

Calming substance hits town streets

By M.D. Watson, Crime Reporter

"Traffic calming" has become more than just an expression in Whitchurch-Stouffville, as evidence mounts of increasing use by local automobiles of a substance which impairs a vehicle's ability to exceed speed limits. The substance, Gohexeneslobenzene (known on the street as "Goslo"), when added to a car's fuel system and ingested by the engine, impairs motor ability and overall performance — resulting in slower speeds.

Although increasing incidence of "Goslo" use has been confirmed by traffic authorities in Europe, the substance was thought to be relatively unknown in Canada and until the recent reports from Whitchurch-Stouffville, there had been no documented cases in the GTA. Local authorities and the regional police were alerted to the possible presence of Goslo in town after quick-thinking residents reported a number of cars on Rupert Avenue observing the speed limit.

Fluid samples from the vehicles were obtained and sent to a government laboratory in Ottawa, which confirmed the presence of "Goslo" in the cars' fuel systems.

A public forum was held on the issue in the Lebovic Centre earlier this week. Dr. Nils Lindstrom, Ph.D., an international expert on Gohexeneslobenzene, spoke on his latest research, and responded to questions from concerned

residents.

For most residents, the question was "how can I tell if my car is on Goslo?"

Dr. Lindstrom outlined the early tell-tale signs — a marked tendency to slow when approaching amber lights, coming to a full stop at stop signs and a noticeable lack of response when the gas pedal is floored at four-way intersections.

Long-term use of the substance will also diminish the ability of a car's stereo system to project 1000 decibels of sound to a range of 50 yards. Local resident Tom Ford recalled an incident earlier this week which appears to confirm this.

"I knew something was up when my neighbour's kid drove by my house and my windows weren't vibrating," says Ford, who reported his observations to the police. The vehicle was impounded and later tested positive for Goslo.

The source of the substance is as yet undetermined; however, police are investigating leads that a group with ties to EOS (Enemies of Speed), a Danish traffic-calming organization, may have played some role in the importation of Goslo and its provision to local automobiles.

The more compelling question is why vehicles are using Goslo. A Pontiac Sunfire, residing in the town's west end, told *This Month* (on condition of anonymity), "Lots of us have tried it. It calms us down. You have no idea the pressure these drivers put on us. Speed up!

Tailgate! Pass! Pass the next guy! Let me tell you, by the end of the day, I'm a wreck!"

Police continue to investigate the situation, but declined comment on suggestions that an unexpected benefit of Goslo's use has been to make their job easier. Requests for officers to enforce speed limits with speed guns have dropped off almost completely and those posted to the town's most notorious "speedways" are finding little to do.

"I used to do really well at this corner," says PC Matt Dillon, assigned to catch speeders at the junction of Elm Road and Westlawn Crescent. "It was like shooting fish in a barrel. Now I haven't stopped a car in weeks."

Ultimately, Dr Lindstrom offered no guarantees that "Goslo" use will be eradicated in the local vehicle population any time soon. He warned that "calmer" traffic may be a circumstance we will have to live with and suggested residents might take advantage of the reduced rates of vehicular speed to do things they would not normally do — like crossing the street, or letting their children play on their front lawns.

While no data currently exist on the recovery outlook for cars which have been Goslo users, Dr Lindstrom warns that even when the substance is completely out of the car's system, vehicles seem unable to achieve former levels of speed.

It appears that "Goslo" may be habit-forming.

Rural Reflections

Scary Stories

by
Ruth
LeBlanc



Who needs Hallowe'en? Twelve months a year there is nothing I like better than telling a good ghost story or two to a wide-eyed audience. The younger the better. Less questions, less scepticism and so much more fun watching young eyes bug in disbelief.

Cruel? No, just watch television for an hour or two or better yet, the world news where hell and terrors are brought daily into your living room. By comparison an old-fashioned tale of hauntings is pretty low on the true scale of horror.

Added to my repertoire of ghoulishness is an annual evening pilgrimage to Scugog Island and the infamous Mississauga Trail, better known as Ghost Road. There, accompanied by my group of tentative ghost seekers, we wait for a sign of the headless motorcyclist.

Years ago - as the story goes - a young man left a party late at night, missed his turn and was decapitated at the end of this country road. Legend says that he returns in the night searching for his head. A lone motorcycle light has been witnessed traveling down this lonely road by believers and sceptics alike.

