

# OPINION

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## Accidents waiting to happen

We've all seen the driver, chatting on their cell phone while the stoplight changes to green, blissfully unaware of other motorists behind him/her.

Or how about the driver who crosses over the centre line while trying to retrieve that all-important message on their BlackBerry?

While inattentive drivers are unlikely to go the way of the dinosaur, the Ontario government is proposing new legislation this fall— so-called “distracted driver legislation”— that could range from an outright ban on the use of electronics while driving to measures that would toughen Ontario's existing laws.

Progressive Conservative MPP John O'Toole has been pushing such legislation for years through a series of private member's bills and it appears as if the Liberal government has been convinced it's time for such action even though only months ago Premier Dalton McGuinty dismissed a cellphone ban.

“Do we ban coffee drinking in cars?” mused the premier.

More than 50 countries already ban cell phone use in vehicles to some degree and three Canadian provinces (Quebec, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia) ban phone use with fines ranging from \$115 to \$400.

According to one U.S. study driver distraction was listed as a factor in 80 per cent of North American car crashes.

Getting behind the wheel of a vehicle carries a huge responsibility with it. Your life and the lives of others depend on your ability to follow the rules of the road and to be alert and ready to react to unexpected situations. It takes only a split second for an accident to happen and any legislation put forward that penalizes those who insist on fumbling with a cell phone or iPod instead of watching the road is a good step.

Certainly there will be civil libertarians who will crow about an infringement on rights and others who will say the law is virtually unenforceable, but we're eager to see what Ontario Transportation Minister Jim Bradley comes up with this fall when he attempts to get drivers' eyes back on the road where they belong.

### What do you think?

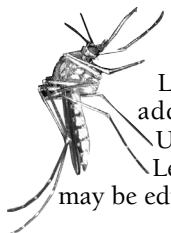
Below are the results of our most recent online poll. For the current poll go to [www.independentfreepress.com](http://www.independentfreepress.com)

How would you rate your interest in the upcoming Beijing Olympics?

- I am very interested and will watch a lot of the events (21%)
- I am somewhat interested and will watch a little of the coverage (5%)
- I am not very interested but will watch some coverage if there is nothing better on TV (53%)
- I have zero interest in the Games and won't watch one minute of the coverage (21%)

## 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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Steve Nease



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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Teen's defacing of school not appreciated

Dear editor,  
I am writing this letter in disgust to some neighborhood teenager who finds it appropriate to deface the property of our children's school— Harrison Public School.

### Festival a success

Dear editor,  
Contrary to what B. Curtis had to say (Why change Festival? Letter July 16), I'd like to thank everyone involved with the recent Festival on Main for putting on such a successful, fun, wholesome family day for the entire community.

From our end of the street we saw lots of happy people all having a good time. For this, we are grateful to the vendors, the games people, the buskers, the face-painters, the non-profit groups who added so much, as well as all the merchants who put their best foot forward.

While I can't speak for every other business owner on the street, we had a very successful day— just as grand as any other from previous years— and this was despite the rain in the morning and the threat of it throughout the day.

I'm sorry that B. Curtis believes that those of us downtown need a single annual event to ensure we remain competitive and that the village-like atmosphere endures. Really and truly, we can and do do better than that every day, and in every way.

Kate Murray,  
The Freckled Lion  
Children's Bookstore

I have two children who attend this school and they absolutely love it, however during the summer months when school is out and the building is unattended it becomes a hangout for local teenagers who have nothing better to do other than apply graffiti to the walls and smash beer bottles on the pavement.

Harrison School is in a state of disgust at this point with graffiti on the portables and somehow the kids have managed to scale the roof of the building and apply graffiti to the upper walls of the building. Why is this being done?

Maybe a designated area could be allowed for these people to spray paint and express their passion for graffiti, however, when it is applied to schoolyards of children who are in Kindergarten to Grade 5 and have almost no concept of these inappropriate

### Hospital care was 'professional and timely'

Dear editor,  
Every person who has had to go through medical testing knows what I mean when I say there is a certain amount of anxiety involved with having these tests done as well as awaiting the results.

Recently I required medical testing at our Georgetown Hospital. I was treated kindly by everyone and the tests were done in such a professional and timely manner as to allow me to have the surgery required without a long waiting period.

Too often I read letters to the editor with more complaints than compliments and because I was treated so

ate words on display it is not acceptable. Why should the young children be exposed to such disrespect? What kind of example is this for them?

Do these “artists” display their work on the schools they attend or is it only for the young children to see? Either way it should not be tolerated and acceptable by any means.

We witnessed an act of art the other evening at the school while walking the dog. The kids were fortunate that we had left our cell phone at home that evening or a call to the police would have been made.

People are watching and the “artists” need to be confronted. How would they feel if someone applied graffiti to their homes? I know one thing for sure, the person who pays the mortgage would not be too happy.

Mike French, Georgetown

wonderfully, I wanted to pay a huge compliment to the hospital and to let them know I have passed on my great experience to a lot of people I know, letting them know that we have a great facility at our disposal.

We all need to take a little more time and effort in appreciating what we have around us and be very grateful to have professional and compassionate people working at the hospital.

A big thank you again for all the terrific care I received, with special thanks to the mammography department for their quick and decisive action.

Marilyn McQueen,  
Limehouse