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25 Queen St. N.  
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905-939-8934  
905-857-6626  
Fax: 905-857-6363  
E-mail address  
admin@kingsentinel.com  
web site  
www.kingsentinel.com

### Head Office

34 Main St. W.  
Beeton ON L0G 1A0  
905-729-2287  
Fax: 905-729-2541

### Publishers:

BRUCE HAIRE  
JOHN ARCHIBALD

### Editorial

**Managing Editor**

**Bruce Haire**

**News Editor**

**Bill Rea**

**E-mail address**

editor@kingsentinel.com

### Advertising

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**John Archibald**

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## Bill's Bulletin Board

By Bill Rea

With all the driving I do in and around King Township, I guess it's a little surprising that I never found myself in this certain situation sooner.

There was a bad accident Thursday morning on Highway 400, just north of Lloydtown — Aurora Road and south of Highway 9. The mishap was sufficiently severe to oblige police officers to close the northbound road completely, meaning traffic heading north on those three lanes that had already passed King Road was going to be funnelled into one lane, and thusly removed from the road.

And today's skill-testing question is: Can you guess where I was at that approximate time Thursday?

Needless to say, that was not a fun day.

Now I drive the 400 often enough to know where the convenient exits are, and the fact is they are kind of limited, which is what you have to expect on one of the 400 series highways. People like me use these roads because we know we can drive a lot faster on them, but we also know (or should know) that if problems develop, it's easy to get stuck on these highways, possibly for a considerable length of time. It's the chance you take,

and the price you pay if the laws of chance work against you.

There wasn't a whole lot I could have done to avoid this, short of choosing another route to get to where I was going. But I had no reason to do that, since I had no reason to believe there was anything wrong.

I was on my way to the Holland Marsh to take pictures of the winter carnival at the local school. I was running a bit ahead of schedule, so I planned a brief side stop to take care of a personal matter. I got on the highway at King Road. Traffic seemed normal for that time of day, the road was clear of snow or slush and visibility was just fine. I had my radio on and was listening to CFRB, planning to listen to Taylor Parnaby's 11:50 newscast (as I try to make a point of doing every day). Since I was not in any particular hurry, I really wasn't paying much attention to my progress.

Then Parnaby opened with the announcement that police had closed the 400, at Lloydtown — Aurora Road. At this point, there was nothing in the flow of traffic to suggest any problems. But I was following a big tractor trailer, so my

horizon up ahead was kind of dominated by the rear end of this big rig.

No matter, I quickly realized I had some problems ahead of me. For reasons that I'm not sure I understand myself, I decided to get out of the middle lane and into the right lane as soon as I could. It was while I was executing this little move that I clearly saw all the traffic around me start to abruptly slow. I guess there was a little bit of wishful thinking involved. If I was close to the Lloydtown — Aurora interchange, the far right lane seemed the logical place to be. Remember, at this stage I really only had the vaguest idea of exactly where I was. I was looking for one of those handy marker signs along the side of the highway, which are numbered and placed approximately one kilometre apart. It was a while before I saw one.

I've driven the highway enough over the years to know King Road is at Interchange 43. I wasn't sure of the number of the Lloydtown — Aurora interchange, but I figured it was something like 53. In fact, I subsequently learned it was 52 (there are some little pieces of trivia that one can only learn the hard way). I finally came upon one marker sign, and my heart sank a bit when I saw it read "48." I was about halfway between the two interchanges, moving at a couple of kilometres per hour, and that was only when I was actually moving, which was not very frequently.

I did a bit of lane hopping, when I realized I was

in the slow one. I usually resist the temptation to do that, fearing the lane I vacate might suddenly pick up speed. This was one of those occasions when I actually made the right move. The middle lane made slightly better progress, and I stayed there until just before a series of pylons would have forced me back to the right.