Vehicles line this isolated road year round, sitting and waiving. Old and

young imaginations alike go as wild as the wind that casts ghostly shadows all around you as you sit and wait... and wait. Without the benefit of streetlights and with no houses nearby, the night is a blanket of pure darkness. Vehicle windows stay up and car doors are double locked. Campfire songs are sung with uneasy laughs as obscene amounts of ju-jubes and other unhealthy treats are eaten almost mechanically.

We have seen the light, so to speak. Starting as a small glow that appears and quickly leaves, the time in between sightings diminishes as the brilliance of the light grows. As the light approaches loud voices become quiet and all joking ends except for an occasional nervous giggle and the sound of doors relocking.

Parapsychologists have investigated this phenomenon for decades and just a few weeks ago the Discovery Channel dedicated a show to this ghostly apparition which has puzzled and perplexed witnesses.

Hearts thundering, we leave our first destination and drive away into the night to the Goodwood Cemetery. Years ago two brothers

farmed the lands across from the graveyard. On occasion one of the cows would escape the barnyard and wander across the dirt road. The elderly gentlemen would take their lantern and walk into the cemetery to retrieve the stray animal.

After their deaths a light was seen moving between the graves, and local folklore was that the brothers were still wandering in search of the elusive cow. Driving in a cemetery on a bright and sunny day gives me not peace of mind as many do, but a shiver down my spine. Take away the daylight and I become a coward and a quivering bowl of human jelly with a throat constricted in fear.

Driving with my entourage, we did witness a shimmering light. Upon further investigation by a brave foot patrol they found it was the reflection of my high beams bouncing off the tombstones as I drove by. We did not see a cow, but I had one when we sat in the dark and waited the minutes away prepared for a sighting that never came. At least not this night.

Yes, you have got to love Hallowe'en with its questions of the unknown that may never be answered, at least not in this lifetime. Happy Hallowe'en.

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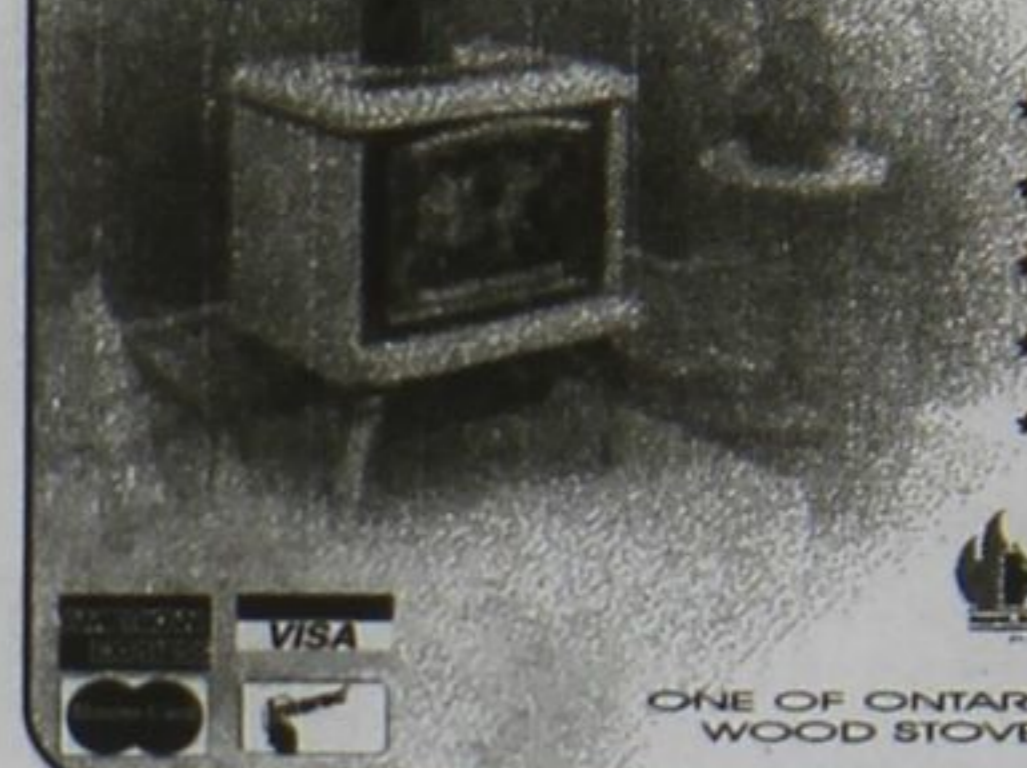
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