

WEEKEND

KEN NUGENT
Publisher

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Save a life

Want to save a life? Stop driving aggressively.

According to Halton Regional Police 16 people died in motor vehicle collisions last year and aggressive driving contributed to many of these preventable tragedies.

Aggressive driving takes many forms, but the most common are speeding, following too closely, disobeying signs and signals and impaired driving.

From June 17 to July 1, the Halton Regional Police Service will be joining other police agencies in Ontario by making a special effort to convince people to obey the rules of the road and stay in control when behind the wheel.

This year's campaign theme is Aggressive Driving — It Stops You Dead.

So drive safely — the life you save may be your own.

Your blood is needed

Blood donors are in urgent demand. Blood supplies in central Ontario are at the critical level and threaten to compromise emergency blood needs. According to the Toronto Blood Centre some elective surgeries have already been postponed and hospital orders are being restricted. You can help by donating blood at Acton's clinic on Thursday, 5-8:30 p.m. at the Acton Legion.

RR2



If you want to ruin a woman's afternoon, tell her she has to be somewhere punctually at five o'clock.

Did you know?

There will be a new strawberry in the markets this summer. Mira, a new orange-red strawberry with a high level of disease resistance, will allow growers to reduce the amount and number of pesticide applications per season. It's the tenth strawberry produced by Agriculture Canada. Mira features high yields of uniform color and shape and resistance to darkening when over-ripe.

— Agriculture Canada



Equal to unravelling the Caramilk secret

My drive to work isn't very long. Maybe ten minutes, with the occasional detour to the high school when my kids miss the bus.

But that drive is quality time — time to organize the day's tasks ahead, or review the day's events as I head home.

But recently my concentration was diverted, with the installation of three of those traffic monitors across the road I travel to get to the office.

You know the apparatus I'm referring to; the little black box that sits on the edge of the road with a bunch of cables strung across the street, counting the cars passing over them.

A couple weeks back, I noticed the noise my car made as it ran over the first one.

Thump, thump thump. Hold it, aren't there two pairs of cables? And two pairs of tires on the car? (Front and back.)

And when I attended school, two times two resulted in four.

But I only heard three thumps.

The next set of cables was coming up.

Again two pairs of cables, two sets of tires.

I turned down the radio to listen.

Three thumps. It was a puzzle.

As I neared the third set, I slowed down, just to count the sound, one more time.

Three more thumps.

Hmmm. Why only three, and not four?

Could it be the length of the wheelbase of my car, hitting both cables at once, so I only heard one thump for that time? Could it be the speed?

For the next few days, I kept my ear to the road, so to speak, just to be sure.

Three thumps, every time. The plot thickened.

