

# On the road to safety

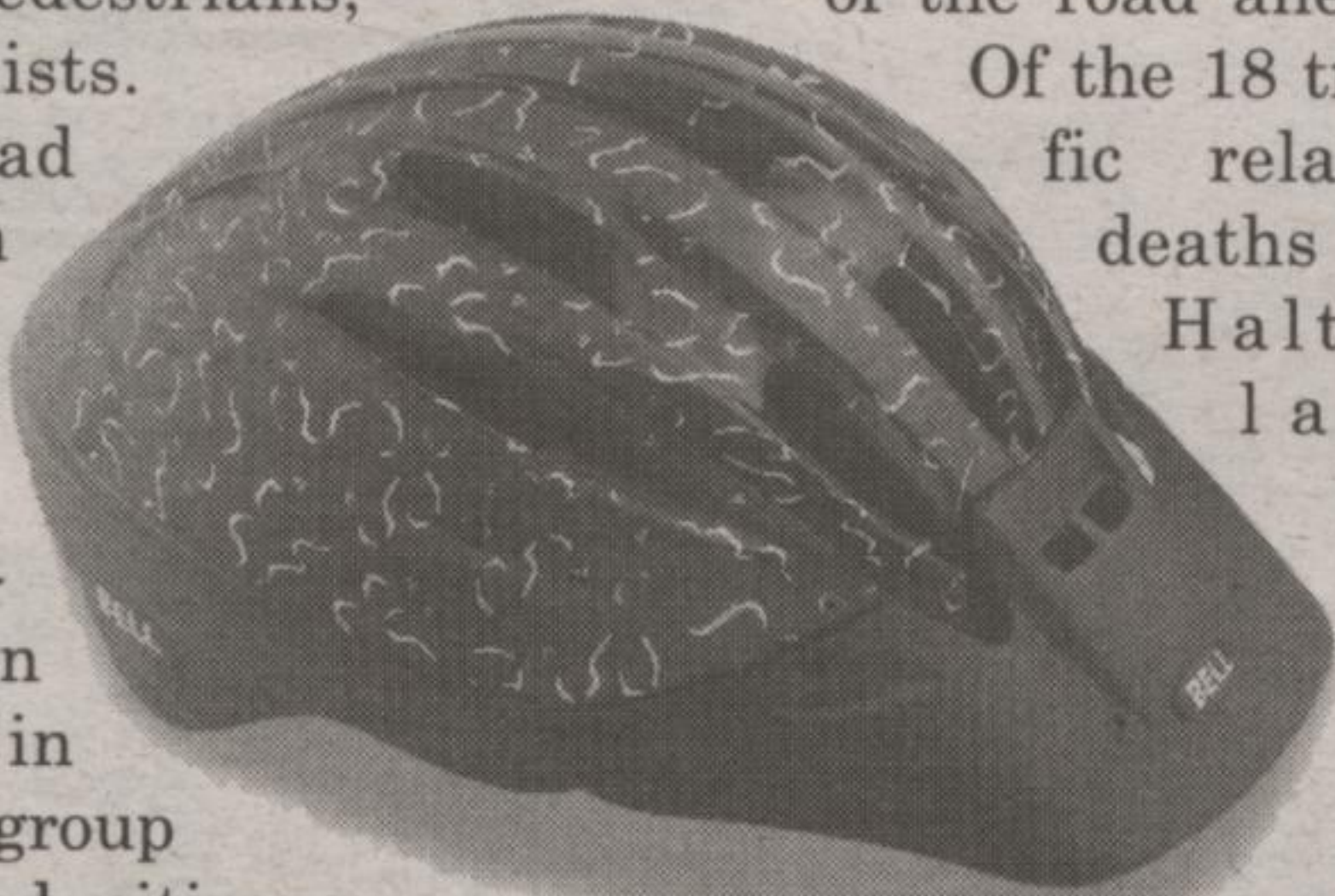
## Does your kid have hundred dollar feet and a ten dollar head?

by Donna Danielli

The Towns of Milton and Halton Hills are joining forces this summer to promote "Road Watch," a community driven program that uses awareness, education, and enforcement to make roads safer for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists. The Road Watch Program was created and established in Caledon in 1995 by a group of concerned citizens, following the tragic deaths of eight teenagers in a horrific car accident. Since then, 28 communities across Ontario have established their own Road Watch Programs, with an additional 25 communities preparing to launch their own programs.

