

Lifestyles

Safety first, even on the snow

Snowmobiling seems to gain popularity in Ontario with each passing winter. From 1984 to 1988, for example, there has been an increase of more than 100,000 snowmobiles registered in this province alone.

With more and more Ontarians involved in snowmobiling, it is important to establish safety guidelines for the sport.

The most common factor in snowmobile accidents is alcohol consumption. In 1987, of 15 accidents investigated by the Ontario

Provincial Police, in which 20 people were killed, alcohol was a contributing factor in approximately half those accidents.

Snowmobiling in unknown areas and inexperience in handling the machine also play a major role in accidents. It is imperative that snowmobilers research unknown areas before venturing into them. Ice and snow conditions may not always be apparent; rocks or tree stumps may be covered by snow.

Researching areas and weather conditions in advance will also

allow the snowmobiler to avoid thin ice, another common cause of accidents.

Speeding causes snowmobiling accidents. Unlike a car or truck, a snowmobile offers little protection in the event of a sudden stop or collision, and the driver and passenger are usually thrown from the vehicle. Snowmobilers should be sure to drive at a speed at which they can still maintain control of the vehicle, no matter what the weather conditions.

Motorists should be prepared

Every year, the first snowfall seems to take Ontario drivers by surprise. This year, however, by preparing ahead, motorists can ensure safe driving throughout the winter.

Having your car properly tuned and fluid levels checked is the most important step. The gas tank level should be at least half-full in cold weather to avoid gas-line freezing, resulting in stalling.

Snow tires should be used if the car is not equipped with all-season radials to alleviate slipping on snow and ice.

A kit containing ice scraper, shovel, booster cables, flares, blankets and a first-aid kit should be stored in the trunk.

When parking, run the car back and forth to make a track that will make it easier to get out later. Allow ample space between cars.

During rough weather conditions, headlights should be on at all times, and windows kept clear of snow and ice.

If the car should begin to skid, release the accelerator and steer in the direction of the skid. Do not brake, because this will only in-

crease the skidding action. As the car responds, straighten out the front wheels.

Allow more following distance to give yourself plenty of room to stop. It takes three to twelve times more distance to stop on snow and ice than on dry pavement.

Finally, be sure to drive at a speed at which you are comfortable handling road conditions, even if it is half the posted speed limit. Safe driving, no matter what the road and weather conditions, is every motorist's responsibility.

Trying to make things better

OTTAWA - I've forgotten her name, but not her face. Dorothy and I were going door-to-door in Burlington, meeting people and asking them to think about the election coming up on November 21. It was a quiet street, so the rusted-out van with the holes in its muffler was hard to ignore.

The truck pulled over, and a woman got out - a slim, blonde woman, who walked over to us. She said she wanted to thank me for being in the election, and would support me, "because you will stand up for us."

She was very pretty, and spoke clearly, from the heart. But she stood there in this affluent neighborhood, and looked out of place in her worn clothes. When she talked, you could see that her teeth were mostly black, or missing.

She told us how hard it was to make ends meet, and that there was never enough money to look after herself and her kids. But if I was her MP, she said, then she knew I would work to "make it better."

Well, here I am, now a Member of Parliament; now trying to be the person that she wanted me to be.

I think about this, because it's the holiday season - and that's a time of expectations for all of us. During Christmas and New Year's, we expect families to come together; men to live in goodwill; hostilities to end; and life to sink into some kind of perfection. Usually, it doesn't happen - but that doesn't mean we shouldn't keep trying.

I've been here for a couple of weeks now, coping with my own expectations of what it was going to be like to be an MP. The learning experience has been intense, especially as we in Parliament have been tussling over passage of the Free Trade legislation.

The government wants to get on with things after the election victory. The Opposition MPs - especially the new ones - want to continue opposing it, and they want to get their objections on record.

Of course, those of us who support free trade also want our voices raised, and I made two speeches during the first six days of the session. I'm not sure the world was a better place after I finished, but I had a few things to say on your behalf.

The deal is now passed, and we're waiting for the Senate to approve it next week. Getting to this



On The Hill
With
Garth Turner

point has meant some late nights, and some fascinating moments.

One of them came early last Thursday morning. After sitting in the Commons for more than 15 hours, we launched into a series of votes on the legislation. It involved supporters and opponents standing and being counted many dozen times. When we started it was on in the morning; people were tired, testy and thinking about how little time they would have with their families over the holidays.

