

Watching my life flash before my eyes

Mike Wilson
From the Editor's Desk



We've all experienced those moments where you feel like your life suddenly flashes before your eyes.

For some, it's a dream. For others, it's while driving the car, and you nearly avoid an accident.

And for some, it happens while coaching a kids' softball team.

I fall in the latter category. This summer, I decided to take on the challenge of coaching a U9 Mixed Mites (three-pitch) softball team. And by taking on, I mean nobody offered to coach on registration night, and our local minor

ball association started calling parents.

I was the first phone call, as it just happens that my aunt and cousin run our local minor ball association.

"We won't have a team if you don't coach," they told me.

When family asks you do to something, you do it.

It turns out we have a pretty decent team. We're doing very well on the field, posting a 7-3 record as I write this.

In our league, the coach pitches to their hitters. Based on our success thus far, my years of subpar

pitching when I played softball are finally paying off, as our players rarely strike out.

Hitters rarely struck out against me 25 years ago when I pitched, but I digress.

One night a few weeks ago, we were hosting a team from a nearby town when one of our best hitters, Isaac, stepped up to the plate as the last batter in the third inning.

Isaac fouled off the first pitch into our dugout, followed by a hard-hit foul ball down the right-field line.

The third pitch went in, which Isaac also fouled off.

In our league, the hitter gets another pitch if they hit a foul ball on the third pitch.

So here we were, the bottom of the third inning with the bases loaded, down to

the final pitch.

Doing my best to pitch like 12-year-old Mike on the mound, I tossed in the pitch.

It was headed straight over the heart of the plate, right in Isaac's wheelhouse.

He knew it. I knew it. Everyone on our bench knew it.

He swung, and it connected.

The next few seconds felt like they passed by in slow motion.

Once he connected, the 11-inch yellow mush ball came straight back to the pitcher's mound, where I stood 30 feet away.

This hit was not a high fly ball – it was a line drive hammered back at the mound roughly six feet off the ground.

I am 6'4" tall.

As the ball came towards me, right at eye level, all I could think of was how to

avoid getting hit. In a split second, I determined falling flat on my back was the way to go.

I hit the ground, the ball travelled into centre field, and Isaac ran like the wind around the bases to score four runs to end the inning.

It took me what felt like an eternity to stand up after that – in reality, it was about 30 seconds. The opposing team's coach came over to help me get up, complimenting me on avoiding the ball.

"I thought I was a goner," I told him. "My life flashed before my eyes."

After I dusted myself off, I made my way over to the bench to congratulate Isaac on his big hit. The players were excited. Not only had they scored four runs, but I was filthy. There was dust in places dust should never find on the human body.

As our team headed back

onto the field, the umpire walked over to talk to me.

"Man, I wish I had my phone out for that one," he said with a big grin. "The look on your face when that ball started coming back at you... your eyes were so far out of your head!"

I didn't need to see the video to know they were.

Thankfully, the rest of the game was uneventful. We went on to win the game, the kids had a good laugh at the expense of their coach, and nobody got seriously hurt.

And it made the post-game ice cream taste that much better.

Mike Wilson is the editor of the Walkerton Herald-Times. He writes a weekly column covering everything from politics to the exploits of his children. Comments and feedback are welcome at mwilson@midwesternnewspapers.com.

TURNBACKS

News from the July 11, 1990 issue of the Walkerton Herald-Times

- Workers picket Sunday shopping.
- Back of truck not a safe spot.
- Slow moving vehicle signs losing impact.
- Masonic Lodge is at home in Walkerton.
- Advertised: Complete car care kit – \$9.99.
- Now playing at the Paramount Theatre in Hanover: *Pretty Woman*.

We welcome your submissions

As the *Walkerton Herald-Times* works to provide an interesting and accurate reflection of Brockton and surrounding area through our news pages, we urge local citizens to ensure their community organization is represented through submissions of news tips, articles and photographs.

