

Be water smart

The first long weekend of the summer of 2012 proved to be tragic on Ontario waterways with seven people believed to have drowned.

Although organizations such as the Canadian Red Cross emphasize the need for water safety education and swimming lessons for young people, the Canada Day weekend's victims were all adults — ranging in age from 19 to 79.

According to the Canadian Red Cross, each year an average of 400 Canadians drown, and more than half of those occur during the summer months.

Recent polling shows that despite significant water safety education and awareness programming, there's still a gap in Canadians' behaviour around the water.

Of the 160 people who drown while boating each year, nearly 90 per cent aren't properly wearing a lifejacket, according to the Red Cross.

Other Red Cross findings include:

- While 82 per cent of Canadians believe there's a legal requirement to wear a lifejacket when boating, only 50 per cent of boat owners always wear their lifejacket
- Only 46 per cent of children know how to swim
- For 51 per cent of Canadians, 'not allowing children under 10 years old to access the pool area' is their only strategy to prevent injuries related to backyard pools

• Fourteen per cent of Canadians keep lifejackets on the boat, believing they will have time to find and put on a lifejacket while falling out of the boat.

Alcohol consumption is another factor that far too often plays a role in adult drownings.

While summer and activities on or near water will always go hand in hand, this past holiday weekend's deaths are a reminder of how failing to be water smart can have tragic consequences.

WEB POLL RESULTS

(Go to www.theifp.ca)

Canadian auto sales in 2012 will challenge the all-time mark of just over 1.7 million units set in 2002, according to BMO Economics. Do you plan to buy a car this year?

1. Yes (12%)
2. No (88%)

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Letters to the editor

GTA West plan is short-term planning

Dear editor,

The current proposal for the GTA West Corridor is a termination at the 401/407 in Halton Hills east of Trafalgar Road with widening of the 401 through Milton to 12 lanes.

All of the traffic criteria cited in the proposal favour a new corridor over the expansion of the 401 through Milton. These criteria should reflect a very high weighting in the overall evaluation of this study— after all this is a transportation study.

The proposal recommending the widening of the 401 through Milton carries the following comments with respect to the widening proposal:

- Worst overall network performance; Highway 401 performance is also worst
- Provides no capacity to accommodate higher than base demands
- Highest amount of auto and truck delay
- Highest amount of inter-regional auto and truck traffic using local roads
- Reduces annual delays due to incidents by 3% (compared to a re-

duction of 25% in a new corridor)

- Increases overall network collisions by 1% compared to base conditions (compared to a reduction of 2% in a new corridor)

My conclusion can only be that this proposal is short-term planning.

This proposal dumps all the GTA bypass traffic east of Milton, one of the fastest-growing towns in southern Ontario, and will simply transfer the existing bottlenecks on the 401 in the GTA that this study is trying to solve to the Milton and Halton Hills area.

We need a practical and effective solution for transportation for the future not a political one.

V. Hendrickson, Georgetown

Vet team provided great care

Dear editor,

To add to some of the letters recently praising local businesses, I wanted to share the incredible experience we have had with Terra Glen Animal Hospital. We have been taking our bulldog Bodhi there for many years, and we're recently devastated to learn he had cancer and there was no treat-

ment options for his particular condition. Dr. Boudreaux and Dr. Wilkinson, along with all the staff, were incredibly compassionate and supportive through our tough time. When we had to make that most difficult last trip to the vet, once again they were very kind and respectful. Only one week following his death, we received a sympathy card from the clinic as well as a notice that a donation had been made to the Ontario Veterinary Association trust fund in Bodhi's name. I cannot say enough about how helpful the entire team was in helping us through this tough time. Thank you.

Kris Rogers, Georgetown

Teachers are appreciated

Dear editor,

Having just returned from a year-end assembly at Centennial Middle School I am reminded of how hard the teachers work to give our kids an enriching education.

Thank you to all the teachers for the effort you put forth during the school year. I hope this summer gives you the refreshing you need to do it all again in September.

Terri Bilodeau, Georgetown