

Editorial

Time will tell

The writing is on blackboard— there will be Junior Kindergarten (JK) in Halton's public schools come September. Designated JK schools in Halton Hills are: Joseph Gibbons, Limehouse, McKenzie-Smith Bennett, Park, Robert Little and Brookville.

While few doubt the logic of starting the program here—the Halton board is one of the last in the province to do so— many are wondering if all-day alternate-day schedule is best way to deliver it.

A marathon session at last week's board meeting demonstrated that more than a few parents are criticizing the new format— which will also affect Senior Kindergarten students as well.

Proponents of the all-day schedule point to the cost-saving factor on busing. Board chair and Halton Hills Trustee Ethel Gardiner, said research also backs the all-day model as a less hectic, more conducive to learning, day for kids.

But half-day supporters, including day-care owners, say they have studies that show kids become tired, cranky, and learn less in all-day kindergarten. It will also cause more day care headaches for working parents.

The trustees made one concession to this side. They passed, by a one-vote margin, a plan to allow some Burlington schools (which do not rely on busing) to implement the half day program. The move will allow the board to evaluate first-hand the pros and cons of both schedules, and only time—and the kids— will tell us which one is the better one.



Letters to the editor....

Heritage designation won't hurt the 'Glen'

Dear editor,

Your very biased (negatively) article on the front page of the March 23 issue of *The Independent & Free Press* regarding the heritage designation for Glen Williams is of concern.

Do Glen Williams residents know of the studies that have been

conducted to determine financial benefits of heritage designation?

In December of 1998 Dr. Robert Shipley of the University of Waterloo published a Report on Research Concerning Trends in Property Values of Designated Heritage Properties in Several Ontario Communities. This study examined 2,707 properties in 24 different communities. Some of his conclusions were:

- 74 per cent of designated properties performed better than average when compared to the average property value trend in their communities
- designated properties tended to resist downturns in the ambient market
- In Kitchener, value history trends were 60 per cent above the community average

Dr. Michael Lahr of Rutgers University conducted a closely controlled study of three district Texan cities and found that buildings in a designated district were valued at 6-

20 per cent higher than comparable non-designated district buildings.

A study by the New Jersey Historic Trust in 1998 found that heritage travelers spend 60 per cent more than general travelers on a daily basis.

They also found that a direct expenditure of \$123 million on restoration property translated, due to the trickle-down effect, into a \$526 million boost to the economy—a healthy payback in terms of jobs, income, taxes and wealth.

Every community has individuals who don't want change, even if it benefits them, and I'm puzzled by the four real estate agents who felt that heritage designation is a death wish.

In the rest of North America real estate agents work on commission. Selling a property for 20 per cent more would normally be interesting to most people—are Glen Williams residents that different?

R. W. Crawford,
Norval

Learn to live with wildlife

Dear editor,

Re: Coyotes kill Acton girl's beloved dog (March 21 *Independent & Free Press*).

How tragic that this little dog was killed. I know how much I love my dog and I can imagine how sad and disturbing it must be for the owners.

I really believe think many of these incidents could be avoided if more education was provided to residents by the Town of Halton Hills on how to live with local wildlife. Coyotes are important in controlling rodents with 80 per cent of their diet consisting of rabbits, squirrels, gophers, mice and rats. Sometimes the animals that look like coyotes in the suburbs are actually a hybrid— coyotes that have interbred with dogs.

In any case, it is important that you make sure you keep pets inside when you hear coyotes. If you want to discourage coyotes from hanging around eliminate any garbage smells, birdseed or outdoor sources of water. In late spring and early summer, coyotes may be more aggressive in their search for food because they have pups to feed.

I love to lay back at night and listen to the yips and howls—the beautiful communication between these animals. After all "What is man without the beasts?" If all the beasts were gone, I know I would die from great loneliness of spirit.

Julie Pomeroy, Norval

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All letters must be signed and include an address and a daytime telephone number. Letters requesting names be withheld will only be published pending a valid reason at the editor's discretion. Letters should be not exceed 300 words and may be edited for content or length.

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