

Cyclists ignore rules

By JOHN STEWART
Times Staff Writer

When the Peel regional policewoman spotted two young children riding on the same bicycle last week, she stopped them and had them direct her to their home.

She explained to their mother that one of her sons was riding on the handlebars while the other rode the bike.

To the astonishment of Constable Carol Porter, the woman said, "I told them they were going to get caught if they kept doing that."

Unfortunately, that kind of parental attitude is all too prevalent when it comes to bike safety, says Porter. "People wouldn't let their kids drive a car and wouldn't hand them a gun, but they give them bikes without giving them proper training. It's not conscious negligence, it's just something they're not aware of."



"People from Europe are shocked at the way bicyclists break traffic rules, but here in Mississauga it seems the bicycle is still looked on as a toy."

There have always been problems with young bike riders who don't know the traffic rules, or don't observe them, but the problems seem to be spreading into older age groups with the growing popularity of cycling.

A bicycle is a "vehicle" under the Highway Traffic Act and anyone going through a stop sign or violating any traffic regulation is subject to prosecution.

The fine for an offence is the same whether the vehicle is a bike or a car.

Sgt. David Yakichuk of Peel police told the Mississauga Traffic Safety Council last week that police are prosecuting violators when they observe them.

The safety council had two letters on its agenda from citizens who have experienced problems. R. Rickard New of Tecumseh Drive said most children don't appear "to have a clue about the rules of the road."

"As far as I am aware, laws for cyclists are similar to those for motorists. A driver wouldn't think of going down the road abreast another car and chat with the driver of that car. He wouldn't stop in the middle of the street, and he certainly wouldn't drive down the wrong side of the road."

In a covering letter, Ward 2 Councillor Mary Heien Spence said she felt parents should be made more aware of the need for training their children to ride bikes. "It is also my view that schools should take a strong stand in forbidding children in younger grades from riding bicycles to school." She suggested children younger than eight years of age not be allowed to ride bikes to school.



Roberta Kelly of the North Service Road related in a letter to police how she was forced to slow down while driving on Atwater Avenue earlier this month when four young boys riding side by side would not let her pass.

She suggested a number of proposals, including licencing bikes, prohibiting anyone under 12 years on the road, and allowing citizens to stop cyclists breaking the law and report them to police.

Porter says licencing has been tried in other jurisdictions, but has largely proven fruitless. "It's almost impossible to expect a child to remember to carry a licence. He wouldn't normally carry it with him," she says, "or he'll tell you the dog ate it."

Regional police carry out an extensive safety program in the schools. When they find juveniles breaking rules, they normally write the parents, explaining the infraction and asking them to instruct their children on proper safety procedures. If the problem persists, a personal visit follows.

Besides the regular programs, other initiatives to try to improve public bike safety are being pursued. The Ontario Ministry of Transportation and Communications has a campaign stressing that you "drive" a bike, and don't ride it, because it is a vehicle, like a car.

The safety council asked regional police to explain their present safety-enforcement program.

Road upgrading ordered

A developer east of Streetsville must satisfy requirements for upgrading Durie and Carolyn Roads, and providing provision for streetlights and sidewalks before final approval is given by the city.

Ward 4 Councillor Larry Taylor says residents have a right to have Durie fixed up all the way to where it enters Streetsville. "It's only a 17-foot road," he notes.

Councillors voted to require the outstanding department wants to require the developer to reconstruct a portion of

September.

