

Opinion

Rules of the road apply to all drivers

The scope of the problem is sadly captured by mounting statistics on death and destruction, with distracted driving now surpassing impaired driving as the number one killer on our roadways.

So far in 2016, eight motorists or passengers have died on Halton roadways, with seven other people sustaining life-altering injuries.

The cause of the collisions that resulted in fatalities and serious injuries are not all a direct result of distracted driving. They are, however, linked to what police call the Big Four Killers: distracted and aggressive driving, lack of seatbelt use and impaired driving.

This week, officers with the Halton Regional Police Service are ramping up their enforcement. They are doing so to mark Road Safety Week in Canada (May 17-23) and are zeroing in on the four 'killers.'

While enforcement is a great way to curb dangerous driver behaviours, motorists need to do their part to ensure they aren't breaking the rules of the road and possibly putting themselves — and others — at risk.

Drivers should take a moment and analyze their own driving behaviours. Consider this:

When you're behind the wheel of a vehicle and your smartphone beeps or buzzes or rings, do you resist the urge to reach for it and glance at the screen? If the answer is no, you most likely do a head-swivel for police before firing off a quick text. Maybe you do so when you're stuck in traffic or idling at a red light. What's the harm?

Well, the harm lies in the behaviour. And repeating this behaviour without consequence can be habit forming. It's that bad habit that may cost you your life. During a recent ride along with a *Champion* reporter, Halton Police Superintendent Chris Perkins said he continually sees distracted driving when he's out patrolling local roads.

When the officer spots a driver speeding, texting or talking on the phone, he can't help but question, "Would these people drive like this on their driving test?" Surely, the answer is no.

So why do motorists feel the need to behave badly? Aren't they aware of the hefty new fines associated with using a mobile device while behind the wheel? Don't they know that some Highway Traffic Act infractions can lead to a licence suspension? Don't they realize that those who use their phones while driving are, according to the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, four times more likely to get into crashes, or that taking their eyes off the road for more than two seconds doubles the chance of a collision?

Motorists need to realize that driving laws apply to all. And those frightening statistics apply to them, too.

SNAPSHOT



IN FULL BLOOM: *Champion* reader Julie Speck snapped this photo of the colourful blooms at her greenhouse, The Flower Shed. The Milton garden centre is responsible for the lovely flowers that adorn Milton's Main Street, which will be planted over the course of the next couple of weeks. Do you have a unique, interesting, fun or cute photo taken in Milton that you would like to submit to be considered for Snapshot? Send submissions (minimum 600 KB resolution) to editor@miltoncanadian-champion.com. Please include the name of the photographer (for publication) and a description of the photo including the location where it was taken.

Up Front

A lesson in persistence

Come on little buddy, you can do it.

As some of our *Champion* Facebook followers are aware, your hometown newspaper's Industrial Drive office has been home to a mama goose and her just arrived first baby — born earlier this week.

I'll admit my excitement over this hasn't been quite as all-consuming as it has for a few of my co-workers. But Tuesday evening marked the exception to that.

Hopping down to the parking lot and stretching his wee legs while mom and pop guarded their two yet-to-be-hatched eggs, junior quickly did an about face and tried to jump back up on the curb to the grass, our container of water and the safety of his parents.

The attempt was met with epic failure — and what looked like a painful splat.



Steve LeBlanc
Sports/News Editor



A gosling explores his surroundings near the *Champion* office earlier this week.
Julie Slack / Canadian Champion

My heart seized up.

The second leap was no more successful. Neither was the third, or... well you get the picture.

I'll give the little fur-ball some credit; giving up was simply not an option. He tested a couple of seemingly shorter spots, and — building up a bit more momentum on the sixth attempt — finally cleared the hurdle back to all his necessities.

I'm not too proud to admit I let out a joyous cheer.

There's a lesson in there for all of us. Persistence pays off.

the Canadian Champion

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