Milton stands out as having the highest increase in traffic collisions in Halton for the year 2000, with a rate of 18.5 per cent. The rural area especially recorded huge increases in traffic collisions in 2000 with Nassagaweya collisions occurring at a 35 per cent increase over the previous year. Speeding has become a deadly issue on roads that weren't built for the volume of traffic and speeds they encounter today. Two-thirds of Nassagaweya's collisions weren't due to standard vehicles or poor roads - driver error is to blame. More and more drivers are ignoring speed limits, refusing to

buckle up or in some cases, even failing to come to a halt at stop signs. Drivers unfamiliar with rural roads are high contributors to the problem, failing to slow down on rural roads with dips, knolls and bends that do not provide a clear view of the road ahead.



Of the 18 traffic related deaths in Halton last year, nine occurred on Milton roads.

"Something has to be done about Milton's increasing collision record," says Jan Mowbray, Chair of Milton's Road Watch Program. "It's frustrating to see people driving with less responsibility, with little regard for the safety of themselves and others. We have to change attitudes and make people realize that driving is a privilege that should not be abused."

Milton and Halton Hills Road Watch committees have and will continue to engage in a number of initiatives and events to build awareness for road safety. Using a Citizens' Report Form, residents are encouraged to confidentially report dangerous and aggressive drivers to the police. If the same license plate owner receives three notices from the police referenced from confidential Citizen's Reports, criminal charges may be considered.

Road Safety Challenge Week took place from May 5th to May 13 and included a Truck Safety Fair at both

E.C. Drury High School and Bishop Reding High School. Anticipating the increased truck traffic that Milton roads will see, the Truck Safety Fairs gave students the opportunity to sit in the cab of a truck and see for themselves the many blind spots in the driver's range of view. If you can't see a truck driver's eyes in his rear view mirror from the position your car is in, then you must be aware that he cannot see you or your vehicle at all. Other safety factors of which the students were made aware were truck turning and stopping. A truck making a right hand turn requires two lanes' space to make the turn and a fully loaded truck requires 450 feet of road before it can come to a full stop. Students were reminded again that as drivers they have a responsibility to watch for truck turn signals and to avoid cutting a truck off in traffic.

Road safety isn't simply an issue for those with driver's Licenses. Two Child Safety Seat Clinics and two RIDE lanes also took place, revealing an appalling lack or misuse of restraints. Children are not small adults, and seat belts designed to protect an adult body will not protect a child. Children require special restraint systems to ensure that crash forces are distributed to the strongest skeletal parts and are tolerable. Parents are encouraged to phone their local Health Department or nearest Co-Operators Insurance office for information about child safety seat clinics. Support for these clinics in the Milton area came from the Co-operators, EvenFlo, Daimler Chrysler Canada, Milton Chrysler Dodge, the Milton Fire Department,



