kind of a deterrent, but how often are charges laid?

Under the Highway Traffic Act, the definition of a vehicle includes "bicycles and any vehicle drawn, propelled or driven by any kind of power, including muscular." This definition would obviously encompass skateboards, roller blades etc., so police have two venues to use in laying a charge.

Our local police appear to have no interest in what's happening on our sidewalks and we wonder why!

If the same cyclist, skateboarder etc. who so dangerously careens around on the sidewalks causing collisions, were to physically lift their mode of transportation and hit someone with it, would not this be assault, or involve some sort of liable negligence?

We also see the above-mentioned no-brains bouncing on and off roadways, leaping curbs and dashing in and out of traffic, but again, it seems the cops pay them no heed.

This is where updated training comes in.

A Halton Region police officer we talked to, was under the misconception a cyclist couldn't be stopped and asked to identify himself/herself.

This is the way it used to be, however, amendments have been made to the Highway Traffic Act and police should be aware of the changes.

Section 218 Subsection (1) of the act states "A police officer who finds any person contravening the act (HTA) or a municipal bylaw regulating traffic, while in charge of a bicycle, may require that person to stop and provide identification."

Subsection (2) states the identification can be verbal and subsection (4) allows the officer to arrest the person, without warrant should identification not be provided.

This is not nit-picking, it's a serious problem.

When a senior citizen or youngster gets bulldozed over and possibly critically injured it will be too late to ask, "What could have been done?"

Conscientious bike riders and those youngsters who use skateboards and roller blades in a responsible manner should have no fear.

Neither should police officers when the laying of charges are warranted.

Colin Gibson

## Halton Hills THIS WEEK

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## The People's Corner

### NELC values are challenged

#### To the Editor:

In your last issue you published a letter to the editor by Lois McClure in which she said that the "Niagara Escarpment Landowners Coalition" is best suited to safeguard the natural condition of the Niagara Escarpment.

This is not so!

The Landowners Coalition is an assembly of property owners on the

Niagara Escarpment - including some who maintain their holdings for purely speculative purposes - who want to get away from the controls by the provincial Niagara Escarpment Commission. Only a fool or a hopelessly naive person believes that the Escarpment is better protected by an organization such as this, than by an agency that has the support of all three political parties.

Since Mrs. McClure is neither, she must have other sentiments. It should be remembered that the McClures want to utilize their Escarpment land to build a subdivision, something that has about the

same appeal for the neighborhood as a garbage dump. Mrs. McClure must know this, yet for years she and her husband told everybody how a housing development in the middle of the Escarpment would enhance the surroundings.

This is the conception of the Landowners Coalition too. With its help, Mrs. McClure may yet get her subdivision, but at least she should spare us her tale that the aim of the organization of which she is such a prominent member is the protection of the natural features of the Escarpment.

Charles Hildebrandt  
Georgetown

### NDP largess

#### To the Editor:

The NDP Government of Ontario seems now prepared to acknowledge the extent of the North American recession and apply to the public sector the same measures of restraint that most private companies took, years ago. However, the public servants being laid off will have more than one consolation:

1. Their positions, if they still existed, would guarantee the worker a salary which is determined by a government board to be "equal in value" according to a whole scale of parameters and according to a government tribunal.

2. A black, a member of a religious minority or perhaps a homosexual hired for that position, if it still existed, would have a better opportunity than a simple Canadian, and would enjoy all of the benefits laid out by the new labor relations legislation.

3. His union had the opportunity to participate in the discussions to terminate his job.

After all, why to be angry? Are not these the benefits of liberalism? Dare I say socialism?

Giuseppe Gori  
Family Coalition Party of  
Ontario  
Georgetown

### Beware of communists

#### To the Editor

The former U.S.S.R., has broken up and is very unstable at present, but there is nothing to say the communists could not regain control.

Russia is exporting military equipment to various Asiatic countries including China. Russia is still building nuclear submarines, although at a slower pace than before, and have by far the strongest nuclear sub fleet in the world.

The west, including Canada is owed billions of dollars for grain and other trade items. Instead of just giving them more grain I suggest that one condition of further aid should be their ceasing to produce military goods and secondly we take in payment for our debts and grain some of their very latest equipment. One or two nuclear subs and a fleet of helicopters.

Their products may not be quite as good as our military would like, but taking a few teeth out of a potential enemy surely couldn't do us any harm. At least getting something for our grain should be better than an uncollectable I.O.U.

Rod Pinkney  
Georgetown

### CVCA slams funding cuts imposed by NDP government

The Credit Valley Conservation Authority is facing a 20% (about \$275,000) cut in funding for 1993 from the provincial government after Fridays announcement of province-wide cuts to reduce the deficit.

"We are not looking for public sympathy at a time when people are losing jobs and expecting governments to cut back," says CVCA General Manager Vicki Barron. What we are saying however, is that we could keep environmental programs running more effectively and efficiently if the provincial government would get its act together and cut the wasted duplication of services.

"We estimate that in our watershed alone, provincial ministries including the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and

Agriculture and Food are wasting between \$3 and \$4 million in duplicated services that Conservation Authorities already provide," says Barron. "The cost province-wide could top \$100 million.

"Our strength is that we are a watershed-based agency able to act on a local watershed basis to deliver our services swiftly and in a cost-effective manner. Slashing budgets without looking at the big picture does nothing but put our local environment in jeopardy and perpetuate an inefficient system

"I am very frustrated that the provincial government is asking the people of the Credit Watershed to sacrifice the future of their environment because of the governments inability to deal with the duplication of services issue," says Barron.

### OFA furious over budget cuts

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) says the Ontario government is tearing the heart out of the future of Ontario agriculture as a result of announced budget cuts.

"The government has performed open heart surgery on an industry that is just recovering from 10 years of trauma, an industry that is trying to rebuild itself for the future," said OFA President Roger George.

Budget cuts within the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF) include the closing of two agricultural colleges, Centralia and New Liskeard, as well as \$1.6 million hacked out of the Farm Start program. "The OFA sees this as an attack on research, education and the establishment of future generations of farmers," said George.

In addition, the Farm Tax Rebate has been frozen at the 1992 level of \$159 million. "If the government is going to freeze the legitimate refund of farmers' own money, then it should also freeze municipal and education taxes," George insisted.

Another direct budget hit was the much heralded five-year \$120 million Farm Investment Strategy which has now dropped to a \$46 million program. "This was supposed to be the centre piece of

NDP agricultural policy," said George, "but it now reflects this government's rear view vision of the future."

At a time when farmers are looking at expanding world markets, the government states that in accordance with a new approach to international activities, Ontario's international offices will be closed. Mr. George said "seeking global opportunities from behind a desk in Toronto is as bizarre as fighting a fire with a watering can. We ask for tools and government's given us a flint axe head."

Even the environment took a hit through the land stewardship program which has been cut by \$5.5 million. "At a time when farmers have led all industrial sectors in a proactive response to the environment, the government's answer to our efforts is to reduce the incentive for environmental responsibility, and threaten farmers with an environmental bill of rights," said George.

"The final irony is that while 181 OMAF public service jobs will be phased out, OMAF senior bureaucracy has gone from two to five assistant deputy ministers," said George. "Clearly farmers and senior bureaucrats are not donating blood on an equal basis."