The contributions are appreciated and, although we can't promise publication of all submissions, every effort is made to ensure those that arrive make our print and online editions.

Our reporters provide coverage of local

councils, schools, service clubs, hospitals, community events, sports and more. However, we can't be everywhere, so it's important to see that numerous stories and photos in each edition have been supplied by dedicated correspondents or interested community members.

We truly appreciate and support your efforts to make the *Walkerton Herald-Times* your own.

Submissions and news tips are welcome at mwilson@midwesternnewspapers.com or you can reach us at 519-881-1600.

FROM THE ARCHIVES



From the July 11, 1990 issue of the Herald-Times
Construction on Durham Street, Walkerton, is expected to last until mid-September as crews install a new watermain.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Radioactive again

To the editor,
Two articles ("South Bruce signs non-binding agreement with NWMO," June 23 and "Ombudsman publishes report on closed meetings held by Bruce County's executive committee," May 24) and two letters ("An open letter to Dave Rushon" by Michelle Stein, June 23 and "It's natural to be afraid" by Tony Zettel, June 16) in recent issues of the *Walkerton Herald-Times* served to reinforce my conviction that what is happening with the deep geological repository (DGR) project in South Bruce is just plain wrong.

While the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO), Bruce Nuclear Exploration Team, South Bruce council and Community Liaison Committee all claim informed community willingness remains necessary for the project to be greenlit, they are doing their best to operate in secret. Improperly closing council meetings to the public, delaying release of information requests and failing to hold an appropriately timed referendum

are a few examples.

In addition, the NWMO's use of their financial might to 'groom the community' with \$3.2 million to South Bruce so far, including money that is being used to pay the salaries of some municipal employees according to their treasurer, sets a terrible precedent for privatizing public services over time. Apparently, hundreds of thousands of dollars are going regularly to the Sauguen Ojibway Nation, who must consent as well. Google the CBC report "NWMO scammed" for breaking news on that one.

It was also reported in the May 24 *Herald-Times*, after an investigation, the ombudsman had concluded that Bruce County had improperly closed meetings to the public in violation of the *Municipal Act*. Interestingly, when doing some research, some of those meetings discussed the Nuclear Innovation Institute's plans for locating a facility. When interviewed by the ombudsman, some councillors told the investigators they were closed because Bruce Power "wanted to keep it confidential" and it was to "protect the interests of Bruce Power." Seems that in Bruce County, both upper

and lower tier government toe the line when it comes to what the nuclear industry wants. Will the ombudsman be investigating lower tier South Bruce council next?

Any reasonable person has to conclude that this compromised and conflicted mess just doesn't smell right.

*Chris Palmer
West Grey*

Open letter to South Bruce council, Nuclear Exploration Team

The following is an open letter, dated July 5, to South Bruce Mayor Robert Buckle, council and the South Bruce Nuclear Exploration Team.

To Mayor Buckle, South Bruce councillors and the South Bruce Nuclear Exploration Team,
Everyone one of you has just taken your first step into the deep geological repository (DGR) hole and the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) is grinning from ear to ear. How could you, in a closed door

(private) meeting with the lawyer present, set up a memorandum of understanding (MOU), then a week later have the lawyer present it at a council meeting, followed by initiating a bylaw to have it signed?

Lise Morton, NWMO vice-president of site selection, states, "...the people in the areas where we're working will always be the experts on their communities and what's important to them." As council, are you the "experts" in this community? Where is the community involvement and transparency?

The MOU is a document that describes a formal agreement between two parties. It is not a legal agreement but it does indicate the establishment of a business relationship that will continue and will likely result in a legal agreement. Just great! What happened to having a referendum before all this formality occurred? It seems that all the i's will be dotted and the t's crossed before the community has its say. Who determined this community is "willing?"

Read all the headlines in the recent newspapers regarding the MOU – they make it sound like the DGR is a "done deal" that

will be confirmed in 2023 by the NWMO. Will this council be around in 2023? Will this MOU still apply?

