

OPINION

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Streetproof your kids

It's every parent's worst nightmare.

As an eight-year-old child strolls along the sidewalk on the way home from school, an unfamiliar automobile approaches from behind. As the vehicle pulls alongside the youngster, its driver's side window rolls down and a stranger with a big smile peers out and greets the child.

The stranger reports having lost a puppy in the area and is asking for the child's assistance to search the neighbourhood by car. It should only take a few minutes and the stranger promises to drive the child right home after the dog is found.

What would your child do? Would he politely refuse the offer and continue walking? Would he say no and run away from the stranger's vehicle? Or would he trust the person with the friendly face, feel sorry for them and proceed to get into the car?

If instead the stranger approached and simply ordered your child into the vehicle, would their response be any different?

With a recent string of incidents involving Halton schoolchildren being approached by strangers and asked to get in vehicles, local parents may want to consider reviewing their child's streetproofing skills.

While police haven't officially offered any theories about any connection between these recent incidents, they are recommending parents ensure their children are practising street safety precautions including:

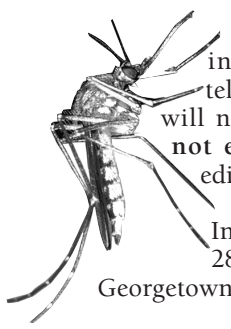
- Children should play together and stay away from remote areas of parks and avoid loitering or taking short cuts home through secluded or wooded areas.
- Do not go anywhere with a stranger and do not accept rides from them for any reason. Don't be afraid to say 'no' to a stranger's request and run away quickly.
- Report suspicious strangers immediately to an adult you know.
- Never accept gifts of candies, toys or money from a stranger.
- Always let your parents know where you are going.

While Halton Hills is generally considered a safe community in which to raise a family, we must not be so naive as to think that we are any more immune to crime than other GTA communities.

The challenge for every parent is to strike a balance between making their child feel safe and making them aware that there are some bad people out there.

Something bugging you?

Send us a letter!



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 for content and/or length.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Usage doesn't warrant a new library

Dear editor,

Our votes really do count. By and large, if we choose to support or reject a position, in a democracy we collectively decide its outcome.

Municipally, we have consistently experienced excessive tax increases, well beyond inflation and reason.

Currently, a large, excessive investment in Halton Hills' library system is being considered. If approved by the leaders we chose, it will mean even bigger rates of increase in our taxes. The costs of constructing and maintaining new facilities are disturbing when one considers that fewer than 50,000 people live in the community to be serviced by the proposed facility.

I have been an occasional library user (like many) for more than 20 years. In more than 100 visits, I have never seen more than one person waiting for service from reference personnel or check out personnel. The only substantial activity I see is in the children's area and computer workstation area (presumably for free Internet access).

The public library's purpose is to provide opportunities for information, education, culture, and recreation. The Internet has replaced the library as the people's top information resource because it is clearly superior in providing each of these opportunities. So why are we considering making a major, major library investment? Decent used computers are available locally for under \$200. Twelve PCs and four cubicles could be added to

the existing library network at minimal cost. Alternatively, for the benefit of all citizens, particularly those who can not afford Internet service at home, why not retain the existing library and open a small Internet satellite in a less-expensive downtown location, rentable at a small fraction of the cost of newly constructed facilities, and expand it as required in the future?

If we do not use our vote to encourage financial responsibility, we get what we deserve. We learned valuable lessons when Canadian spending went unchecked for two decades.

OPSEU teachers don't care about students

Dear editor,

It is really too bad that OPSEU (Ontario Public Services Employees Union) college employees who, in general, cannot see the forest for the trees, stand on a platform defending students and class sizes while at the same time stabbing them in the back by holding them and their future hostage.

Teachers say they want smaller class sizes and their wage increase, as offered, is okay by them at 12 per cent. Well, as a regular employee of the private sector who has been without a raise for two years that is too bad. All they really want is more money for less work as class sizes are made smaller.

OPSEU members do not care about students—they only care about themselves and how much money they can pocket and force from the students (and their funding parents) through

Please do not forget the price we have paid, and will continue to pay for decades into the future, for that mistake.

There is substantial opposition to a large library investment, evident in recurring letters to the editor. Express that opposition with your vote. Familiarize yourself with your local representatives' positions (council member, mayor, MPP, MP) on key spending initiatives and budget decisions. Let them know how you feel—and vote!

Al Robitaille,
Georgetown

increased tuition prices.

And what does the current government do— nothing! In fact the Ontario government almost did less than that as they could not or would not answer the question of refunds and credits for graduating students.

So, Mr. Premier you have allowed a portion of your voting public to be tainted by your obvious lack of interest in the furtherance of education. I hope these people will remember how you treated them on the next election day.

To all the parents and supporters who fund their children and grandchildren in the gaining of a higher education they should also remember that both OPSEU and the Liberal Party in Ontario do not care whether your child graduates.

Doug S. Galvin, Acton