

*Editorial*

# Think safety

School is back in session in Halton Region and with a new academic year comes the responsibility of every driver to keep a lookout for students making their way to class—especially in school zones and along bus routes.

This week upwards of 75,000 young people commenced classes in Halton's elementary and secondary schools.

This is a good time for motorists, students and parents of younger students to be reminded of safety rules and traffic laws intended to protect children on their way to school.

According to the Ministry of Transportation more than 800,000 Ontario children are transported in excess of 1.9 million kilometres each school day.

Drivers need to remember that traffic in both directions of a city street, highway or country road—regardless of the posted speed limit—must stop when approaching a stopped school bus with its upper red lights flashing.

Failure to do so will result in a fine ranging between \$400 and \$2,000, plus six demerit points. Subsequent offences will cost between \$1,000-\$4,000, six demerit points and possible jail time of up to six months.

Many children who don't take the bus will be walking or biking to school. Motorists must take special care to reduce their speed in school zones, stop when directed to do so by a crossing guard and obey all yield, stop and traffic signal controls. It's the law.

Parents have responsibilities too. They should revisit the basic traffic safety rules—especially with their younger children.

We hope everyone makes the effort to make the 2005-06 school year the safest on record.



## Letters to the editor....

# Cyclists have a right to be on the road

Dear editor,

This letter is directed to all drivers as a refresher concerning the sharing of the road with cyclists; in

particular the woman who felt the need to yell at me out of her yellow Corvette convertible recently in front of my daughter.

People honestly need to understand that a bike is a vehicle subject to the same rules as other drivers and are legally permitted to share the road with motorists.

My daughter, Sydney and I frequently go out for rides together and I have debated the sidewalk versus road route for her. There are several excellent websites addressing this question supporting that, with proper training, the road is the proper place for a cyclist. When a cycling path is available, we of course take it, but when it comes to the road vs. sidewalk debate, sidewalks are significantly more dangerous, primarily for the following reasons:

- The "rules of the road" make traffic orderly and predictable;
- Cyclists on the sidewalk are not visible to motorists overshooting the stop sign at an intersection, or backing out of their driveway;

- Intersections and driveways are bumpy and lead to increased spills;
- Sidewalks are for pedestrians.

At only 7, Sydney has competed in two triathlons containing a bike-race component; she is excellent on her bike and has been taught and comprehends road safety. I would however, never allow her to cycle by herself, let alone be on the road unsupervised. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure children are properly educated and supervised and for motorists to comprehend that they do not own the road and need to be aware of the rights of cyclists.

Excellent information for parents, and obviously yellow Corvette convertible drivers who are prime to learn something new, is available at the following links:

- <http://www.bicyclesource.com/body/safety/family/ten-steps-kids.shtml>
- <http://www.ohiobike.org/kids-cycling-ed.html>

Terri Oliver, Georgetown

## Why are feds involved?

(This letter was sent to John Godfrey, Minister Responsible For Infrastructure. A copy was made available for publication.)

Mr. Godfrey,

I have read with interest, of the federal government proposing to share \$5 billion from its federal gas tax revenue over five years for environmentally-friendly infrastructure projects with municipalities.

Why is the government directing how this shared money should be spent?

My understanding is that neither federal nor provincial governments now direct gas tax revenues to any promised, declared or legislated specific areas. Why do they (federal) think they should dictate to municipalities where the municipalities must spend this money?

In recent years both federal and provincial governments have taken steps that have resulted ultimately in increased financial responsibilities being thrust onto the municipalities, without providing the municipalities with any new means of increasing revenues.

The municipal representatives are much closer to the people they serve than the other two levels of government. Surely the municipalities can best decide what they should do with this money.

I welcome your response.

Ted Daquano, Georgetown

### Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor must include an address and daytime telephone number. Unsigned letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 200 words and may be edited.

**Mail or drop off**

Independent & Free Press, 280 Guelph St., Unit 29, Georgetown, Ont., L7G 4B1

**Fax**

905-873-0398

**E-mail**

[jmcghie@independentfreepress.com](mailto:jmcghie@independentfreepress.com)

**Editorial e-mail addresses**

**John McGhie**

[jmcghie@independentfreepress.com](mailto:jmcghie@independentfreepress.com)

**Cynthia Gamble**

[cgamble@independentfreepress.com](mailto:cgamble@independentfreepress.com)

**Lisa Tallyn**

[ltallyn@independentfreepress.com](mailto:ltallyn@independentfreepress.com)

**Herb Garbutt**

[hgarbutt@independentfreepress.com](mailto:hgarbutt@independentfreepress.com)

**Ted Brown**

[tbrown@independentfreepress.com](mailto:tbrown@independentfreepress.com)

# The Independent & Free Press

Address: 280 Guelph St., Unit 29, Georgetown, Ont. L7G 4B1, (Georgetown Market Place)  
 Telephone: 905-873-0301 Fax: 905-873-0398  
 E-mail: [production@independentfreepress.com](mailto:production@independentfreepress.com)  
 Web site: [www.independentfreepress.com](http://www.independentfreepress.com)

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