

# THE HALTON HILLS WEEKEND

**KEN NUGENT**  
Publisher

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## NEWS ITEM: Ontario considers returning religion to the classroom...



## Too high a price

It's the holiday weekend, the unofficial start to summer, but after filling the gas tank, there's not much cash left for hot dogs on the barbie.

The high price of gasoline, a reported 17 per cent hike since January, is leaving many wallets empty this spring.

On Tuesday, the federal government announced they will launch an inquiry into the high prices, seeking to find whether the giant oil companies are fixing prices.

But we see this inquiry simply as another waste of taxpayers' dollars. Already 27 cents of every dollar spent at the gas pumps goes to taxes. Perhaps we may be cynical about politicians these days, but whatever the inquiry finds, no government is going to order lower gas prices, if it means tax money out of their pockets.

Gas, for some, is as necessary as groceries. We can only suggest that readers take a hard look at their driving lifestyles and look for ways to cut costs .... do you need to drive the kids to school, can you take the GO bus or train one or two days a week, do you need to take a weekend drive, can you walk to the corner store or to the movies...?

Environment Canada stats say that owning and operating a car costs \$7,000 a year. That's almost \$600 a month. Keeping some of that cash for yourself is better than giving it to the oil companies and the government.... we give them enough already.

## It's back and I'm pleased as punch

Every spring I become a tad preoccupied.

(Now, some people close to me might say that's an everyday occurrence.)

But I get REALLY preoccupied this time of the year.

Why?

Simple — baseball's back.

And I'm pleased as punch.

Yup, the kitchen hall of our house is again littered with sports bags chock full of catcher's equipment, gloves, spikes, balls, and all the paraphernalia that accompanies the game.

And the appearance of that equipment has come to be the Brown family's sure fire sign that spring is actually here (in spite of the crappy weather) and that summer can't be far behind.

Yup, as my wife trips over the gear, she has, on occasion, regretted that day so many years ago, when she signed up our girls to minor ball; an action which led to my developing an over-enthusiastic (often referred to as 'obsessive') attitude about the game.

But it's my thing, the one time of the year when the pressures of work and the stress and fatigue of being accountable to family and friends can actually be relegated to the back burner, for at least a couple hours in an evening, as nine players take to the diamond, and three coaches attempt to direct them to a winning performance.

But it's not only about winning a game — there's so much more.

It's the atmosphere, the magic that accompanies the

spirit of the game, entrenched in almost every ball park around town.

There's nothing quite like the magical crack of a bat, or the powerful thud of a ball slapping into a glove. They're music to my ears.

How about that excitement created as the dust settles after a slide, or the yell of an umpire?

It all adds to the atmosphere.

Then there's the lingo, as players pump their colleagues with talk of "ducks on the pond" or "touching some green," with "a little poke." They all signal sunny weather and

coaching strategy, our wins, our losses and all the old games we play over and over, again and again, in our minds.

It's that time of the year when camera equipment in the trunk of my car competes for space with baseball gloves, bats, spikes, stat books and balls.

And the time of year when my computer at home burns the midnight oil as numbers are entered from yet another game and players' stats are calculated.

It's the time RBIs, Slugging Percentages, Onbase Percentages and Batting Averages become part of my everyday jargon from now until fall.

And the time when I receive more faxes from my coaching partner than I do from the general public, as the stat sheets from the previous night's game land on my desk, all ready to be entered into the steadily growing database of facts, figures and statistics, which will eventually find themselves in an end-of-season yearbook.

It's a time when I enjoy the camaraderie and friendship of more than a dozen fine young women, who share that love of the game that obsesses their coaches.

And it's the time of the year my co-workers will eventually pray for the return of the fall weather, simply to shut me up.

Ah yes, baseball has once again returned.

And I'm pleased. Cuz when ball season is here, all seem's well with the world.



By TED BROWN

RR2



They've gone too far: a man was refused a building permit because the walls were plastered.

### Did you know?

Statistics Canada conducts a complete census of Canada's population every five years. Data collected provides a detailed statistical picture of the demographic, social and economic conditions of the population at a single point in time. Five years ago in Halton Region 41 per cent of residents were between the ages of 20 and 45. Children (19 and under) made up 28 per cent of the population and seniors were 10 per cent of the total. Of the over 88,000 families, 86 per cent were legally married couples, 14 per cent were a mixture of common law and single parent arrangements.

—Statistics Canada