

# Opinion

## Headlines might have read very different

Twitter was a feeding frenzy as news outlets rushed to be first to report the shooting at the A. Grenville and William Davis Courthouse in Brampton last Friday. Reporters onsite and anyone else with a cellphone were posting raw footage as fast as their fingers would allow. It was instant news, a chance to be first with the headline of an officer down and a suspect shot dead. It was an unfolding story that had people glued to all media outlets.

News crews captured police cars flanking a speeding ambulance carrying the wounded officer on its emergency run to a Toronto trauma centre. The wail of the sirens and the unknown shooter at the courthouse made for drama at every corner.

Our website insidehalton.com was also updating the tragedy as it unfolded.

However, one wonders how the headlines would have read had the officer not been shot.

What if the suspect had pulled a gun but not fired?

What if the officer managed to shoot the culprit first without being struck by a bullet? What if the officer believed he had seen a weapon but there was none? What if the weapon was actually a replica or merely a child's toy?

How would the story have played then? How would the media have interpreted the incident?

Would we be describing the officer as a hero? Probably not. Many in the media would be swift to condemn, judging a situation from the sidelines.

The scenarios of what ifs are plentiful.

There are many reasons why police draw their weapons — to handle a threat to public and personal safety or to euthanize an injured animal.

There are also alternatives available to police drawing their firearm — Tasers, batons, physical restraint tactics.

We're very well aware that not all police officers are perfect. Policing is dubbed the thin blue line because officers walk that precarious line every day in the line of duty. They face scenarios most people don't even fathom. Often a decision must be made in a split second. They place themselves into harm's way, all in the line of duty.

If the Brampton incident played out differently, how many armchair critics would have jumped in to say this is another example of the police acting too fast in taking down a suspect? They might second-guess the officer as if they were there themselves.

Peel Const. Mike Klarenbeek is already a hero; he didn't have to take a bullet to prove it.



### Rural Roots

Music was an essential part of rural life and the centre of social activities. Groups, formal and informal, performed in homes at events and at dances. In 1895, Jack Milne organized and led the Brookville Brass Band. The names of many band members are now familiar as street names and hamlets. William Frank, an accomplished musician, also formed the small band 'Sod Busters'. They performed live on Hamilton CKOC radio during the depression, which provided much-needed income for the band members and enjoyment for listeners. Here, the Brookville Brass Band members include (front) Duncan McTavish, George Blacklock, Edward Britton, Duncan Campbell, Jim Leachman, Jack Moffat, Jack Barber, (middle) William Frank, Aleander Crawford, Ronald Richardson, Joseph Frank, (back) Thomas Blacklock, Jack Milne, Samuel Frank, William Kitching and Joseph Leachman.

— Submitted by Nasagiweya Historical Society

## Editor's Desk

### How did you spend Earth Hour? We played cards by candlelight.

Cards by candlelight.

That's how my husband and I spent Earth Hour Saturday night.

From 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. we shut off all the lights, turned on the battery-operated candles and dealt the cards.

We didn't even miss the television. It was quiet, but welcome. Our cat didn't quite know what to think of it, though.

Earth Hour — the annual global effort created to bring people together toward effecting lasting, measurable environmental change — is organized by the World Wildlife Fund. It started in Sydney,



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Australia in 2007. Since then it has grown to engage more than 7,000 cities and towns worldwide.

Just my husband and I shutting off the lights and electronic devices for an hour Saturday night wouldn't make much of a difference, but the collective, large-scale switch-off on an international level was significant. It makes me wonder how much energy usage would be reduced if Earth Hour was held every month.

We already had some practice at this during the ice storm, but that power shut-down was involuntary. During Earth Hour, we made a conscious commitment to the planet.

I also came to realize I couldn't beat my husband at Rummy with the lights on or off.

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