



Chris McNeil (left), his brother Scott (centre) and Wayne Cochrane do some tire-swinging in Erin Mills. Sgt. David Yakichuk stresses that Elmer the Safety Elephant is aimed at students their age and won't be replaced by the new "superheroes."

Elmer's here to stay

So move over Captain Safety and Safety Woman

By JIM ADAIR
Times Staff Writer

Elmer the Safety Elephant will never be phased out, asserts the man who knows him best in Mississauga, Sgt. David Yakichuk of the Peel Regional Police.

After students at Streetsville Secondary School designed new characters to remind children of traffic safety, there was talk that Elmer's job might be taken over by the new "superheroes."

But Yakichuk says Elmer has been around for too long to be replaced by Captain Safety and Safety Woman, or by anything else.

"The papers picked it up and blew it out of proportion," Yakichuk says. "Captain Safety is just an additive to the program."

"Elmer's never been outdated yet," he adds. Elmer was invented in 1940 by Walt Disney, and promoted locally by the Toronto Telegram. Later the Toronto Star took over the promotion, and now it is done by the Ontario Safety League.

Ad campaign

The Streetsville students were asked by the Mississauga Traffic Safety Council to design an advertising campaign that would make an impression on the city's children. They decided to invent Captain Safety and Safety Woman because they felt Elmer wasn't being recognized as a hero among Grades 1 to 5 children.

At present, Elmer is only used for kindergarten-to-Grade 3 students. Yakichuk admits Elmer would probably be laughed at if he was used as a symbol of safety for children in the older grades.

Vista Heights Public School principal Myron Bryan says that he felt Elmer was better

received by the younger children than the superheroes, who visited his school a couple of weeks ago.

He doesn't think that Elmer is an outdated symbol for the younger children, noting that that age group tends to study animals extensively in their classrooms.

"I think there's a need for both of them," says Bryan. "I think we need all the safety approaches we can get."

Principal Ross Kingdom of Meadowvale Public School says he thought a lot of children would be disappointed if Elmer was phased out.

"He's an integral part of our primary safety program," Kingdom says. "We have a plaque on the wall that has Elmer's picture on it, and if we have no accidents during the school year, we get a bar for it."

He says the children are made aware that they have to work hard to get that safety bar.

Laugh or cry?

Dan Darcy, one of the Streetsville students who designed the Captain Safety campaign, says he didn't know whether to "laugh or cry" after he saw published reports that Captain Safety was designed to replace Elmer.

He says Captain Safety and Safety Woman were designed because a survey of 1,700 school children showed they wanted new characters to promote safety.

However, Darcy said he is sure that Elmer will not be replaced, and that the superheroes can work along with the elephant. "Elmer is still effective."

He adds that the Captain Safety campaign has gone much better than he expected, and that reaction from both children and parents has been very good.

Proposal for crosswalks appears 'in limbo' again

The latest attempt to have the city begin a pedestrian crosswalk system appears to be dead.

Mississauga Traffic Safety Council voted last week to receive a report from the city engineer which did recommend implementation of the crosswalk system.

Ward 3 Councillor Frank Bean, a member of the safety council, says the crosswalk proposal "seems to be in limbo again."

Previous attempts to implement the system also failed when city engineering and police officials were noncommittal on its benefits.

The council decided to investigate the idea since the crosswalks are so common in other major municipalities in the province.

City Engineer William Taylor's report suggested crosswalks aren't necessary in Mississauga where there is generally less pedestrian-vehicular conflict than in other centres. Present safety provisions, including special signs and pavement markings for school crossings, use of school patrols and municipal crossing guards "have effectively provided a high degree of pedestrian safety," Taylor contended.

A letter from Peel Regional Police Inspector Ewen Macdonald suggested that a massive educational campaign would be necessary to start the program. The

letter did not state definitely whether the police favor crosswalks or not.

Bean says a minimal education program would probably be required since so many Mississauga drivers have been in Toronto where crosswalks are common. He says drivers going from Bloor

Street in Mississauga to Bloor Street in Toronto apparently have no difficulty in observing crosswalks there.

The council decided to install a special yellow flashing light at Burnhamthorpe Road and Molly Avenue, the intersection which triggered

the original suggestion for crosswalks. Bean says traffic volumes there will never reach high enough proportions to warrant traffic signals, yet there is a serious safety problem for pedestrians.

He says that location is a good example of an area where a crosswalk would be valuable. The engineer-

ing department says such locations would be few and far between, causing doubt in drivers' minds as to whether they must observe the crosswalk or not.

The safety council's recommendation now goes to general committee and council for a final decision.

Math formula set for safety

By JOHN STEWART
Times Staff Writer

Mississauga Traffic Safety Council is going to test a new mathematical formula for safety in an attempt to define hazard areas as objectively as possible.

The new system, to be tried by all traffic safety members during an experimental series of inspections in the next few weeks, puts a number value on several different potential safety problems at intersections.

Once those hazard evaluations are added together, they will produce a figure that should tell the council whether any controls at all are needed; whether a school patrol guard is needed; whether a city crossing guard is needed; or whether the only safe way to transport students is by bus.

The council asked the city's legal department, Sergeant David Yakichuk and Inspector Ewen Macdonald of the Peel

Regional Police and council co-ordinator John Murray to develop the check list for hazards.

That move came following legal advice from city staff who indicated that the council should refrain from any reference to "hazardous" routes. Legal action could follow if the council said a route was not hazardous and an accident subsequently occurred.

The new checklist may

also solve the continuing communication problem between the safety council and Peel Board of Education about what to do on controversial intersections, where the council feels busing rather than crossing guards are warranted.

For the first time, the council will have a specific calculation to show the need to support its contention.

One of those controversial corners is the Queensway West and Erin Mills Parkway, where the council believes busing is warranted and the board wants crossing guards. The new checklist was used for an evaluation there and showed a rating of nine.

The proposed evaluation scheme shows ratings of six to nine warrant crossing guards, while more than nine warrants busing.

Education head to do study

Peel Board of Education is going to get its detailed study of school programs after all — in the person of Director of Education John Fraser.

Trustees this week approved relieving Fraser of his administrative duties from September to December of this year so he can conduct the study.

Trustees had previously rejected undertaking a comprehensive study of program because of the \$83,000 price tag.

The study conducted by Fraser will cost an estimated \$25,000.

He will be looking into the historical background of secondary school programs, reviewing program literature, staffing and resources, current legislation and professional development.

Fraser says that outside organizations, including the association of large school boards and the Brampton Board of Trade,

have shown an interest in the study.

"The time appears to be ripe; there is no shortage of co-operation," Fraser says.

He says the purpose of the study would be to ensure that taxpayers are getting value for the money invested in education.

While Fraser is conducting the study, an acting director of education will be appointed.

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