

OPINION

RIDE safely

During this holiday season many families will decorate the Christmas tree together, open presents, visit friends and talk of plans for the new year.

However, there will be some families who will plan a funeral, hold a sombre visitation service and try to pick up the pieces of their lives after losing a loved one(s) to a senseless traffic collision caused by an impaired driver.

The annual Festive RIDE program is now under way in Halton and other regions with the intention of lessening the chance an impaired driver destroys a life or devastates a family.

Despite the ongoing RIDE campaigns, and the endless public awareness programs, there are people out there who choose to throw common sense aside, if only for a moment, or blatantly disregard the law, and drive after drinking.

On the first day of this year's month-long campaign, Halton Police made two arrests for impaired driving and issued numerous suspensions on drivers who indicated a "warn" reading on roadside alcohol screening devices.

On the first day!

If you have been drinking make sure you have a designated driver or call a cab.

If you see a suspected drunk driver call 911.

If you are the owner of a licensed establishment make sure your staff know their responsibilities when it comes to serving alcohol.

Do everything in your power to prevent someone you know who has consumed alcohol from getting behind the wheel.

The message couldn't be simpler: if you drink, don't drive.

WEB POLL RESULTS

(Go to www.theifp.ca)

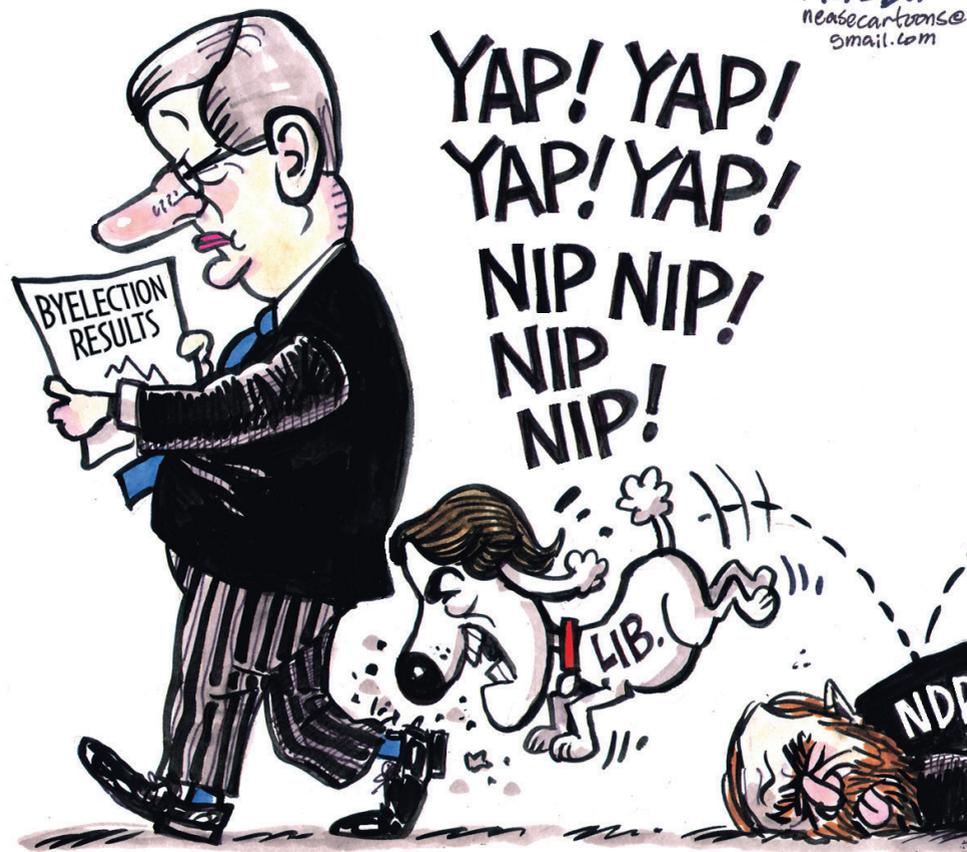
Cell towers have become a hotly contested issue in parts of Halton Hills. Which of the below choices best matches your view?

- They're a necessary evil if we want wireless service (54%)
- I have no problems with cell towers (22%)
- I'm most concerned about potential health risks (18%)
- They lower nearby property values (5%)
- I think they're unsightly (1%)

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Letters to the editor

Reader missed the big picture

Dear editor,
Distracted driving police 'propaganda' (Nov. 21 letter).

The letter written regarding Sgt. Davies's report on distracted driving is upsetting. To criticize an organization that deals directly with these issues, such as the police, is in itself, ignorant.

To conclude that a law created with the public's safety in mind is "self-serving, revenue generating and political point-scoring" is nothing more than failure to see the big picture and purely opinion-generated, if not entirely self-centered.

The use of a hand-held device at an intersection prevents one from seeing traffic in their rear-view mirror and leaves them susceptible to a collision. That ticket or fine is there to protect the person using the cell phone as much as it is for the people around them. Just because you've never been in a collision while distracted, doesn't mean it won't happen

or that you are immune to accidents.

There is after all, a reason it's called an "accident". Also, claiming that the statistics behind distracted driving is "junk science" is ridiculous. Whether these occurrences are increasing or decreasing, one accident from distracted driving is one too many—plain and simple.

Jake Merchant,
Georgetown

Hospital says thanks for Bears That Care

Dear editor,
On behalf of the Georgetown Hospital Emergency Department, we convey our thanks to *The Independent & Free Press* for the adorable teddy bears.

I understand they were donated as part of the Bears That Care program that is sponsored by local businesses.

A basket full of bears is waiting in the Emergency Department, each to go home with a child. Nurses give the bears to sick or injured children for comfort in

the hospital and as a friend to take home.

Recently, a little girl came to Emergency with quite severe burns. As the nurses were dressing her burns, I walked into the room with a bear for her.

She saw me coming and exclaimed "a stuffy" which she quickly accepted and hugged tightly. This was the best part of her treatment!

Thanks so much to the local businesses for this generous gift to the children of our community.

Shirley Andrechek,
Patient Care Manager,
Emergency Department
& Supportive Housing Program
Georgetown Hospital

Letters policy

Letters must include the author's name, address and daytime phone number. Anonymous letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 150 words and may be edited for content and/or length. Publication is not guaranteed.

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