

OPINION

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They're off!

As of 5 p.m. the 2006 municipal election officially got under way.

During the course of the next 45 days, leading up to the November 13 election, local residents will have to determine which 11 people they want to see form the town council for the next four years. (Yes, four years instead of three.)

Historically, municipal elections have had all the appeal of an Adam Sandler film festival. Voter turnouts are usually below 40 per cent, meaning that only four of 10 eligible voters actually takes the time to cast a ballot. That's a shameful number.

Perhaps it's apathy, laziness or a mindset that "it doesn't matter who you vote for, all politicians are crooks", that pervades municipal elections. Whatever, there is no excuse not to cast a vote.

Politics at the municipal level is where the voter can have the biggest impact. Councillors are generally more accessible than their federal or provincial brethren and because they spend every day in the same neighbourhoods as those who elected them, they are more accountable—or should be.

To be sure, being a local politician is not an easy—or well-paying—job. For most, it's a part-time occupation that entails plenty of meetings, late phone calls at home from residents complaining about everything from a pothole to when the road will be cleared of snow. But these candidates know this, or should, when they put their name forth for election.

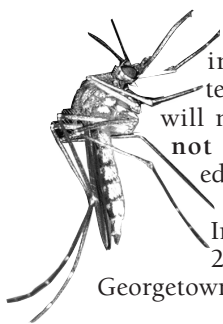
The people we elect in November will determine how our tax dollars will be spent and what direction the Town of Halton Hills will take for the next four years.

These 11 people carry an enormous responsibility but it is you—the voter—who determines who gets to carry that responsibility.

For your sake, and the sake of your town, take the time and learn about your ward, your current councillor's record, the candidates seeking election and make an informed choice on Nov. 13.

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 Unsigned letters will not be published.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

Red Cross needs help to provide its services

Dear editor,
Have you thought about when you get older?

Have you considered the problems that come with aging? White hair, failing hearing, a cane, possibly even a walker or wheelchair? One that you might not have considered is losing your driver's licence due to failing eye-sight. What happens if you need to see your doctor, but cannot drive yourself or have enough money to pay for a taxi?

Who would you phone for help? Your children? Spouse? Friends?

If you have those people around you who can jump in their car and come over to help, that's wonderful, but what if you do not have anyone who can help you?

Who do you call then?

If you are one of the many elderly people living in Georgetown and Acton areas, you call the Red Cross office in Milton and request a ride. We provide around 1,000 rides per month in the North Halton area at reasonable rates—but we need to provide more. The need for transport is more than we can provide due to low numbers of volunteer drivers in Georgetown and Acton, and a growing number of elderly and frail members of the public.

The Red Cross Society has been providing transportation within our community for many years, but we need more volunteer drivers to continue.

Just consider for a moment if we can no longer provide this valuable service?

What happens when YOU are older and can no longer drive? What do YOU

do then?

Help those around you, call the Red Cross Society at 905-875-1459 to offer your services.

If WE continue to volunteer, we will encourage the younger generations to

volunteer—and that's who will take YOU when YOU need help.

Judith Dobbs
Co-ordinator, Training Institute
Volunteer Recruitment
Region of Peel Branch

Almost 1,000 children in reading club

Dear editor,
The staff at Halton Hills Public Library would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to everyone who helped make our summer reading programs such a huge success!

With the enthusiastic assistance of our summer students Christine Elliott and Katherine Vandermey we kept almost 1,000 children reading over the summer in our Quest for Heroes Summer Reading Club! We acknowledge those parents who encouraged their children to participate, thereby fostering a love of literacy. Thank you

also to our student volunteers who played games and made crafts with our kids!

We would also like to recognize the efforts of *The Independent and Free Press*, the *Acton Tanner*, and Cooper-Standard Automotive for promoting our programs. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the generosity of the three bank branches of TD Canada Trust in both Georgetown and Acton for providing prizes. We look forward to next summer!

Children's and Youth Services staff
Halton Hills Public Library

Enforcement needed on student pedestrians

Dear editor,
Re: School's back in. It's not hard to see that school is back in, as it seems that lunch time or spare classes bring students back outside so they are able to go to their favourite eating place.

It appears that even though enforcement is out to remind drivers that school is back in, maybe some enforcement should be done to remind students that crossing four lanes of traffic (Guelph Street and Mountainview

Road), standing and waiting in the turn lanes for vehicles to stop or slow down enough for them to clear the roadway safely, as they walked by proper pedestrian walkways (traffic lights) could be hazardous to their health and well-being.

As I have witnessed this since school started, I was under the impression that jay walking was illegal.

Dave Crewe-Read,
Georgetown