Read the conditions in this MOU. The NWMO is going to run this community as 31 of the 36 "guiding" principles are all in the NWMO's hands. Council will only be a "figure head" bowing down to what the NWMO says.

It is about time South Bruce council and your committee of council, the Community Liaison Committee, who only lets you learn what the NWMO wants you to know, come out from behind their computer screens and have "face-to-face" open meetings with the public.

Yes, Mayor Buckle et al., you have just taken the first step into that deep hole called a DGR. And the community has had no say. Some transparency.

And by the way, the recent South Bruce Exploration Project mail outs say that "several provinces" use nuclear power. Please inform the public what other provinces besides Ontario and New Brunswick use nuclear power. And they call this Canada's plan!

*S. A. McDonald
Culross/Teeswater*

Mr. Stick Man

Mike Wilson
From the Editor's Desk



As a journalist at a community newspaper, you get the opportunity to interact with several people in the community.

I'm sure a seasoned reporter could write a book about their experiences throughout their career. As for me, I have a handful of really entertaining stories that I could share. However, one sticks out more than the others.

In 2015, I was a reporter for the *Mount Forest Confederate*. Our office in downtown Mount Forest was a busy spot, often frequented by residents who wanted to share news tips.

One such day I was sitting in my office when an older gentleman stopped in wanting to talk about an issue he was having with his neighbour and the town. We'll call him Mr. Stick Man.

You'll also understand the name later.

Mr. Stick Man sat in my office and told me his story. The issue was with his neighbour to the east, whom Mr. Stick Man said had directed their rainwater onto the property.

"How so?" I asked. "They've got all their downspouts from the eaves pointed at my property, with big 'o' pipe from the bottom of the downspout running onto my property," he replied.

He then produced a stick – a twisted, knotty branch about an inch in diameter and roughly 20 inches long. See why I call him Mr. Stick Man?

Mr. Stick Man handed me the stick as if it were an official, legally binding measuring device.

"It's this far over my property line! And I know where my property line is because the stakes are easy to locate," he said.

Having some familiarity with bylaws, I knew the neighbour was in the wrong.

"Have you talked to the

neighbour?" I asked.

Mr. Stick Man said he has on multiple occasions, and the neighbour would move the big 'o' pipe. However, the next day, the big 'o' pipe was over the property line.

I suggested he talk to the bylaw enforcement folks at the Township of Wellington North. He had already done that.

"They don't see the issue," he claimed.

Thinking this was odd, I once again looked at the stick. Seeing the confusion on my face, Mrs. Stick Man suggested I hop in their car and take a drive over to the property.

So I did. When we pulled up to the property, I was stunned.

It was an empty lot with grass about a foot high.

We got out of the car, and Mr. Stick Man walked with purpose toward the easterly boundary of the property.

He motioned for me to follow. I walked over to find a string that marked the property line. Sure enough, there was the big 'o' pipe from the neighbour's downspout about one stick over the property line.

"They're draining their water onto my property," Mr. Stick Man said. "They are," I replied. "But what harm is it doing? It's an empty lot."

Mr. Stick Man told me all of the harmful things this would allegedly do to his property, all of which were so minor that I can't recall them seven years later.

"One day, I am going to give this property to my kids and they can build a house on it," he said. "But this land will be useless if they keep draining their rainwater onto it."

I took some photos at Mr. Stick Man's request, and they dropped me off at the office.

"I look forward to reading your story," he said. And then he handed me the

stick.

Not wanting to offend him, I took the stick and walked inside.

Afterwards, I reached out to the township about this issue, and surprisingly I got a response. I don't recall the exact quote, but it was essentially, "We have met with Mr. Stick Man, and no further action will be taken."

After discussing with my editor, we concluded that this story wasn't a story. The story I had crafted would not see the light of day.

A few weeks later, Mr. Stick Man called me and asked why his story wasn't published. I told him my reasoning; it was a dispute between him, his neighbour and the town.

