

# Instilling respect and decency

To the editor;

John Shadbolt's letter of Jan. 5 which advocates that qualified people be allowed to legally carry guns brings to mind a fictional situation I read. (Sorry, I don't remember the name of the author).

In a large city where crime was rampant, the mayor decided to conduct an experiment. He ruled that in 1/2 of the city guns were totally banned. In the other half anyone and everyone could own a gun.

After one year, the half where guns were banned was in chaos. Crimes of every kind had more than tripled. It was a gun-smugglers' paradise.

The half where guns were allowed to everyone was

crime-free. No hoodlum would dare cross the line. The few who had tried it didn't last long.

Remember the days when nearly every household possessed at least one gun? Yet shootings were practically unheard of. It wasn't fear of retaliation that prevented shootings from occurring;

it was a combination of respect, decency and common sense, and yes, maybe a certain fear of consequences.

Maybe if we instilled those qualities in children early enough and deeply enough, guns wouldn't be a problem.

Eileen Hutcheson, Acton.

## Georgetown Optimist Club's 'Santa Calls' successful

To the editor;

All of us at the Recreation and Parks Department would like to extend a very special thank you to everyone who contributed to the annual "Santa Calls" Program.

A great big heart felt

thank-you to the members of the Optimist Club of Georgetown whose efforts are inspirational and have made a lasting impression on many little people in Halton Hills. In this busy world, it's wonderful to know that there are individuals like the Optimist members who take the time to bring joy to children.

To Halton Hills parents, principals, and kindergarten teachers thank-you for participating in this year's program and helping make it such an incredible success.

Due to everyone's hard work Santa was able to wish over 1,400 kindergarten children and their families in Halton Hills a very Merry Christmas.

All the Best in the New Year,

Aaron Matthews, Recreation Supervisor.

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# Letters

## Adding service charge to bill makes it 'totally transparent'

To the editor;

A recent (December 8, 2005) editorial in "The New Tanner" by Hartley Coles discusses the online payment service offered by Halton Hills Hydro as a convenient payment option for its customers. Mr. Coles has correctly identified that Halton Hills Hydro does not receive any revenue from the service being offered. Caledon Card Services provides the online services and charges customers taking this payment option a convenience fee and a handling fee according to the size of the customer's energy bill. For simplicity, these fees appear on your total credit charge (hydro bill + convenience fee + handling fee) and are collected for pass through to Caledon Card Service so the customer does not have to make a separate payment for this service.

Mr. Coles is also correct when he notes that customers do have a choice of whether they wish to elect the online payment option. For example, a customer may also choose to pay by cash or cheque at the Acton office, or at any bank. Customers can obtain information about the various options for payment by calling our customer service staff (519-853-3701) during office hours (8:30a.m. to 4:30p.m.).

Mr. Coles article suggests that customers are annoyed that these extra charges

occur and that "other companies" do not charge for this service. It is necessary to point out that provision of these services does have a cost and perhaps other companies simply add the charges to overhead costs or include them in the "service charges" that are transferred to their customers indirectly. We have chosen to ensure the costs for this service are transparent to the user and as indicated previously, Halton Hills Hydro receives no revenue from this online payment service.

Electricity distribution rates are regulated and do not provide for this charge because it is each customer's choice to use this service and such fees should not be subsidized and are not subsidized in electricity distribution rates paid by others. Halton Hills Hydro has not made any attempt to hide the fact that the online billing services are provided at the cost of the service provider only, nor has there been any attempt to hide what those

charges are. It is our intention to be totally transparent about the costs of this option. By being transparent with respect to these charges, and by ensuring that only those using the service are being charged for the service and are not receiving a subsidy from the other ratepayers who do not use online billing, we meet our obligations of fairness to all of our customers.

Once again, online payment has been made available to customers wishing to use this option. Rather than eliminate it, Halton Hills Hydro will retain the option to enable customers to enjoy the modern convenience of paying from their own homes or businesses. If customers electing this option are dissatisfied and wish to change, there are other options available, and we will be happy to assist in the selection of the best option for the customer.

Bryan D. Boyce, Chair - Halton Hills Hydro Inc.

## Her views not mine

To the editor;

I read Eileen Hutcheson's letters to the editor and wish to comment on one letter - re: Make govt.'s accountable.

According to Eileen in my great country, Canada, we have a corrupt govt. who

steals from us, lies to us, politicians who are stupid and greedy, arrogant, etc., etc. Her opinions (not mine).

Surely Eileen could we agree (maybe) that our very "corrupt govt." does allow us to express our differences and opinions freely. You are free to vote for your preferred political party (not mine). We can still worship in the religion of our choice and there is still freedom for our press to publish what they wish. Otherwise they would not be free to publish your many letters expressing your opinions (not always mine).

Sincerely, F. Marcoux, Acton.

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