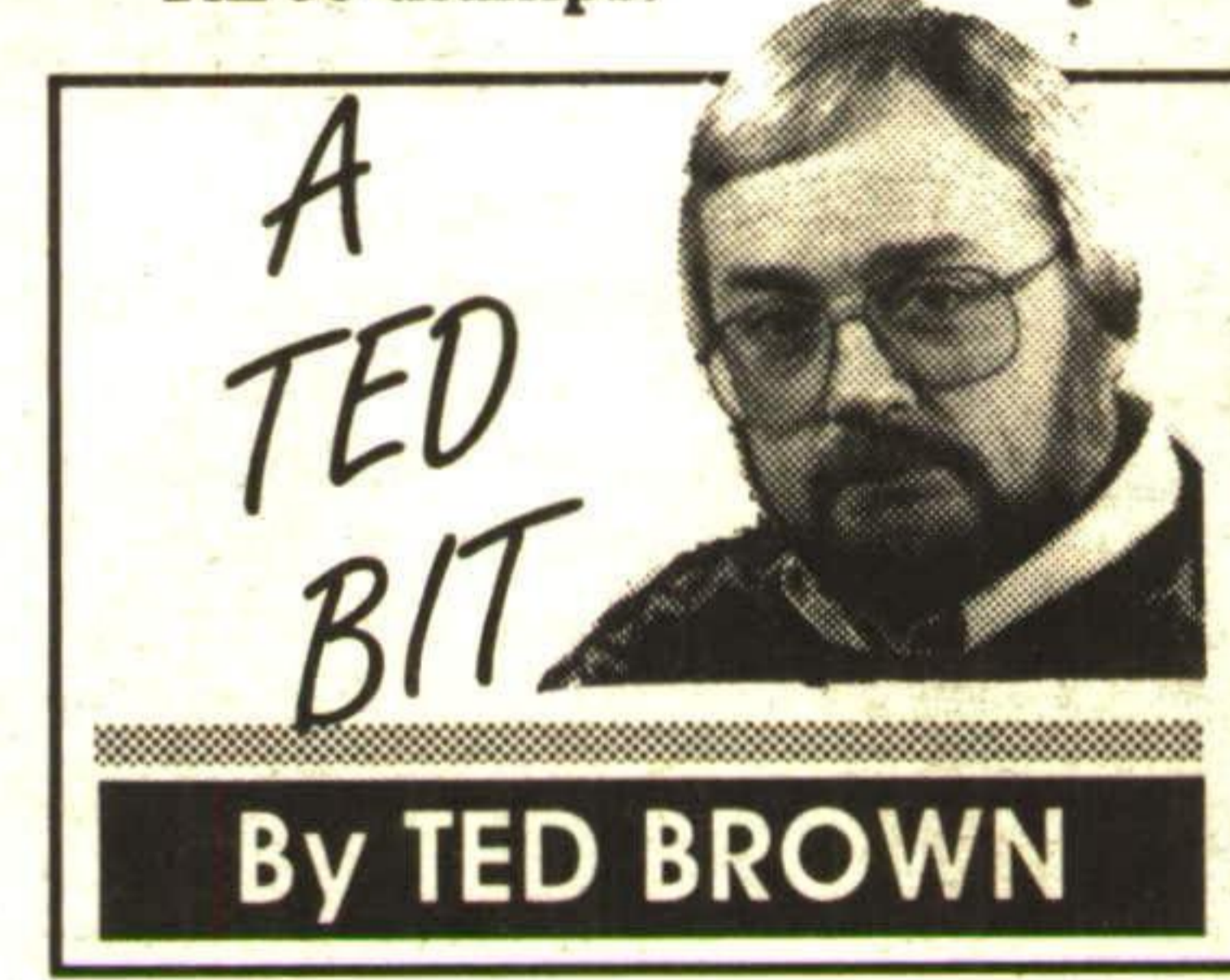
I had occasion to drive my kids to school one day.

As we approached the counters, I mentioned my observation.

They gave me that look kids reserve for their parents who have done something really gross in front of their friends.

We passed over the first set of cables.

Three thumps.



The talk ceased momentarily, as they tried to think of an explanation.

By the second set, my inquiring daughters were hooked. It was a puzzle to them as well.

"What happens if you cross them with the van, Dad?" one asked.

"Same thing," I replied, "Tried it on the weekend."

The others started to question the phenomenon as well, wondering if one would hear three thumps if they crossed it with such things as a motorcycle, a bicycle, an 18 wheeler, and a tricycle... (Okay, it got a little ridiculous at that point.)

One even asked what if a pony crossed it... (I think she meant

four legs, rather than four tires..)

The conversation ran downhill from there, but the question remained — why only three thumps?

Next day my nephew hitched a ride to his summer job.

Now this kid's just home from his first year at U of G. He's no dummy.

But when I suggested the puzzle to him, he gave me that 'have-you-lost-your-marbles-Uncle-Ted' look, (a look reserved for adults who drop mustard on their clean white shirt.)

That was, however, until we crossed the first set.

"Yup Uncle Ted, I only heard three thumps."

I love it when I'm right in the face of adversity.

By the second and third set his keen mind had no explanation.

This question was almost equal to unraveling the Cadbury Caramilk secret.

As I drove to work another morning, a crew was removing the counters, clearing the road of the monitors that had raised these great philosophical questions. I was tempted to stop and ask the two guys if the cables were set down a specific distance apart, and if they knew why they only thumped thrice.

I passed. That evening, I reopened the discussion with my family. Still no explanation.

But my wife, who has a way of reducing things to the lowest denominator, found a way to resolve the whole issue. She did it in three words.

"Ted," she asked with an air of authority.

"Who cares?"