"We won't be publishing the story," I said.

Mr. Stick Man told me how disappointed he was and that he was cancelling his subscription to the *Confederate*.

"I'm sorry to hear that," I said. Then Mr. Stick Man hung up.

Fast forward a few months, and the owners of the *Confederate* had decided to close the Mount Forest and centralize the area's operations out of Listowel. As we finished packing up the office, one of my co-workers found Stick Man's stick and asked if I was bringing it with me.

"No," I said. "That memory can stay here."

When we moved into the Listowel office a few days later, I arrived to find my belongings – and the stick – on my desk.

"What's with the stick?" asked one of my new office mates.

"It's a long story," I said.

Since that day in December 2015, the stick has disappeared. I have no idea what happened to the stick, but part of me wishes I still had it.

The stick may be gone, but the legendary tale of Mr. Stick Man lives on.

Mike Wilson is the editor of the Walkerton Herald-Times. Comment and feedback is welcome at mwilson@midwesternnewspapers.com.

FROM THE ARCHIVES



From the July 22, 1987 issue of the *Herald-Times* Bruce County, particularly the Bruce Peninsula, has the distinction of getting the 34th national park in Canada. The above photo, a portion of the park and the harbor at Tobermory, was taken from 4,000 feet.

TURNBACKS

News from the July 22, 1987 issue of the *Walkerton Herald-Times*

- Teachers must learn facts about AIDS.
- New "looney" coin popular.
- Residents oppose industrial zoning.
- Optimist Club will be started in town.
- Advertised: Kraft peanut butter – \$1.59.
- Now playing at the Paramount Theatre in Hanover: *Summer School*.

We welcome your submissions

As the *Walkerton Herald-Times* works to provide an interesting and accurate reflection of Brockton and surrounding area through our news pages, we urge local citizens to ensure their community organization is represented through submissions of news tips, articles and photographs.

The contributions are appreciated and, although we can't promise publication of all submissions, every effort is made to ensure those that arrive make our print and online editions.

Our reporters provide coverage of local

councils, schools, service clubs, hospitals, community events, sports and more. However, we can't be everywhere, so it's important to see that numerous stories and photos in each edition have been supplied by dedicated correspondents or interested community members.

We truly appreciate and support your efforts to make the *Walkerton Herald-Times* your own.

Submissions and news tips are welcome at mwilson@midwesternnewspapers.com or you can reach us at 519-881-1600.



Brian Nogler Photos

Walkerton's Brian Nogler has recently taken up photography, and has used the surrounding beauty of the town as his subject. Nogler says more of his photos are taken while he walks and admires local gardens and backyards. "Photography, for me, is a way of getting out, exercising, taking in nature, seeing the pride people take in their gardens, and of course having some great conversations," says Nogler. And local residents have been eager to share their spaces for Nogler to shoot, with more shoots planned in the near future. To see more of Nogler's photos, visit his Facebook page – [facebook.com/Backyards-and-Gardens-110317345051280](https://www.facebook.com/Backyards-and-Gardens-110317345051280).



BILL HUETHER, General Manager
bhuethe@midwesternnewspapers.com
MIKE WILSON, Editor
mwilson@midwesternnewspapers.com
PAULINE KERR, Local Journalism Initiative reporter
pkerr@midwesternnewspapers.com
MARIE MCKERTCHER, Production Manager
mmckertcher@midwesternnewspapers.com
JANINE MARTIN, Production
jmartin@midwesternnewspapers.com

SANDY WOODCOCK, Advertising, 519.881-1600
swoodcock@midwesternnewspapers.com
CATHY SPITZIG, Front Office, 519.881-1600
cspitzig@midwesternnewspapers.com
JULIE KELLY, Front Office, 519.881-1600
jkelly@midwesternnewspapers.com
DOUG ROWE, Regional Manager
drowe@midwesternnewspapers.com

The Local Journalism Initiative is funded by the Government of Canada. Canada
Printed by Master Web Printing & Publishing

Bravo for 'the worst form of government'

The brutal murder of British MP, Sir David Amess in a suspected terrorist attack has raised questions around the world about the safety of political representatives.

