

# Opinion

## Stiffer fines for distracted drivers

The symbolism was perhaps a bit heavy handed, but the message was crystal clear.

In the continuing effort by police to convince drivers that texting or talking on cellphones while behind the wheel can be disastrous, a police service put a hearse into service as an unmarked vehicle. The grim visual, part of a week-long effort to combat distracted driving in the city, was intended to convey the message to motorists that using mobile hand-held devices could land you or someone else in that sombre vehicle, so common to funeral processions. If the approach seems dramatic, it's important to point out that authorities are fighting an uphill battle when it comes to ending distracted driving, as they are with impaired driving, despite decades of powerful messaging and RIDE campaigns.

Last year, police observed the phenomenon become even more common than drunk driving. By the end of August last year, there were 38 distracted-driving deaths, compared to 19 impaired-related fatalities. Overall, 2016 saw 309 traffic fatalities on OPP-patrolled roads, up from 301 the year before, and distracted driving was one of the main causes. In Ontario, texting, talking into a hand-held mobile device, even eating while driving, can result in a fine between \$490 and \$1,000, plus the loss of three demerit points. A ticket can also result in a \$200 or more uptick on your insurance bill. Distracted driving has been illegal in this province since 2009.

Insurance Bureau of Canada statistics show that a driver is 23 times more likely to be involved in a collision if texting while driving and four times more likely if talking on a cellphone. Eighty per cent of collisions involve some sort of driver inattention. But drivers continue to do it.

A Canadian Automobile Association survey, conducted late last year, revealed that 33 per cent of Canadians admit to texting at red lights. If stiffer penalties are what's required (Transport Minister Marc Garneau is calling for national standards on fines) then they should be implemented. We can't allow distracted drivers to continue to make our roads more dangerous.

## Ask a Cop

Do you have a burning question for Halton's finest? Here's your chance to have it answered. The *Champion* reached out to the Halton Regional Police Service, whose officers are eager to answer reader-submitted questions about traffic, crime and community policing. Submitting a question is as easy as 1-2-3. Go to [www.insidehalton.com](http://www.insidehalton.com) and click on the Ask a Cop link on the top right-hand side of the landing page. Fill out the web form, select your community and click 'Submit.' Questions will be answered monthly in a column published in the *Champion* and online.



## Correction

A story in last week's *Champion* about master runner Ed Whitlock, whose passing prompted the Town of Milton to lower its flags in his honour, contained incorrect information. The visitation is set for Friday (March 24) from 2-4 p.m. and 7-9 p.m. at J. Scott Early Funeral Home, 21 James St. The funeral is scheduled for Saturday (March 25) at 11 a.m. at Grace Anglican Church (317 Main St.) The *Champion* apologizes for any inconvenience caused by the error.



## Milton to Hamilton bus service begins

*Time Capsules are gems of information extracted from past issues of the Champion and other publications in order to provide a window into Milton's past.*

**March 1922**

The Green Bird bus service began a Milton-Hamilton service last Monday, via Kilbride, Carlisle, Flamboro Centre, Waterdown and Aldershot.

...

The hockey and skating season ended at the arena on Saturday afternoon with a game between the public school boys and girls. The ice was covered with water. The girls won 3-1.

They averaged larger than the boys and used their weight with great effect in checking.

Public school girls: goal by Loretta Brush, defence, Aileen McMullen and Aileen Kennedy, centre Grace Williams, wings, Ruby Wilson and Eva Onley. Public school boys: goal by Mackay, defence Durno and McDougall, centre Morley, wings, Foster and Timbers, sub. McMullen.

...

Board of Directors of the Children's Aid Society, those from Peel as well as Halton, opened tenders for the new addition to

the building and awarded the contracts, that for building to Sam Henson and that for heating and plumbing to E.F. Earl. The cost will be \$5,700. Some time ago Mrs. Sophia Hyman, of Churchville, left a legacy of \$5,000 for the addition. Peel county council has decided on a grant of \$500 and Halton is expected to give a like amount. (The building was located at the northeast corner of Court and Main streets. It has since been demolished and replaced.)

...

The annual meeting of the Milton High School Athletic Club came off on Tuesday, when officers were elected: Hon. Pres. Principal Hamilton, President W.R. Stewart, Secretary Crawford Chisholm, baseball manager C.E. Toll, coach C. Toletzka, captain W.R. Stewart, Form representatives, Form 4 C. Wilson, 3 R. Carbert, 2, D. Robertson, 1 J. Aikens, 1a J. McJannett. A school baseball league was formed, a team from each of the five forms, also a county high school league composed of Oakville, Georgetown, Burlington and Milton was formed.

*This material is assembled on behalf of the Milton Historical Society by Jim Dills, who can be reached through the society at (905) 875-4156.*

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