

Protecting our kids

In light of this week's conclusion to Ontario's largest co-ordinated child pornography investigation— which saw two Halton men among those charged— it's good to hear the provincial government is trying to be proactive about protecting children from on-line predators.

The province announced Wednesday that it had partnered with youth television network (YTV) and the Canadian Centre for Child Protection to launch a program designed to educate children and their parents about cyber predators.

Highlights of the program include:

- YTV developing a series of animated television announcements with tips on Internet safety in partnership with the Ontario Provincial Police. The announcements direct viewers to a cyber safety game and more tips on YTV's website www.ytv.com.

- The province is also distributing three guides for parents of children between 8-13 years old. The guides help parents understand what their children are doing in cyberspace.

Developed by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, the guides will be sent home through schools and are available online at www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/news/2008/20080213-safe-br.asp.

"These brochures provide parents with a hands-on tool for understanding the risks faced by children on the Internet and provide age-specific strategies for reducing their chances of being harmed," said Lianna McDonald, executive director of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection. "It's time that we empower parents with relevant information for protecting children online."

Any parent who thinks cyber predators are not a growing problem better think again.

According to the province, in 2007 police completed 1,353 Internet child pornography and luring investigations and laid 539 charges.

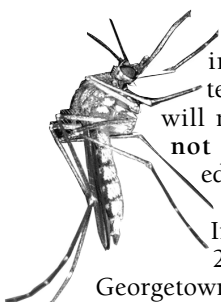
Of course, the most vital players in the success of any program that aims to prevent strangers from preying on our children are the parents.

Knowing where our children are going on-line, controlling access to areas of the Internet through parental control software and taking the time to explain and educate our children about the real dangers that exist in cyberspace, are measures that must start at home and be reinforced at school and by all forms of mass media.

We agree with Community Safety and Correctional Services Minister Rick Bartolucci's statement that, "Kids today spend a lot of time on-line, and we all need to work together to keep them safe from predators."

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:

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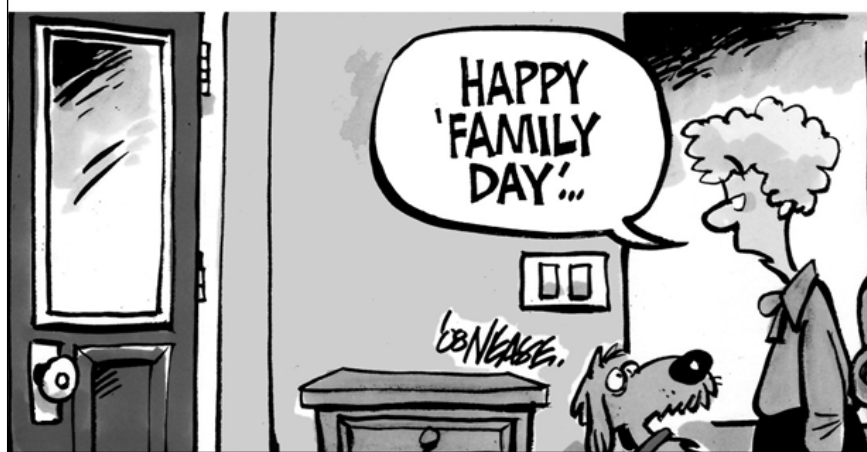
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Snow removal efforts have been 'pathetic'

Dear editor,
I do realize that we have had much higher than average amounts of snow this winter—it looks absolutely beautiful. That is, until you have to go out into it, especially if your only means of getting around is by foot.

It is absolutely pathetic the way that snow removal is dealt with in this town. I have seen more people walking on the roads than on sidewalks because either the Town has bigger priorities or the people who live in it are just too lazy to remove the snow from their sidewalk.

While taking my dog for her walk I was amazed that clearing the snow off the track at the Fairgrounds was more of a priority than clearing the snow on the sidewalks. I feel sorry for senior citizens and young children who have to resort to walking down the side of Princess Anne Drive due to both the laziness of the Town and its residents. If the Town is unable to clear the snow, then there should at least be a bylaw to enforce proper snow removal to make it safe for everybody to get around.

It only takes a few more minutes to clear the snow on the sidewalk around your property. Take a stand and make the rest of this winter a safer one for those who do not have the luxury of getting around in a car.

Perhaps in a few years this whole global warming thing will come true and people will not have to worry about any snow, but until then, real-

ize you are not the only people in this town and do something nice for

someone.

Jeremy Malanchuk, Georgetown

Homeowners urged to clear their sidewalks

Dear editor,
Re: Recent major snowfall and sidewalk clearing

Thank you to all Georgetown residents who have taken the time to clear the snow from the sidewalks in front of your homes.

My letter is really a plea to those Georgetown residents living along residential sidewalks who have chosen to only shovel their driveways. Please help those of us who use the sidewalks on a daily basis by clearing them as quickly as possible.

My frustration comes from trying to maneuver myself and my one-year-old along the sidewalks while we walk my four-year-old to school. The areas of

town where the sidewalks have not been cleared are very dangerous. I have been forced to flee the safety of the sidewalk by taking my baby and myself out onto the streets full of morning rush hour traffic. I understand that the morning after a major snowfall there are many concerns and that perhaps your sidewalk is secondary, however last week we experienced many snow-covered sidewalks two days after a major snowfall.

Let's make this town safer for everyone. Please get out there and clear a path on your sidewalks. Thank-you.

Kim Stubberfield, Georgetown

People will always find something to complain about

Dear editor,
I cannot believe how many people are upset about the Town's snow clearing efforts. I think the crews are doing the best they can.

I make my living doing residential snow clearing and believe me these snowfalls tax the equipment and the manpower to their limits. So, if you want to walk for exercise and the sidewalks are not clear, go to the mall and walk around there.

Too much salt, not enough salt, too much plowing, not enough plowing—do people expect perfection? It's winter in Canada, we get snow—sometimes a

lot, sometimes not— conditions change quickly.

Adapt people, change according to the need, it's okay to alter your plans based on the weather and the conditions. As for the people who want change, then run in the next municipal election, see what it's like on the other side and walk a mile in their shoes before you complain.

I'm sure by April the snow will be gone and then people will complain about the plow damage to their lawns and boulevards. Then summer will be too hot, then the fall will be too.....

Ray Eckert, Georgetown