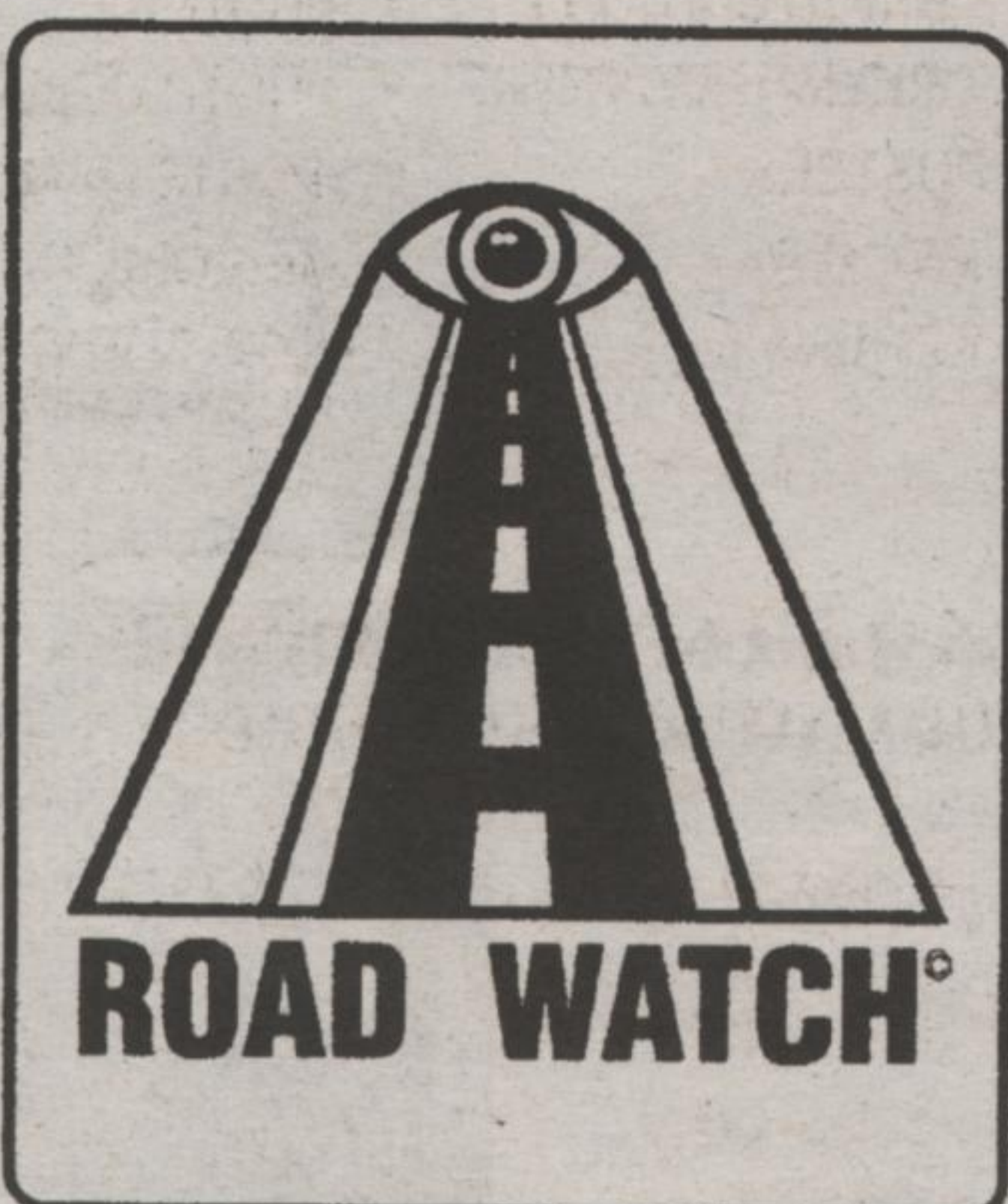
and Halton Police, which was gratefully appreciated by the Milton Road Safety Committee.

Young cyclists are also encouraged to learn and practice road safety.

"Does your kid have hundred dollar feet, and a ten dollar head?" asks one safety poster. The importance of bicycle safety and proper equipment was stressed to many young students at Bike Rodeos held by Spokes 'N' Slopes at Brookville and Hitherfield Schools. Parents are encouraged to prioritize proper fitting safety helmets over costly designer clothes. A helmet cannot protect what it does not cover. Helmets should be worn low in the front to protect the forehead and should fit snugly. Inspect helmets regularly for signs of wear and damage. Most importantly, riders must wear a helmet designed for what they're

doing every time they ride. All area cyclists are invited to visit Spokes 'N' Slopes at 89 Ontario Street North in Milton for a proper helmet fit at no charge. You can find out more about the free helmet fitting by calling Spokes 'N' Slopes at 905-876-7676.

Awareness, education and enforcement are the three driving forces behind the Road Watch Program. Milton and Halton Hills Road Watch Committees are hoping residents and visitors will embrace the program, resulting in a decrease in traffic accidents and fatalities. For more information on the Road Watch Program, please contact Jan Mowbray at 519-853-4492.



### Sponsors and Supporters of the Truck Safety Fair

Many thanks to Integrated Training Resources, Gordon Food Services, TDL Group, J D Smith and Sons Ltd, Con-way Canada Express, Peter Hodge Transport Ltd, Associate Carriers Inc, Fifth Wheel Truck Stops, Dufferin Aggregates, Transportation Services, The TransX Academy, Bishop Reding Secondary School, E C Drury School for the Deaf, OPP, Halton Police



Services, MADD, COPPs, Public Health, Peel Hearing Society, Active Transport, Harrow Truck Lines, Dakota Logistics Inc, Challenger Motor Freight, Milton Hydro, Ontario Trucking Association Road Knights, and, of course, 3M and the MTO, without whom Challenge Week would not be possible.

**Put the brake on collisions!**