

The Oakville Beaver

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BIG EVENT: Big Brothers Big Sisters Halton chair Jeff Turk, left, accepts a \$1,000 cheque from Mark Brown, chair of the Oakville Chamber of Commerce, Theresa Castonguay, M&M Meat Shops, John DiBenedetto of Fortinos, Dominic Evangelista of Shred-It International, Geoff Shore of Tim Hortons and Richard Messer executive director of Kerr Village BIA. The cheque represents proceeds from the third annual Environmental Awareness Day held at the Tim Hortons at 111 Cross Ave. July 9.

Guest Column

Weighing in on taxi issue

On Monday July 4, Oakville Town Council voted to approve the taxi plate issuance from one cab for every 2,000 residents to one cab for every 1,540 residents. What that means is that Oakville's taxi industry will be saturated with cabbies competing with one another to earn a living.

As a resident of Oakville, a part-time driver, and also as a commerce graduate from Ryerson University, I have a wide range of emotions for the decision that was rendered. I feel disappointed in our elected officials who were given analytical reports, accounts from owners, drivers, and dispatchers, all pointing out the negative implications of introducing more taxi plates.

Aside from Councillor Jeff Knoll, and Councillor Marc Grant, you could tell that the decision was already made and that the meeting was just mere formality.

I also feel sorry for the drivers who made arguments as to why Oakville needs more plates.

In five years, these will be the same drivers who will be whining and complaining that there is no business to support the vast number of taxis on the roads.

In light of all the evidence and testimonials presented, Town Council led by Mayor Rob Burton, did a poor job in evaluating the information presented. I believe if council had taken all information into consideration, with no preconceived notions, the opposite would have occurred.

The Town's decision to increase the number of plates in the next five years by reducing the plate to population ratio is a poor decision and cannot be supported by socio-economic factors.

A few points to ponder:

BMA Consulting Group's Study: The number of calls dispatched has drastically decreased despite increase in population. A huge percentage of the business relies on people calling in and placing orders. Why is that?

Residents of Oakville compared to other residents in neighboring towns, have higher incomes, which allows a household to invest in automobiles. We have a great bus transit system and many residents opt to take a bus.

The ability to park your car at two GO stations in Oakville and take the train definitely hinders the taxi business.

Low tourism — unlike other cities such as Niagara Falls and Toronto, Oakville doesn't offer events or activities on a regular basis that would allow taxis to build their business off of tourists.

Guests who stay in hotels entrust the hotels to make out-of-town travel arrangements for them, which results in out-of-town limos coming into Oakville and taking business from the Oakville taxis.

Based on the few points above, it clearly shows that Oakville is a unique town and we must have our own policies in place as opposed to Town's policy in using other towns in different provinces and countries to create a taxi plate model.

Outside Companies Scooping Fares: The only time I have seen other companies come and take Oakville fares is when it has been pre-arranged by the customers.

See Industry page 8

The heat is on, the horses are home and the fun has begun

On the second hottest day in recorded history — temperatures flirted with 40 and the heinous humidex topped 50 — we saw the return of an old friend, with a new friend in tow; the birth of a brand-new fashion statement that I've decided to call Nouveau Heat-Wave Barn Chic; oh, and my wife opened an impromptu spa of sorts.

We started the day with a cycle over the hills around our house. As all exercisers who are not completely crazy, we fast figured out during this prolonged period of extreme heat, if you're going to work out it has to be either at dawn, dusk, or indoors. Even still, we were soaked in sweat within minutes. Speaking of completely crazy, as we biked we came upon a guy jogging in that hellish heat. In long pants. Right.

We returned home to find a truck parked on the burned-out grass in our backyard. It was a welcome sight. It was Art, delivering our hay. Art's a super guy who, for the past six summers, has grinningly tolerated me asking him to kindly change his name to Jude so I can call him, as a great groan-inducer: Hay Jude.

We hadn't seen Art at all this summer. Regular readers of this column know we lost one of our horses over the winter when Apollo fractured his pelvis in a freak accident and ended up having



Andy Juniper

to be put down, leaving us with one horse. Given that horses are herd animals that need companionship, we left Bamby at Five Star North where we stable her during winters while my wife searched for a good riding horse, and a suitable pal for our palomino princess.

As the equine gods would have it, she found that horse right under her nose at Five Star — a big, beautiful Canadian Horse (the official name of the breed) named Nicky. After some trial rides to test compatibility between horse and rider, my wife bought the muscular mare. And last Thursday afternoon, as temperatures soared to sticky new heights, Nicky and Bamby were trailered over to our place. I'd like to say the short trip was a breeze, but there was no breeze that day. I'd like to say it was no sweat, but there was sweat. By the time they arrived, both horses were in a good lather.

Which is how my wife came to unwittingly create a new fashion style that will undoubtedly be a hit in couture hotspots around the globe. See, I was outside cleaning our deck — yeah, and I thought

the guy jogging in long pants was crazy — when my wife emerged from the house in a bikini, topped with an oversized t-shirt and, the coup de grace, a pair of black lace-up barn boots. Well, I didn't know whether to laugh, wolf-whistle, or place a collect call to *Vogue*.

Joined by our daughter, my wife then went about making Nicky feel at home and making both horses as comfortable as possible in that unforgiving heat. When she later explained to a business associate exactly what she'd been doing in the heat with her horses, the woman (apparently not a horse person) laughed and laughed.

"Let me get this straight," the woman chortled, "on the second hottest day in recorded history, you stood outside in that sweltering heat and gave your horses a... sponge bath." She did indeed. And then the woman laughed some more as she envisioned my wife welcoming home those hot horses with a lovely equine spa treatment. You know, a little mani-pedi, maybe a nice full-body massage, maybe braid their manes.

The heat is on. The horses are home. The fun has begun.

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