

Fateful decision

In a matter of seconds six lives were forever altered in the middle of the night on April 3, 2010 in Acton.

That night, 23-year-old Todd McGowan of Mississauga, chose to climb behind the wheel of a Hyundai Sonata with five young friends, after having too much to drink.

Around 2:50 a.m. (well past party time for most adults don't you think?) McGowan lost control of his vehicle on Queen Street in Acton and it slammed into a tree.

Jeff Sandles, 23, of Campbellville, who was a passenger in the front seat, died at the scene.

An 18-year-old Erin woman was airlifted to a Toronto-area hospital in critical condition and two 20-year-old Georgetown women and a 20-year-old Mississauga man suffered non-life threatening injuries, although all undoubtedly will forever be scarred by the event.

Sgt. Paul Davies of the Halton Regional Police Reconstruction Unit said some of the injured passengers will never fully recover.

Bad decisions by all involved lead to lives forever changed... that's the reality of impaired driving.

McGowan, who has been in custody since the incident was handed a seven-year prison sentence (he has five years left to serve) and received a 10-year driving ban.

Many will argue it is hardly enough.

We can only hope, yet again, that this incident is a stark reminder to those who drink and drive that they are playing a fool's game.

With graduation parties soon to come, along with the advent of spring and summer, more tragic stories will, in all likelihood, unfold across this province and nation.

And other lives will be forever changed in an instant. Pity.

WEB POLL RESULTS

(Go to www.independentfreepress.com)

The town of Georgina is considering banning smoking at most of the town's outdoor parks, sports fields, etc. Should smoking be banned at outdoor facilities?

- No. Smokers should be allowed to light up outside (51%)
- Yes. Second-hand smoke is a problem regardless if it's inside or outside (49%)

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Steve Nease

905-873-0301
Publisher: Ken Nugent
General manager: Steve Foreman (sforeman@theifp.ca)
Retail advertising manager: Cindi Campbell (ccampbell@theifp.ca)
Managing editor: John McGhie (jmcghie@theifp.ca)
Distribution manager: Nancy Geissler (ngeissler@theifp.ca)
Classifieds
 Kristie Pells (classified@theifp.ca)
Accounting
 Rose Marie Gauthier
Editorial
 Cynthia Gamble: News editor (cgamble@theifp.ca)
 Ted Brown: Photography (tbrown@theifp.ca)
 Lisa Tallyn: Staff writer (ltallyn@theifp.ca)
 Eamonn Maher: Staff writer/sports (emaher@theifp.ca)

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Email:

jmcghie@theifp.ca

Mail or drop off:

Independent & Free Press, 280 Guelph St., Unit 29, Georgetown, ON, L7G 4B1.

Letters to the editor

Renewable energy plans are missing

Dear editor,

The recent renewal in the increases in the price of oil has overridden my attempt to retire from making public statements. I cannot remain silent any longer.

In 1973, oil sold for \$3 per barrel and began to increase until 1979 when it had reached \$50 a barrel. I was energy critic at that time in the Ontario legislature; Robert Welch was Minister of Energy.

He and I combined forces and put together a plan to start to address the problem—renewable energy projects such as small hydro demonstrations, on-farm ethanol projects and low energy consumption homes to name a few.

The development work that had been started during those years was, with only a few exceptions, abandoned.

The efforts to develop renewables should be marching along side-by-side with new oil discoveries so that when oil prices climb to prohibitive levels alternatives will be ready to take over.

We are at least a generation be-

hind. Why? The reasons are not so simple.

1. It's more comfortable to ignore the unpleasant reality.
2. There are narrow financial interests that don't want to know about it.
3. There is a genuine belief among some that oil will last "forever".
4. Our system of government does not encourage long-term planning.

It is more comfortable to ignore the huge increases in carbon dioxide in our atmosphere than to acknowledge the problem and try to do something about it. After all, developing solutions costs money doesn't it?

As an example we encourage urban development on agricultural land—land which will be sorely missed in the age of renewables to say nothing about the incredible increase in world population which is already demanding more food than some areas are able to produce.

Come on politicians of all stripes. It's time for leadership.

Julian Reed, Norval

Fight condo plan

Dear editor,

Thank you to Lisa Tallyn for her coverage of the Feb. 27 meeting at our Civic Centre and her subsequent article in *The Independent & Free Press*, regarding our neighborhood's

opposition to the proposal for the re-zoning of the property located at 60 John Street to allow for the construction of a five-storey condominium apartment complex.

I urge all Georgetown residents to step up and help our neighborhood in fighting this. While this is not an issue in every neighborhood in Georgetown at this time, it may well be sometime down the road.

We need to stand together as a "town", not just a single neighborhood.

Ed Lange, Georgetown

Fall victim says thanks

Dear editor,

On January 28 I fell on the sidewalk in front of my house.

Thanks to Graham, Cal and Chris for staying with me until the ambulance arrived. It was not a pretty sight I'm sure.

I'm sorry if the girls were late for their appointments.

Thanks, too, to the ambulance personnel and to Lynne for placing my dog.

A big thank you also to the loving support of my family.

Nancy Holman, Georgetown