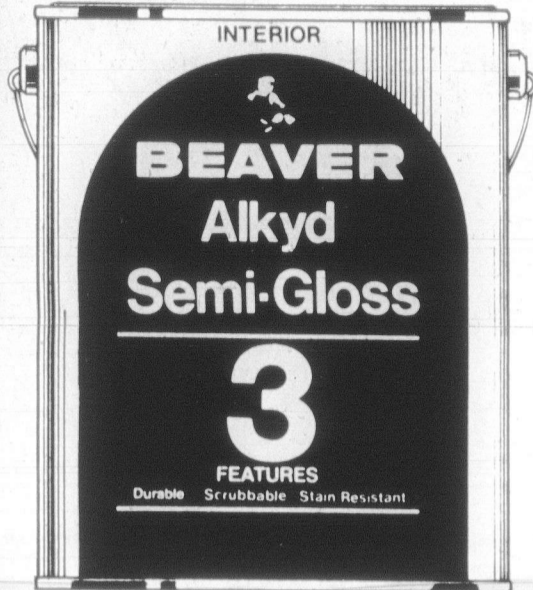


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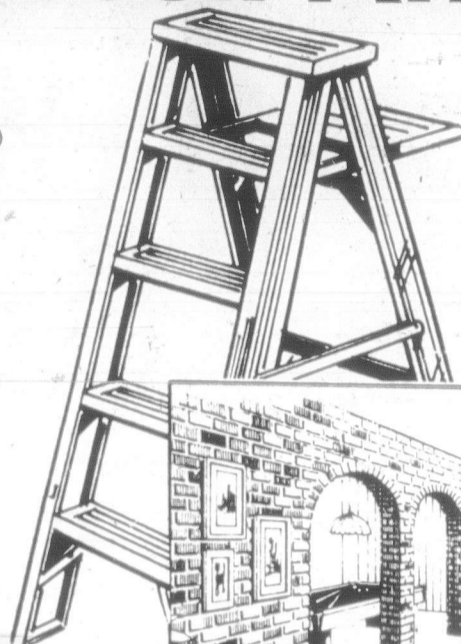
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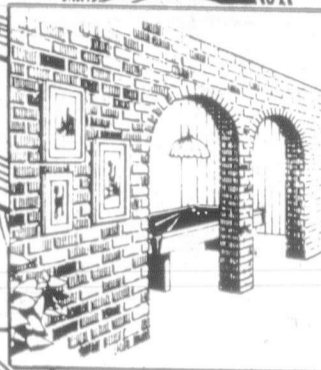
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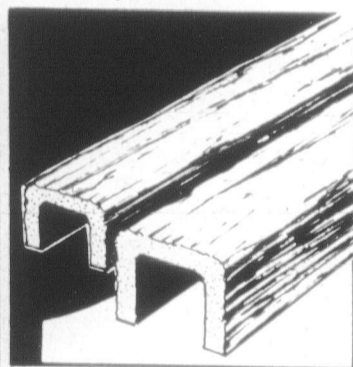
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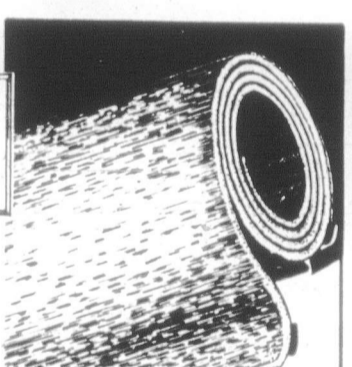
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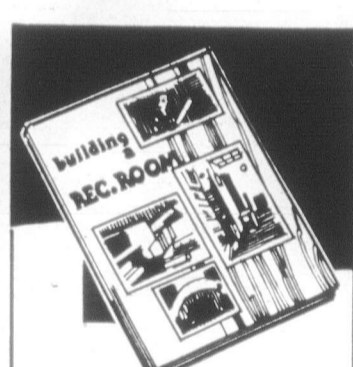
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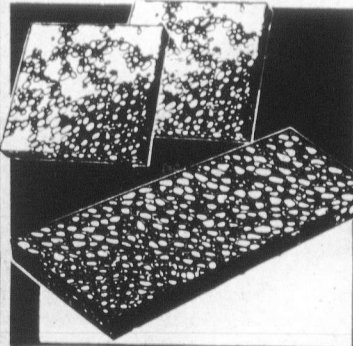
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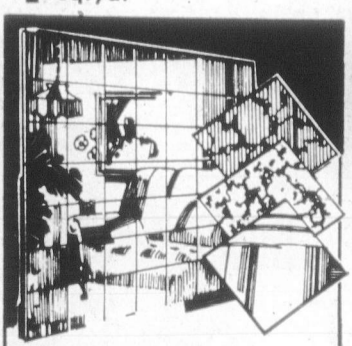
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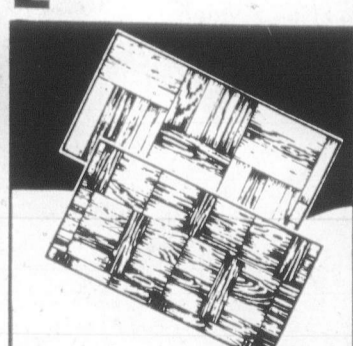
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