

OPINION

A bird in the hand...

When a member of an endangered species is hit by a car at the end of your driveway, what do you do?

A wild turkey vulture was laying in the middle of the road in front of our house on the Fifth Line recently. I thought it was dead but it raised its head and I knew I'd have to move it soon.

I put the bird on my front lawn and it appeared the only thing wrong with it was that it was in shock. No broken wings, neck or legs. So what next? When a wild and potentially dangerous animal is injured and on your front lawn, who do you call?

My mother suggested I call our vet clinic for some ideas: they said, "Call Mountsberg." I learned that Mountsberg has been rearing and releasing these birds into the wild for some time now.

They said of course they would take the bird, but someone would need to bring it to them. They stressed not to touch the bird as it could easily hurt someone with its large, sharp beak. They said to call our local animal control or Humane Society for pick-up.

So from 11:30 am, when I found the bird, until 4 pm, I played phone tag. First I called the Acton vet clinic, who told me to call the Rockwood vet clinic and speak to the woman who works with wild animals. Unfortunately, she only works on "the cats end of things."

They suggested that I try the Oakville or Erin Humane Societies, or the Kortright Centre in Guelph. Going down the list, Oakville was too far away to retrieve a bird in Acton; Erin had an answering machine with a promise to return my call after 6 pm which might be too late to save this wild bird. I left a message anyway.

Next I called the Kortright Centre, who told me I was on my own. So much for taxes! What are we paying for?

Out of desperation for this poor bird, I called Animal Control in Hillsburgh/Erin. Their response: "Sorry, there is no wild animal or dangerous animal retrieval program in place here."

Something is wrong with this picture. No one in Acton, Hillsburgh, Erin, Oakville or Guelph can help me as I try to save this bird? This is ridiculous! What if a wild animal came into your backyard and your well-being was jeopardized? Police, the Town, no one is responsible. But someone is to blame and must provide an answer, because as long as there are wild animals in our area, there will be injuries, invasions and encounters with citizens.

★★★

— Jennifer Flesch

The tragic death of John Wilson early Saturday evening is the fourth death of a local community member as a result of a traffic accident in the past six months. And it further underscores the need for all drivers to take extra care out there!

Number 1: Slow down! How important is it to arrive at your destination five or ten minutes earlier? These hilly, winding roads around Acton can be treacherous in the winter — give yourself plenty of time to arrive safely.

Number 2: Check your vehicle. A well maintained vehicle is less likely to break down on you, especially in dangerous settings such as highways, intersections, train crossings and so on.

Number 3: Do *not* drive while impaired! It's illegal, it puts other unsuspecting drivers at risk, and it's unnecessary.

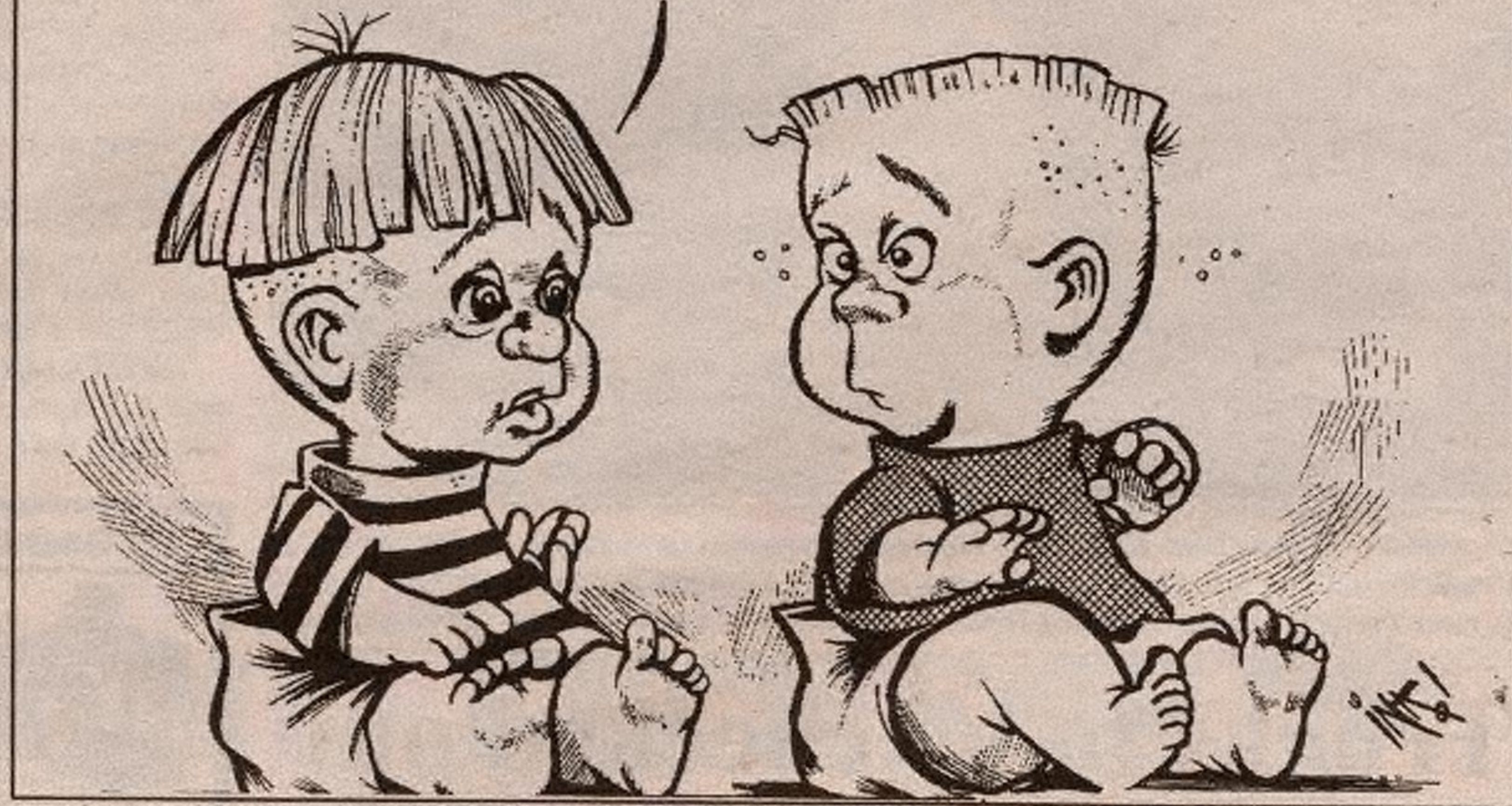
We now have four families around town who are struggling without their fathers, their husbands, their friends, colleagues, partners. Our heartfelt sympathies go out to the Wilsons, the Dicks, the Budgells and the Van der Geers.