By all accounts, Amess was "a man of the people" – approachable, interested in speaking with his constituents and representing them to the best of his ability. He was known for his work on behalf of young people with special educational needs, and campaigned against trophy hunting and fox hunting. He was described as a good, kind man, a family man, and a political representative who "got things done."

The murder investigation was still in its early stages as of press time, but reading the various accounts provides a picture of an accused killer with probable ties to Islamic terrorism. It is unlikely the killer knew his victim personally; Amess was murdered not because of who he was, but because of his position. The fact he made it a habit of meeting directly with his constituents made it easy for the killer to get access to his victim.

There is a certain grim irony in the fact that a leader in a totalitarian regime where the public has no say in government would have been safer. Such a leader would not have been at a public place, meeting with ordinary constituents. He would not have been out in public at all, at least, not without well-armed bodyguards, bullet-proof glass shields and metal detectors.

Moreover, in such a regime anyone even remotely suspected of being dangerous would have been behind bars or dead.

Because Britain is a democracy, where leaders govern according to the will of the people, a terrorist was able to stab and mortally wound an elected representative.

Around the time this tragedy occurred, elected representatives in this area were doing much the same thing as Amess – meeting with community members, with no police car in sight.

Literally anyone in this area can greet a member of provincial legislature or Parliament, even a cabinet minister, one-on-one. In the days before COVID, the greeting would likely have included a handshake.

Despite Amess' murder, that is unlikely to change. British politicians and their democratically-elected counterparts here and elsewhere will continue to meet their constituents and hear what they – we – have to say.

Democracy is far from perfect. Winston Churchill has been quoted as saying "democracy is the worst form of government – except all the others that have been tried."

One has to wonder what form of government would be preferred by a person who would slaughter someone like Amess. We can only pray we never find out.

A society in which government leaders cower in fear behind barricaded doors, and never meet with ordinary people, is not one we would want to be a part of.

If anything good can emerge from a tragedy like the death of Amess, let it be a renewed respect for political leaders like he was – people who take pride in being part of their communities, who meet with members of the public and who try to provide the best representation possible.

We have just had a federal election and are facing provincial and municipal elections. Bravo to the people who have stepped forward or who will do so in the coming months, to seek election.

It takes courage and commitment to seek public office, especially in challenging times like those in which we live. A global pandemic continues to wreak havoc, a housing crisis looms and climate change threatens many communities in ways too numerous to list.

The people we have just elected, and who we will soon elect, may not be perfect. Some of them will make mistakes. There will be decisions with which we disagree. We may even become angry enough not to vote for that person again.

As systems of government go, it may not be ideal but is impossible to imagine one that would give us better representation, more rights and a greater ability to give voice to our ideas.
No murderous act of violence will change that.

The advertiser agrees that the publisher shall not be liable for damages arising out of errors in advertisements beyond the amount paid for the space actually occupied by that portion of the advertisement in which the error occurred, whether such error is due to the negligence of its servants or otherwise, and there shall be no liability for non-insertion of any advertisement beyond the amount paid for such advertisement.