Now there are probably some people out there who believe I am a relatively calm and patient person. Such grossly misguided souls I would refer to my wife, family members, colleagues (past and present) and others who really know me. I get very uptight in such situations, especially when I have places to be. While my time wasn't particularly tight in this case, it was far from unlimited.

But there is another part of my make-up, which even those close to me sometimes seem unaware, that if I find myself in a situation that I haven't caused and which there isn't a whole lot I can do about, I tend to just chill out and let events develop.

And despite my sense of frustration, I found I was able to relax and keep my blood pressure sort of under control.

There have been cases fairly recently, in which major highways were closed completely, and the poor motorists caught in the trap were evidently left to fend for themselves. I briefly worried about the possibility of being stranded for some hours, but I relaxed, as I saw traffic was moving — slow but sure.

I kept the motor running on my car, realizing that

was going to likely mean a big dip in my fuel economy numbers (something I keep close track of). Fortunately, I had almost half a tank of gas, so I wasn't concerned about running out. But I realized that not everyone in this mess would be that well equipped. I worried about people like that.

What if someone had a health emergency? I wondered if they would be able to get help, and what would I do if I started having similar problems. Then I set my mind to other thoughts, rather than running the risk of having to deal with a self-inflicted panic attack.

I ran into this mess at about 11:50 a.m. After more than an hour of progressing a couple of feet at a time, I made it to the interchange a couple of minutes after 1. Once the traffic was all merged into the one lane, things actually moved with surprising speed.

Considering all the vehicles suddenly being forced onto Lloydtown — Aurora Road, traffic wasn't as bad as I was expecting. There was a lot of diverted traffic heading north on Jane Street, so I went through Kettleby to connect with Keele.

So in the end, I got through it all relatively unscathed, except I'm a little spooked about the whole experience. I found another route to take to get back to the office from the Marsh, and a trip to and from Newmarket the next day was completed without even giving the 400 a glance.

Maybe I didn't really handle this situation quite as well as I first thought I had.

## Editorial

# King Township is not a business

The on-going deliberations of King Township's budget for 2007 is producing a virtual kaleidoscope of emotions and conflicting views on the amount of taxes that should be collected and what should be done with the money.

No one should be surprised that there are varying opinions on both issues. And there should be no consternation either. It's simply part of the game when we have a budget process that's about as open as such a process can be.

Monday night's meeting was no exception, although there was one small matter raised that we hope will only go so far.

One member of the public made an observation that the Township should be run like a business.

That is a concept that's been heard a lot over the years, and in principle, there's little wrong with it, as long it's not taken to extremes.

We have to remember that we are talking about government, as opposed to business. That means we're dealing with two different animals.

How many times have we heard a taxpayer complain that if he ran a company the way politicians run a government, he'd be bankrupt. Fair enough.

The other end of the concept, which we seldom hear anyone bring up, is if governments were run like a business, the politicians responsible would likely be seeking other lines of work once elections are out of the way.

Governments exist largely to provide services. Businesses are supposed to provide one service or another, and show a profit at the same time.

The truth is none of us enjoy paying taxes, and many of us conduct financial planning, using tools like RRSPs, to reduce or

### Letter to the Editor

## CCKT still opposing variance

The following letter, addressed to Mayor Margaret Black and King Township councillors, was submitted to the Sentinel for publication.

Concerned Citizens of King Township (CCKT) has previously expressed our disagreement with the Committee of Adjustment's approval to the request from

Country Day School (CDS) for permission to erect a 15.5-meter structure in front of their main buildings despite lack of adherence to King Township zoning bylaws.

We are now writing to request your support to stop a much more significant violation, specifically the contravention of the Oak

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of necessity, must give a significant amount of priority to the balance sheet, a priority that government cannot.

Running a municipality like a business, in terms of responsible use of tax dollars, is admirable. But the reality is that is where the business sense must end.

Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP).

If CDS is allowed to erect such a structure anywhere on their property, the ORMCP is being violated.

Under ORMCP land designations, the CDS site includes both natural core

**See 'Moraine' on page 5**