

# School bus debate is not finished yet

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK  
The Acton Tanner

An Acton mother's four-year crusade to get free school bus service for young students was revived with the beginning of classes last week.

Bev Bailie, whose youngest daughter begins Junior Kindergarten on Friday, is concerned that children, some only 3-years-old, are not eligible for bussing, unless they live more than one kilometre from their school.

"Ninety per cent of the route from Cobblehill Road to Robert Little school is on a very busy, major highway," Bailie explained in an interview last Wednesday.

"Not all families have two cars or can afford that \$5 a week it would cost to ride the pay-bus (operated by Tyler Transport).

"Why should they when there are buses with empty seats going by the door?"

Bailie's dispute also involves the Board of Education's insistence that her home is .93 kilometres from Robert Little, not quite one kilometre.

"It's so close. It's spitting distance and when the principal and vice-principal of Robert Little drove the route it was one kilometre," Bailie said.

The Board's Manager of Transportation, Reg Witoszkin, said he

can sympathize with Bailie and other parents worried about how far their children must walk to school, but said "the line has to be drawn somewhere."

Witoszkin noted that the Board has just reduced the eligibility distance for Kindergarten and Junior Kindergarten students to one kilometre from 1.6 kilometres and the distance for Grades 3 through 5 to 1.6 kilometres from 3.2.

Witoszkin also said that there may be room for ineligible children, like Bailie's daughter, to ride for free under the Board's empty seat procedure.

"We will review the situation and see what the numbers are during the next couple of weeks," Witoszkin said.

As for Bailie's contention that she lives more than one kilometre from the school, Witoszkin said that their computer shows that property line to property line, the distance is .93 kilometres.

Bailie, frustrated that no one could tell her where the property line of the school was, recently asked for Milton Trustee Tim Kingsbury's help.

Kingsbury, who has equipped his car with a traffic wheel counter because of previous distance disputes, said he would measure the distance from Bailie's home to Robert Little and report back.



NOWHERE TO GO! The Bailies, from left, Emma, 3; Benjamin, 8; and Holly, 6, are not eligible to get bussing to Robert Little, because their Cobblehill Road house is less than one kilometre from the school. The Halton Board of Education says the distance is .93 km. (Doug Harrison photo)

## Bring along food donations Sat.

As you're making plans to see the annual Fall Fair parade this Saturday, please remember Acton FoodShare.

FoodShare will once again have a float in the parade, which begins at 12 noon, and the local food bank is asking spectators to bring food to donate.

Volunteers will walk the parade route with carts to accept any canned or boxed foods you can give.

With Thanksgiving around

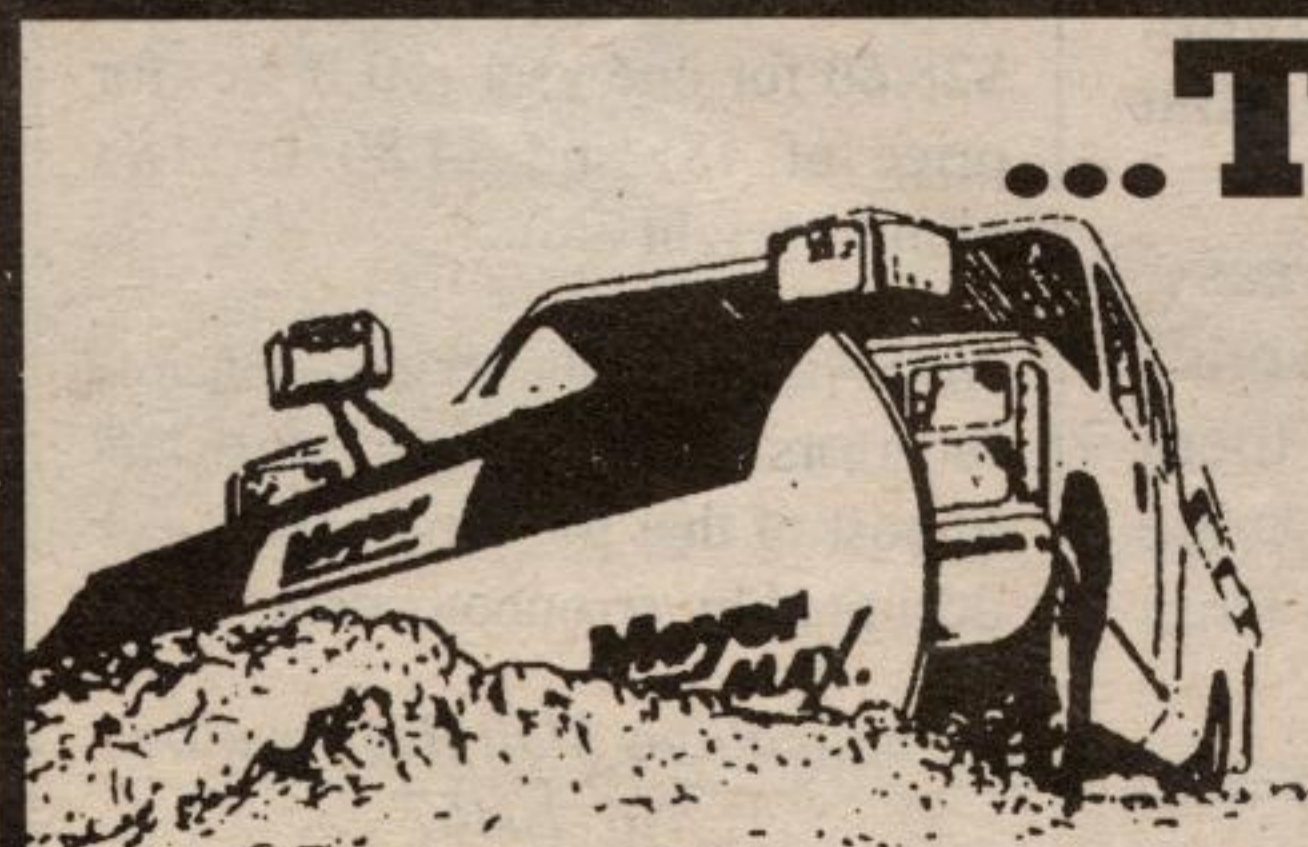
the corner, if you can contribute in any way, FoodShare would greatly appreciate it.

"Parade donations always help our shelves a lot at this time of year," said Food-Share Coordinator Pat Hatch yesterday (Tuesday).

Meanwhile, Hatch reported that the Perth Street food bank is "really trying to restrict ourselves to the people who need us most, especially families within the Acton area."

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\* DAILY DEMONSTRATIONS

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