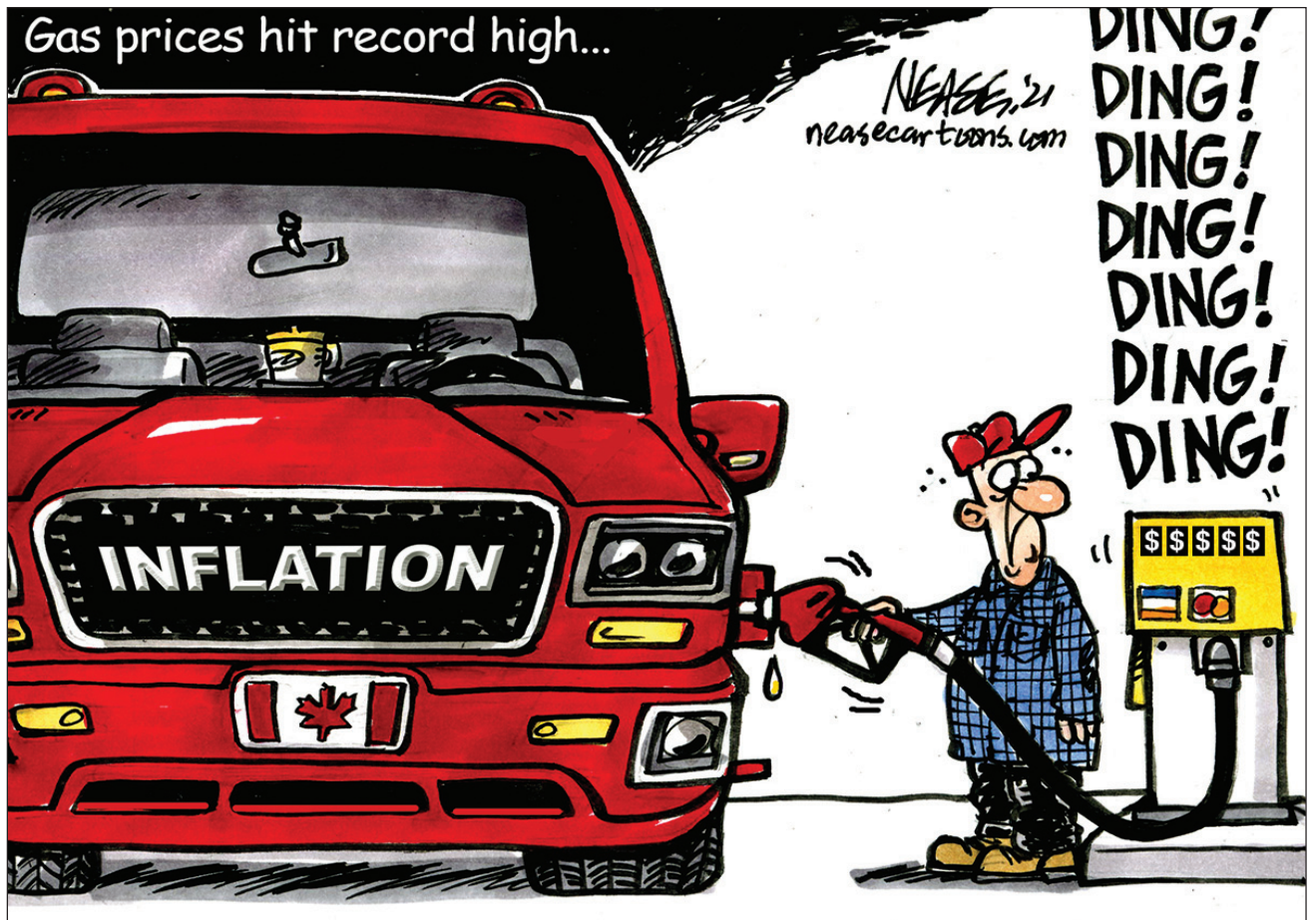
Copyright Walkerton Herald Times 2021

The Walkerton Herald Times is a member of the Ontario Press Council, an independent body set up by the newspapers of the province to uphold freedom of expression and deal with complaints from readers. The Press Council encourages complainants to first give the newspaper an opportunity to redress their grievances. If not satisfied, they may then write to the Council, enclosing a copy of material that is the subject of the complaint, at 80 Gould St., Suite 206, Toronto, Ont. M5A 4L8.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada.

Subscription Rates:

\$42.00+GST per year; \$79.00+GST for two years.



First injury of the hockey season

With the minor hockey season back in full swing, I've been spending many nights at the local rink watching my kids practice.

This year, my oldest is in U11 (formerly Atom) playing on the Local League team in Minto.

