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25 Queen St. N.
Bolton ON L7E 1C1
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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

**Director of Sales
JOHN ARCHIBALD**

Sales Reps

Nancy Stenhouse
Aileen Robbins
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Cherry Hames

Composing

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Ad Designers

Penny Gilbertson
Joanne Radyk-Carrick
Lisa Rosati
Brian Valdock

Business

Jacquie Archibald
Cheryl Phillips
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**Bill's
Bulletin
Board**

By Bill Rea

Every now and then, something happens to remind me just what a swell guy I am (if you want to read positive comments about yourself in print, then you sometimes have to write them yourself).

A bit of explanation is in order, I guess.

I was driving in neighbouring Caledon last Wednesday when I came upon a fellow creature crossing the road, and not making a lot of time in the process. On the other hand, every school kid knows that turtles are not known for excessive speed.

That's right, it was a turtle. I'm not up enough on my turtle studies to offer many more comments. I know there are different varieties of turtles, such as the red-eared turtle, which I remember because we had two of them in my class when I was in the second grade. They were named Ian and Alice, and no, I don't know how or why I remember such garbage.

All I can say about this

critter I encountered last week is it was about six inches in diameter. And since I'm not in the habit of frivolously killing my fellow living beings, I made sure I left plenty of space between car and turtle.

In June of this year, we ran a brief story based on a media release from the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), which asked motorists to be on the lookout for turtles crossing the roads. This was in the spring, of course, and the communication was prompted by the fact turtles would have been seeking nesting areas at the time, sometimes prompting them to cross roads and highways. Turtles are known for their protective shells, but one suspects they won't be able to hold up to two-ton automobiles.

The release also said the turtle population is at some risk, meaning the Ministry was anxious that their numbers not be further depleted. As well, we were told there is a law against intentional-

ly killing a turtle, under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, and violators could be looking at a fine of up to \$25,000 for sending a turtle to meet its maker.

Finally, the release said it is permissible, provided it's safe to do so, to stop your car, get out and help a turtle cross the road. That little item popped into my head last Wednesday, as soon as I realized that indeed it was a turtle that I had just passed.

I also realized that I was maybe 100 yards from a red light, meaning I was going to have to stop anyway. There were no other vehicles in sight. Besides, I was a Boy Scout at one time, but I never offered my unsolicited services to helping a little old lady cross the street (I figure my mother wouldn't have counted). This turtle was about the best I could do.

I'm not in the habit of stopping to help animals get across the road. I work on the assumption that if a creature starts a journey, it's responsible for it's completion. But my memory of the note from MNR in June made me think again.

So I stopped, turned on the hazard lights, grabbed a pair of work gloves that I happened to have in the back seat (I was lucky, because they are normally kept in the garage) and stepped out to do my good deed for the day.

The object of the exercise evidently realized that someone was approaching, because its speed abruptly increased. Turtles can run, sort of, when they see someone is after them.

Since I am largely ignorant about turtles, I wasn't sure how this one was going to feel about being accosted on the road. I'm told that turtles don't bite, but I didn't know for sure, and I wasn't anxious to find out the hard way. That's one of the reasons I wore the work gloves. Had they not been handy, I'm not sure I would have wanted to pick this thing up with my bare hands.

That being said, I had to do a bit of chasing to catch up with my quarry.

How many of you out there can say that you have actually chased a turtle along a road? He honest!

By this time, I had a bit of an audience. A few cars were passing by, and the drivers had evidently seen the flashing lights of my vehicle, so everyone seemed to be approaching with a certain amount of caution. I even had a few motorists hang their heads out their windows, yelling out messages that I took to be complimentary.

I know I am not the only one who would stop a car to help a turtle in potential distress. A couple of years ago, I was driving up Keele Street, just out of King City, when I came upon a

couple of men working with a great big one, helping it get across. Like me, they seemed a little reluctant to grab this monster (at least a couple of feet in diameter) with bare hands. They were using a piece of plywood to help it along its way. I was taking pictures of the scene.

On both occasions, we happened to be in a safe place to pull a car over and render the necessary assistance. Helping a little old turtle cross the road is not something I would want to try or recommend on Highway 400.

Actually, this isn't the first time I've stopped and got out of my car to remove objects from the road. And safety permitting, I think it's something most people should consider. I can't count the number of times, like on windy days, when I've come across a garbage pail sitting in the middle of a road, especially a major road like King Road. I've seen lots of drivers just go around these things, and take off on their merry way. But to me, and obstruction is still an obstruction, so if I can, I try to get it off the road, putting it in a ditch if possible, where the wind seems unlikely to toss it anywhere.

I always have figured that's the right thing to do. Even if MNR doesn't have a position on creaming garbage cans with a car, I do.

Editorial

**Desire to preserve heritage cannot
infringe on owners' rights**

It was clearly demonstrated at Monday night's Township council meeting that there's little desire to see the Pringle House in Nobleton demolished. And there is hope that some way can be found to keep it standing.

That's good news, because we understand the importance that many people place on preserving our past.

But that being said, we also have to remember that while Township councillors have an obligation to respect the past, they were elected to govern in the present. That rightly imposes upon them an obligation to do what's right by the current owners of the property.

There is disagreement about the structural soundness of the house, and it's owner, Maria Gallo, made an excellent point Monday

night, when she asked if the house is in good shape, why are they having trouble getting it insured. A valid issue that needs to be addressed. There are others.

Acquiring property carries with it certain responsibilities, and if the property involves a house that's more than 100 years old and important to the heritage of the community, there is a certain obligation to preserve it. But the community has an obligation too, and that includes not imposing requirements that are too onerous on a property owner.

It could be argued that expecting a property owner to foot the entire bill for the preservation of a house is excessive, especially when it's others who are pushing hardest for that preservation. Few of us would be very happy to be blithely told by

the community what we can or cannot do with our property, entirely at our own

expense.

We do hope this house can be saved, but it has to

be done in a way that's fair to both sides. That is the community's obligation.

Letter to the Editor

Concerns over Pringle house

The following letter, addressed to Mayor Margaret Black, was submitted to the sentinel for publication.

It has very recently come to my attention that the Pringle House in Nobleton is under threat of demolition.

The threat is immediate, and this letter of concern brings to your attention, and to the attention of King Township council, the urgency with which I am requesting the right decision to be made in terms of having the building listed as a heritage building.

I would also suggest that this building is also impor-

tant in terms of the streetscape of Nobleton.

With a historic building having recently been demolished overnight – the Masonic building which was also located in Nobleton, it would be disastrous if another such occurrence was to happen once again in our township.

The house was recently inspected by Ian McGillivray of McGillivray Architects. According to his report, "this house is in good to excellent condition with no significant externally visible structural problems with the possible exception of the west extension."

As a first-generation Canadian, I believe that we need to exercise a much more vigilant approach to older buildings in all of our communities.

We tend to demolish older buildings at the drop of a hat. We could easily end up with no heritage buildings in King Township if the proper procedures are not put in place to protect them.

I urge you, Madam Mayor, and the King Township councillors, to make the right decision for the preservation of the Pringle House.

Ron Mitchell,
King City