

OPINION

www.independentfreepress.com

Phone: 905-873-0301
Fax: 905-873-0398

Parents must help in battling bullying

Is your child a cyber-bully or the member of a fight club? Or perhaps he/she is the victim of this technology-driven, sick form of entertainment among some of today's youth.

While we think it's great news that Halton Police are teaming up with the region's two publicly-funded school boards to combat cyber-bullying activity, there's a third party that needs to be part of the solution—the parent.

Halton Police report that acts of cyber-bullying—often involving viciously violent attacks on unsuspecting students by schoolmates—are being recorded with videophones and posted on the popular site YouTube with greater frequency.

While some of this disturbing footage involves fight clubs—groups that gather to engage in so-called consensual fighting—police note that this kind of activity is illegal as soon as anyone is seriously injured.

“No one can consent to bodily harm,” said Sgt. Peter Payne, public affairs officer for Halton Police. “So if two people consent to a fight and one of them subsequently becomes injured in more than a minor way... then the individual that caused the injury would be liable for a charge of assault.”

While some of these planned fights are taking place on school property, at least one Halton Police are aware of was hosted in the backyard of a Halton residence.

For this reason, parents need to be an active part of uncovering suspected incidents of cyber-bullying and fight club activity.

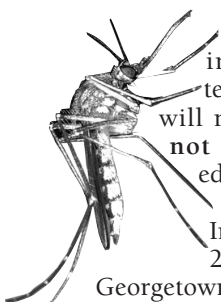
We need to better acquaint ourselves with the ever-evolving technology around us that allows our children to capture video and still images on pocket-sized electronic devices such as cellphones.

As Halton schools become more aware of student abuse of computer equipment to post these disturbing video images online, so too must parents become proactive in their monitoring of cellphone and home computer use.

If left unchecked, incidents of cyber-bullying have the potential to escalate to a lethal outcome. By either taking away or, at least, monitoring the use of technology that makes cyber-bullying possible, we may be able to prevent such a senseless tragedy.

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.

Mail or drop off:

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

E-mail:

jmcghie@independentfreepress.com

THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS

The Independent & Free Press is published every Wednesday and Friday at 280 Guelph St., Unit 29, Georgetown Ont., L7G 4B1. It is one of several newspapers published by Metroland Media Group Ltd.

Advertising is accepted on the condition that, in the event of a typographical error, that portion of the advertising space occupied by the erroneous item, together with reasonable allowance for signature will not be charged for, but the balance of the advertisement will be paid for at the acceptable rate. In the event of typographical error advertising goods or services at wrong price, goods or services may not be sold. Advertising is merely an offer to sell which may be withdrawn at any time.

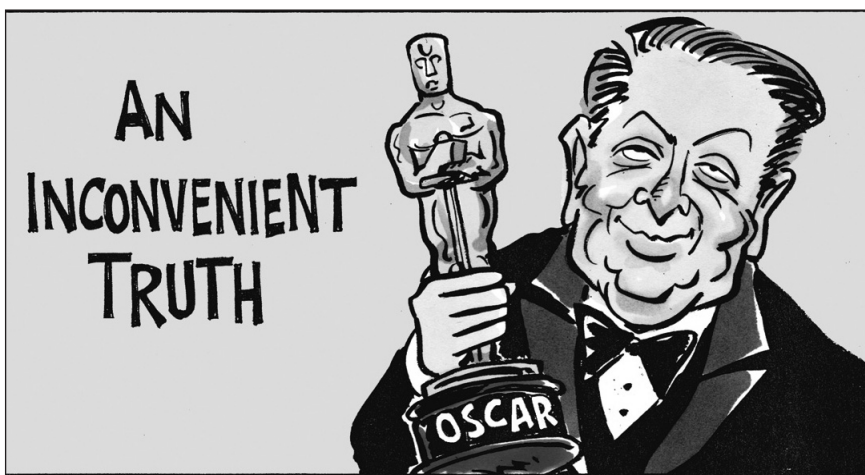
Editorial and advertising content of The Independent & Free Press is protected by copyright. Unauthorized use is prohibited.

Price: Store copies 50¢ each; Subscriptions \$26 per year by carrier; \$92.50 per year by mail in Canada; \$130 per year in all other countries. Plus G.S.T.

Second Class Mail Registration Number 6869. The Independent & Free Press is a member of The Canadian Community Newspaper Association and The Ontario Community Newspaper Association.



Steve Nease



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Roadways are for vehicles, not runners

Dear editor,
Whilst I applaud people who like to keep fit, can I ask why 'runners' feel the need to run in the road?

When driving down a narrow side road I drove round a bend in the road to be confronted by three runners, not in single file but running 'abreast' (good job I was doing UNDER the speed limit). Another vehicle was coming the other way and there was not room for all of us, so I came to a stop to give way to the

other car. This did not please the runners who then pounded on the roof of my car and told me in no uncertain terms I had ruined their running rhythm by making them stop!

Perhaps they would have preferred it if I had run them over, putting a permanent end to their running rhythm!

If this had been early in the morning or late evening when it would have been almost dark things could

have been a lot worse, especially as they were in their rather fetching black lycra.

Actually I can think of something worse, and that is the three-wheeled baby buggies some like to push while running. What a risk you put your children at! We do have running tracks in the area so why not use them and get your exercise in a safe environment and leave the road to the vehicle licence-payers.

Pat Couzins,
Georgetown

Theatre owner praised for providing good service

Dear editor,
Kudos and a tip o' the hat to Danny Edwards for his entrepreneurial spirit in keeping local theatre alive in Georgetown.

When Ontario Cinemas 3 closed its doors, Danny recognized that many of the younger children and seniors, who did not wish to travel out of town, wanted this source of entertainment. Under his ownership Edwards Theatres has provided our community with quality movies second to none. At any time we can see first-run movies at all three of the theatres. At no time are X-rated films shown. The price of admission for all is far below that of the larger out-of-town venues. Parents, if not accompanying their children, can drop them off on weekend afternoon while they shop at the nearby mall.

The drive to our local movie house is less than 10 minutes from most points. Some of the older kids

actually walk to and from, enabling them to get much-needed exercise.

I have, on occasion, attended one of these state-of-the-art theatres. The sound was so loud I thought my ear drum would break. The trailer of upcoming shows was a ridiculous 30 minutes long before the feature began. I guess that was included in the exorbitant price of admission.

For seniors, Danny has featured some classic films, as well as special movies for some of our elementary schools as fundraisers. Most recently fundraisers have been held at his theatre, the proceeds of which went to CAS-hh, Credit Valley Hospital and the Canadian Cancer Society.

While we would all welcome more comfortable seating, this is a small price to pay for what we do have. Support by all residents would bode well for Mr. Edwards' plans for expansion.

Kay d'Entremont, Georgetown

Call for better living conditions for long-term care residents echoed

Dear editor,
Re: Jan. 17 letter, *Long-term care residents deserve better.*

It is truly a disgrace that our community must hear this outcry from a very courageous lady at the Bennett Health Care Centre, who is only asking for fairer living conditions for all long-term care residents.

The board of directors of this facility should be leading the charge to address these injustices and ensure the mandate for quality care that has been entrusted to them.

Their position is not a ceremonial role, but one that requires dedication, diligence and passion.

As a very concerned activist I am appalled.

Blayne Hillock,
Georgetown