

# OPINION

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## No reason to choose

For most Halton residents, having to choose between shelter and food is about as abstract a concept as living in a war zone.

Still, having the means to eat well shouldn't blind us to the reality that some who live here can't afford enough to eat.

A recently-released study by Halton's health department paints a startling picture of low-income residents being forced to choose between their basic nutritional needs and other necessities of life such as heat, hydro, transportation and clothing.

Too often a healthy diet is being sacrificed in order to pay for adequate shelter.

"These families are more likely to pay the rent and necessary bills and have little or no money left for food," said a report from Halton Medical Officer of Health Dr. Bob Nosal.

"Clearly there is a disconnect between what the government provides in benefit rates and the actual cost of eating for good health."

Cited in the report is the example of a Halton single mother receiving assistance through Ontario Works while raising a seven-year-old daughter. Their household income of \$1281.55 per month is quickly gobbled up by rent of \$869, leaving \$412.55 to pay for everything else.

According to Nosal, a nutritious diet for a two-person household would use up just under \$250 of the monthly budget, leaving less than \$164 to pay for utilities, transportation and clothing.

Entitled, the Nutritious Food Basket, the survey also found that the average weekly cost of providing a family of four with a healthy diet increased five per cent—from \$120.89 in 2006 to \$127.08 in 2007.

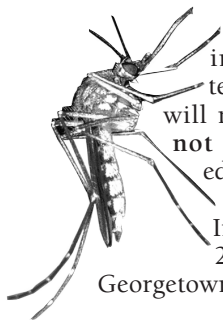
We agree that it's time the province implemented its Poverty Reduction Strategy to help address the increasing gap between social benefits and the real cost of living even the most rudimentary life.

At the local level, food banks struggle to keep shelves stocked while organizations like Halton Food For Thought work hard to develop innovative school nutrition programs such as The Healthy Basket, a pilot project that sees bins of healthy food placed in each classroom to help ensure young, developing minds have enough to eat.

In a civilized, caring and just society no one—and especially not vulnerable children—should have to make a choice between having a roof over their head or eating their next meal.

## Something bugging you?

Send us a letter!



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Steve Nease



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Neglect of Scotsdale Farm is disturbing

Dear editor,  
I am writing this letter in response to the recent article on Beecham House whose future appears to be in jeopardy.

The future of Scotsdale Farm also appears to be in jeopardy based on recent observations, conversations, phone calls and e-mails with Ontario Heritage Trust. This invaluable rural property was bequeathed to the people of Ontario by Mr. and Mrs. Bennett in the 1980s. Something has gone wrong with the plan.

The property and buildings are in a serious state of disrepair. The only users are dog owners and hikers on the Bruce Trail. The property itself is being neglected with no forestry management plan in place. A major branch was recently removed from the front of the Bennett's home, perhaps due to let-

ters of concern, but strangely enough snowplowing is being done on a regular basis by someone.

Unattended trees and branches are producing a liability. The once predominant cedar rail fences need to be rebuilt. Extensive painting is required on every building and who knows about the state of the roofs—that's just the exterior. Then there is the issue of the farm pond. Who knows what's happening inside?

At one time, conferences, retreats and weddings took place on a regular basis at Scotsdale. All in all, the future of this property is dubious at best. Like Beecham House, Scotsdale could become a target for vandalism.

These are two fine examples of local rural heritage preservation sites in Halton Hills being shunted way down the list of priorities. Credit Valley

### Close call in traffic circle leaves mother upset

Dear editor,  
I live in Georgetown South, close to a traffic circle.

I had an incident recently when, already in the traffic circle, I noticed a car speeding towards us along Danby Rd. East at more than 80 km-h.

The driver sped up, even when he realized we were continuing in the traffic circle. He had to slam on his brakes, narrowly missing our car from behind. I was fuming! My kids were in the back seat and he could have caused an accident with his reckless driving.

I shouted, "Can you not read the signs?"

He replied, "Yeah, it says you're supposed to yield to oncoming traffic. I have the right of way."

WRONG! The sign clearly states, those already in the roundabout have the right of way, those outside of the circle MUST yield to those in the traffic circle.

I think someone should do an article on this issue. I think its a very important issue for the safety of our children. I wish the Town or police would crack down on these reckless drivers. The Town would make money that's for sure!

Kathy Meyer, Georgetown

Conservation and Ontario Heritage Trust are the managers of these properties. These provincial agencies appear to be in dire straits financially for heritage preservation. If we lose these buildings we lose them forever.

Mary Shier, Limehouse

### Main St. a racetrack

Dear editor,  
Ugly signs have appeared on Main Street in Georgetown reading: "Pedestrians YIELD to Main Street traffic". In my opinion they have got it wrong.

Improvements to the high street were aimed at making the downtown area more welcoming, usable and used; the library improvements, the wider sidewalks, better lighting, retained on-street parking and the new car park seemed to be heading in the right direction and the timely completion helped the success of Homecoming.

However, the average volume and speed of traffic on Main Street between Maple Ave. and Highway 7 both seem to have increased. I have seen no enforcement of the speed restriction and now we have the signs suggesting the complete superiority of the traffic.

On the other hand, if safety was the motive for the signs, then "BEWARE of traffic exceeding speed limit" might be better wording.

Do we want a street which encourages use by locals, visitors and shoppers or a racetrack between Highways 7 and 401 for the passers-through?

Brian Perry, Georgetown

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