Same time last year ...

Former Acton teacher Ethel Gardiner easily wins the Ward 1 and 2 school board trustee seat ... Pearl Court resident Kent Freeland appeals to Town Council to solve traffic and loitering problems caused by Acton High student smokers ... MSB student Darren Banks finishes first at the All-Halton cross country finals.



....and then I asked my Dad if all Fairy Tales begin with "Once upon a time...", and he says, no Son, most Fairy Tales begin with "When I'm elected Prime Minister....".



Your LETTERS

Keep promises

Editor's note: The following open letter to Halton North MPP Ted Chudleigh from the North Halton Association for the Developmentally Handicapped was filed with The Tanner for publication.

To the Editor,

At our Annual General Members meeting on Sept. 30, the membership of our Association unanimously passed the following motion:

Whereas most developmentally handicapped adults' incomes are from provincial GAINS allowances;

And whereas the Province of Ontario is responsible for providing basic medical and dental services and prescription drugs for such persons;

And whereas the Ontario government has publicly made a commitment not to reduce benefits to the disabled in carrying out its objective of reducing public expenditures;

Gag law 'stifles' political debate

To the Editor,

Canada's federal gag law died recently, not with a bang but with a whimper.

The whimpering came from those federal politicians who opted to use this obnoxious law to stifle debate at election time.

Your readers may recall that the gag law threatened imprisonment to any independent citizen or group who spent more than \$1,000 during federal elections to express a political belief.

Challenged by supporters of The National Citizens' Coalition, who saw the law as an infringement of free speech, the gag law was dealt a

And whereas the government has violated its commitment to the disabled by requiring the disabled to pay a portion of their prescription fees from their current basic GAINS allowances;

And whereas this severely undermines the quality of life of those with disabilities who need regular prescription drugs;

Therefore, be it resolved that the North Halton Association for the Developmentally Handicapped (NHADH) demand that the Ontario government, including the Ministers of Community and Social Services and Health, honour its promise to the disabled by restoring full payment for prescription fees incurred by the disabled.

We believe that you, as our provincial member, should be advocating for the best interests of the most disadvantaged person in society. We therefore request that you bring this concern to the attention of the caucus and government, and advocate the full restoration of benefits for such persons as was promised by your government.

We look forward to hearing what steps you have taken to address this most serious issue.

Bob McTavish
President, NHADH

mortal blow when an Alberta court ruled it unconstitutional earlier this summer.

Its official death, however, came only after the federal government, probably realizing that this was one fight they could not win, opted not to launch a Supreme Court appeal.

So the gag law is dead. Good riddance.

Unfortunately, it may not stay dead. The Liberals say they are cobbling together a new gag law to replace the old.

Some people, it seems, never learn.

The courts realize it's wrong to suppress free speech; why don't our politicians?

David Somerville, President
National Citizens' Coalition

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