

Letters to the editor...letters to the editor...letters to the editor

Busing a safety issue

Dear editor,

In response to "Walk to school won't do kids any harm" and "Put kids' walk to school in perspective" letters October 24.

I have never written to the editor before but felt compelled to after reading the "opinions" of Brendan McMahon and Lisa McCashew. It is obvious to me that this issue does not affect them or their children, so it is easy for them to say that it is not a big deal.

Speaking as a mother of three whose children will soon have to make the 40-minute walk to and from school each day, I was insulted by some of the comments these two made. I do not "molly-coddle" my children, nor would I let them, at 11 years old, walk to the mall/movies etc. by themselves. I give them plenty of responsibility and they get plenty of exercise. This is about keeping them safe.

And to compare our fight to keep our kids safe with the tragic death of Aidan Benoit is reprehensible. I am sure Aidan's parents did everything in their power to keep their child safe—just as we are doing. We want to "welcome them home" every day and not worry that they will end up under the tires of a truck. That would be tragic as well, wouldn't you agree? Never mind the predators who are lurking in our neighborhoods (letters have been sent home with our children from the school board about this threat so it IS real).

The fact of the matter is Silver Creek School was granted two additional buses because the Argyll Rd. and Mountainview Rd. intersection was "too busy" to cross. My kids will have to cross much worse.

Why were these children granted busing but not my children? I pay taxes too.

S. Kirk,
Georgetown

Kids at risk walking to school

Dear editor,

After reading both letters in the paper on October 24, I was just a little outraged.

I am one of those parents whose child has to walk to school. I agree to some point with the authors of both letters. Yes, it's great the kids get some exercise in this day and age of childhood obesity and, yes, I am happy my child is healthy and is able to walk to school.

However, my biggest concern is the safety of my child. Lisa McCashew stated that "Let's put it into perspective— it's really simple actually— be happy that your child is healthy and physically able to walk to school, that you have the joy of being able to see them home every afternoon, that you can enjoy the years of seeing them grow up." I personally would love to be able to do that for as long as my child is in school.

As I'm sure the mother of Holly Jones would have loved it too. Holly was kidnapped and murdered walking near her home in broad daylight at age 10. Or Kristen French's parents. Kristen was kidnapped and murdered at age 15 walking home from school. And the stories go on.

I do not want my child or any one else's to be a statistic in this community. How ironic that these letters appeared in the paper the same week that the front page story is about sexual assault on two females aged 36 and 15.

Predators do not have age limits and when children are walking to school everyone is at risk. There is also the added

factor that many of the students are walking Mountainview Rd. and Guelph St. without the aid of crossing guards.

So, yes I am fighting for the return of the school buses to get our children to and from school safely.

Bonnie Courchesne,
Georgetown

Walk to school is tiring, says student

Dear editor,

In the October 24 issue, I noticed that one of the headlines on a letter was "Walk to school won't do kids any harm".

First, I'd like to mention that I am one of the students who attends Centennial Middle School who has to walk that 40 minutes 2-3 times a week. I know some people who walk to school every day and are tired in the middle of the day. I know you're probably thinking, "Well in my day I had to walk five miles a day." Well, that was your day; this day is now different.

This letter writer listed the reasons why we should walk to school, but I'd like to point out the bad side of walking to school.

1. We have to worry about bullies. I pass Christ the King School and teenagers from Georgetown District High School.

2. We now have bigger and faster vehicles on the roads and there are a bunch of crazy drivers out there. We could easily get hit.

Tyler Lemyre, Georgetown
Grade 7, Centennial M.S.

Dad defends bid for buses

Dear editor,

I am responding to the two people who wrote letters about parents fighting to get the school buses back. I am a parent of a 12-year-old boy.

1. One should get the facts about what they are spouting off about first.

2. My health, or if I want to go to a gym, is none of his business.

3. The reason for trying to get the buses back is for the safety of the kids. The sidewalks are not plowed when the kids go to school therefore they would have to walk on the road.

4. In this day and age both parents have to work.

5. The buses in question have been in service for more than 35 years.

6. As for Lisa McCashew's comments, yes, let's put everything in perspective, to coin your phrase. My heart goes out to three-year-old Aidan Benoit and his family however, I am sure if he or his parents could have the chance to fix the problem they would.

As you said, I am lucky to see my son off to school but if I was waiting for the great big smile in the afternoon and instead had a police officer show up at my door to tell me my son was hit and killed by a car, I would think the 40-minute walk was longest time I would have to live with forever.

7. The Halton school board, as noted in the paper, has a large surplus of funds.

8. If either Brendan McMahon or Lisa McCashew could tell me what a child's life is worth than they must have a wis-

dom higher than any other power I know of in this world.