Suddenly, over the drone of the Speaker's voice, came the sounds of a Christmas carol. It was almost imperceptible at first, then growing stronger. It started off to the right side of the government benches, then spread to the centre of the Chamber, then across the aisle to where the Opposition sits.

By the time the current vote was finishing, there were almost 300 people, singing loudly and together - O Little Town of Bethlehem, then God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, then Jingle Bells.

The public gallery was empty. The press gallery was empty. All the country's federal politicians were here, voting on a historic bill, knowing most of Canada was asleep and the rest weren't watching the proceedings on television.

For a minute, the wrangling, debating, name-calling and heckling was gone. For a moment, there was just a bunch of Canadians together in a gift hall, thinking about home and hearth and what

these days mean. The expectations of Christmas were there; and this time they were met.

As I write this, the session of Parliament is ending, and we can come home. Later in January, I'm looking forward to starting our Town Hall meetings across the riding. I also will enjoy the Free Trade seminar we've got planned, and sending you a copy of my first newsletter.

Now that the business at hand has been done here, I will be working hard to do what I promised during the campaign: Listen. Only after listening to your concerns and ideals can I come back here and hope to do what you want me to.

So I look forward to seeing you at our meetings; to speaking at service clubs and other groups around the riding; and to showing up on your doorstep.

Meanwhile, Dorothy and I want the very best for you and your family. We wish you health, peace and hope. And to the blonde lady in Burlington: Thank you for your support; for your trust. I will not forget.

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Norval News

Community mourns loss

By KAY WILSON
Norval Correspondent

Ashgrove Community has been shocked by the tragic accident that has taken the life of Elizabeth (Liz Bird) Howden, who passed away Dec. 29, at Sunnybrook Medical Centre, Toronto, in her 28th year.

Beloved wife of Doug Howden of Milton. Loving daughter of George and Verna Bird of RR2 Georgetown and daughter-in-law of Arnold and Marie Howden of Milton. Dear sister of Marilyn, Charles, David, and Ronald, and sister-in-law of Paul, Miriam and her fiance Terry Gracey. Also loved by grandparents Vernon Pickett of Georgetown and George and Wilda Marshall of Milton.

Funeral service was held from Hillcrest United Church, on Jan. 2 at 1 p.m. Interment was in Evergreen Cemetery, Milton.

Liz and David were just married in September in Hillcrest Church. Sincere sympathy is extended to her husband Doug, parents and family at this sad time.

Carol service

St. Paul's Anglican Church held their Carol Service on Christmas Eve. Rev. Rick Ruggle conducted the service and Frank Howard was organist. The age-old Christmas Scriptures and story along with beautiful Christmas carols highlighted the service.

New Years party

George and Marilyn Smith of Norval, hosted the New Year's Eve Party, for the Couples Club of Norval United Church. A total of 18 people enjoyed games, followed by a potluck supper.

Euchre planned

The biweekly euchre of the Pinegrove Community Club will be held on Jan. 9, 8 p.m. in the school.

Strange birth

Clifford and Allan Cook, RR4 Georgetown, dairy farmers on Winston Churchill Boulevard, north of 17 Sideroad, had a freak Herford calf born, with its heart in its throat. They were bottle feeding the calf when they felt the heart beat, and looking down its throat could actually see the heart beating. They called Guelph Veterinary College who picked up the calf for observation purposes.

Concert held

The Sunday School Concert of St. Paul's Anglican Church was held on Dec. 17, following the church service. The teachers, Lyn Ruggle, Donna Downey and Luke Bertrand, combined all

Thinking drivers are safest

According to a Ministry of Transportation spokesperson, the safest drivers this winter will be "thinking drivers", the ones with their "minds in gear" for winter highway and road conditions.

- There are six essentials for safe winter driving:
- Think Safety - Avoid abrupt acceleration, braking, or lane changes that can cause skids on slippery roads.
- Anticipate - Look ahead as far as possible. Try to anticipate stop signs, traffic signals or traffic ahead.
- Slow Down - Reduce your speed in less than ideal conditions on slushy, snow covered or icy winter roads.
- Keep your Distance - Increase the distance between you and the car ahead by three to four times to leave a buffer zone for safe braking.

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