Once the roster was finalized, an email came from minor hockey searching for coaches for the team.

Within minutes of that email being sent, a friend of mine sent me a text saying, "I volunteer Mike Wilson to coach."

I chuckled and replied that I would think about it.

You see, after coaching my middle child in baseball this summer, I swore I would never coach my kids again. That experience is best summed up like this: coaching a seven-year-old boy is like talking to corporate – they say they are listening, but really, they aren't and will do whatever the heck they want.

The next day, my friend sent me a list of reasons why I was suited for the job.

After learning that another parent – someone I have coached baseball with in the past and I work well with – was willing to share head coaching duties, I threw my name in the hat.

Fast forward to last Friday night – our third practice as a team – and we were working on backwards skating drills.

The kids are doing great, making their way around the circles, when I turn to talk to one of the other coaches. The next 10 seconds are a blur.

I look down and see a head come between my legs... the next thing I know, I am flat on my back on the ice.

I immediately look over and ask the player if he is OK – miraculously, I didn't land on the kid and he was no worse for wear.

After taking a moment to gather my bearings, I get up and "shake it off" like we were taught to back in the day. I didn't hit my head, but my back and elbow were sore, but everything still worked.

We finished the rest of the practice, held our parent meeting, and all departed for the evening.

After getting home, my son told my wife about the big fall and how "it's a miracle Dad didn't kill the kid!" She asked how I felt – at that time, just sore – and she put our daughter to bed.

About 15 minutes later, she came out of the bedroom and said, "What the hell is wrong with your elbow?"

Mike Wilson
From the Editor's Desk



I looked in the mirror to find my elbow had swollen to the point it looked like a golf ball was under my skin. "That's not good."

I texted our friend, a nurse practitioner – the same one who suggested I help coach this team – and asked her what I should do: go to the hospital or ice it and see how it is in the morning.

"Either way, you're going to end up there," she said. "Go now."

The emergency room doctor took one look at my elbow and said, "Oh, it's broken."

Heck of an opening, doc. "Let's get you an X-ray."

Within 15 minutes, I was in the X-ray room. About 15 minutes after that, the doctor came back in to see me.

"I don't know how... but there's no break. Nothing," he said. "I would have sworn, based on how much it swelled in three hours, it was broken."

This was music to my ears.

He put me in a sling, told me to ice the elbow, and rest. If the swelling doesn't go down, he said, come back tomorrow.

Thankfully, the swelling went down. Now, instead of having a golf ball on my left elbow, my skin is about six different colours from bruising, and very tender.

While it sucks that my elbow looks like the victim of a one-sided mixed martial arts fight, I learned three very important things from this incident:

- never turn your back to the players on the ice;
- don't be ashamed to say you're hurt on the ice; and
- always wear elbow pads.

Until next time, keep your stick on the ice.

Mike Wilson is the editor of the Walkerton Herald-Times. Comment or feedback can be sent to mwilson@midwesternnewspapers.com.

TURNBACKS

News from the Oct. 23, 1991 issue of the Herald-Times

- A new addition to the County of Bruce General Hospital laundry facilities was opened last week.
- Construction on the Riverview Condominium project will begin this fall.
- "'Twas the Night before Christmas" will be the theme of this year's Walkerton Santa Claus Parade.
- Efforts to prepare for junior kindergarten by 1994 are "on track" according to the Bruce County Board of Education, but may mean cutbacks in other areas.
- Advertised: Eight item Lunch Break at KFC – \$2.99.
- Now playing at the Paramount Theatre in Hanover: *Ernest Scared Stupid*.

WEEKLY POLL

THIS WEEK'S QUESTION:

Midwestern Newspapers offers weekly polls on topics of interest to our readers on our website at www.midwesternnewspapers.com

Should municipalities offer a reduction in ice rates for minor sports?

YES NO

Last week's results: Do you support COVID-19 vaccination of children between five and 11?

NO - 78%
 YES - 22%