Ken Noakes,
Georgetown

Walk to school is dangerous

Dear editor,

I read Lisa McCashew's and Brendan McMahon's October 24 letters regarding the

loss of the bus to transport our young children to school and felt compelled to write a response.

Let me put it into perspective for you as a mother whose children will soon be making this dangerous, and it is dangerous, walk to school through the busiest intersection in town— Mountainview Road and Guelph Street.

I am not opposed to my children getting the 40 minutes of exercise, but if it includes having to dodge transport trucks and busy commuters who are too busy talking on the their cell phones and drinking their coffee to pay attention to young children crossing the road, then this is a concern.

I find it insulting that Mr. McMahon suggests that we pay for the buses out of our pockets. We, too, are taxpayers and are only concerned about the safety and well-being of our children. The Halton District School Board, without sound justification, decided to take away our bus and then had the audacity to approve a bus in Georgetown South. This is neither right nor fair.

And in closing, apparently we shouldn't just be concerned about the bullies that our children may encounter on their walks to school but the bullies who consider people looking out for the safety and well-being of their children "mollycoddlers".

D. Cozens, Georgetown

Walking route is not safe

Dear editor,

I am a parent of children affected by the bus changes which were effective September 2007.

To this date I have not been angered or outraged as I understand all sides of the argument and the reasons behind the decisions made to date. I would like to respond to the people who voiced their opinions in the October 24 issue of *The Independent & Free Press*.

First, I would like to agree that our children could all use exercise and that a 3.2 km walk is not unreasonable for most. Second, my children did not walk to the malls and shopping centres unattended in the summer as suggested. Third, some of us work and cannot drive or walk our children to school. We do not have public transportation as an alternative. Also I did offer to pay for the school bus but was told that was not allowed. The money already comes out of all of our taxes.

It is in the hopes of enlightening some of you that I write this letter. Not all routes where the buses were removed are safe for 10 and 11 year-olds to walk. If you travel up Mountainview Road north from River Road in the winter you will encounter a very slippery railroad overpass which has snow consistently plowed on the sidewalks. This forces pedestrians to walk on the road.

Take the time to drive it and see when the pedestrians become visible to the driver— at the top of the incline. Perhaps this

will be too late.

Have you walked the route past the graveyard where the sidewalk plow cannot get in between the fence and hydro poles to plow the sidewalk, hence forcing pedestrians onto the road again? Have you stood on the small median in the middle of Hwy. 7 on a snowy, icy day while industrial, commercial and residential traffic moved all around you while you waited for the light to change? Do you know how many accidents occur at that intersection in the winter?

Perhaps if you had a child walking the route requested, at the age of 10 or 11 you would feel the same pit in your stomach every time they left the house and every time you made the drive and were alerted to the dangers of the major arterial roads in our town. As for letting our children gain responsibility, I think anyone would agree I have two of the most responsible children out there. I am afraid for their safety.

Oh, to put it in perspective, as one person commented, I AM the mother of a child with cancer who did not make it. I never want another parent to have to feel what that is like.

I believe as many children die from accidental death as disease. As a community, and as a parent, it is our right and obligation to do all that is humanly possible to ensure the safety and well-being of our children.

Mary Lim, Georgetown

POSSE march 'irrelevant'

Dear editor,

In recent weeks, we have had residents writing letters to the editor begging for diversity, now we have the Pride flag flying and recently we were privy to the POSSE organization's second "march".

I have a few suggestions:

POSSE should try holding a march at say, Jane and Finch in Toronto. I think everyone will agree that neighborhood is in more need of diversity and understanding than Georgetown.

The so-called "marches" they hold in town are merely a type of protest "light". Why do they insist on pushing their beliefs on us anyway? Why try and fix a "problem" that doesn't exist? Obviously the vast majority of folks in town agree, as the POSSE march only had 100 or so people turn out in a town of 35,000-plus. This speaks volumes to the march's irrelevance.

To all the readers who have written in and jumped on the diversity bandwagon, I have a very simple solution. Why not relocate?

I think that we all need to remember that Canada was built by Europeans for Europeans. They developed and molded this country into what it is today.

Matt Penny,
Georgetown

Flying flag 'ridiculous'

Dear editor,

I would like to say that hanging the Pride flag in Georgetown is ridiculous.

To push gay rights in a town that I have lived in for almost 40 years is upsetting. Most people, like myself, sit back and let the minority try and push their ways upon us. They speak out so loudly because they have to since they are so small in numbers.

Imagine if all the husbands, wives and children pushed for "God's way" and to put up a family flag. Do we really want the "gay flag" hoisted in our town? Maybe we should have a family flag or sports flag or peace flag. Surely I'm not alone here.

Howie Oram, Georgetown