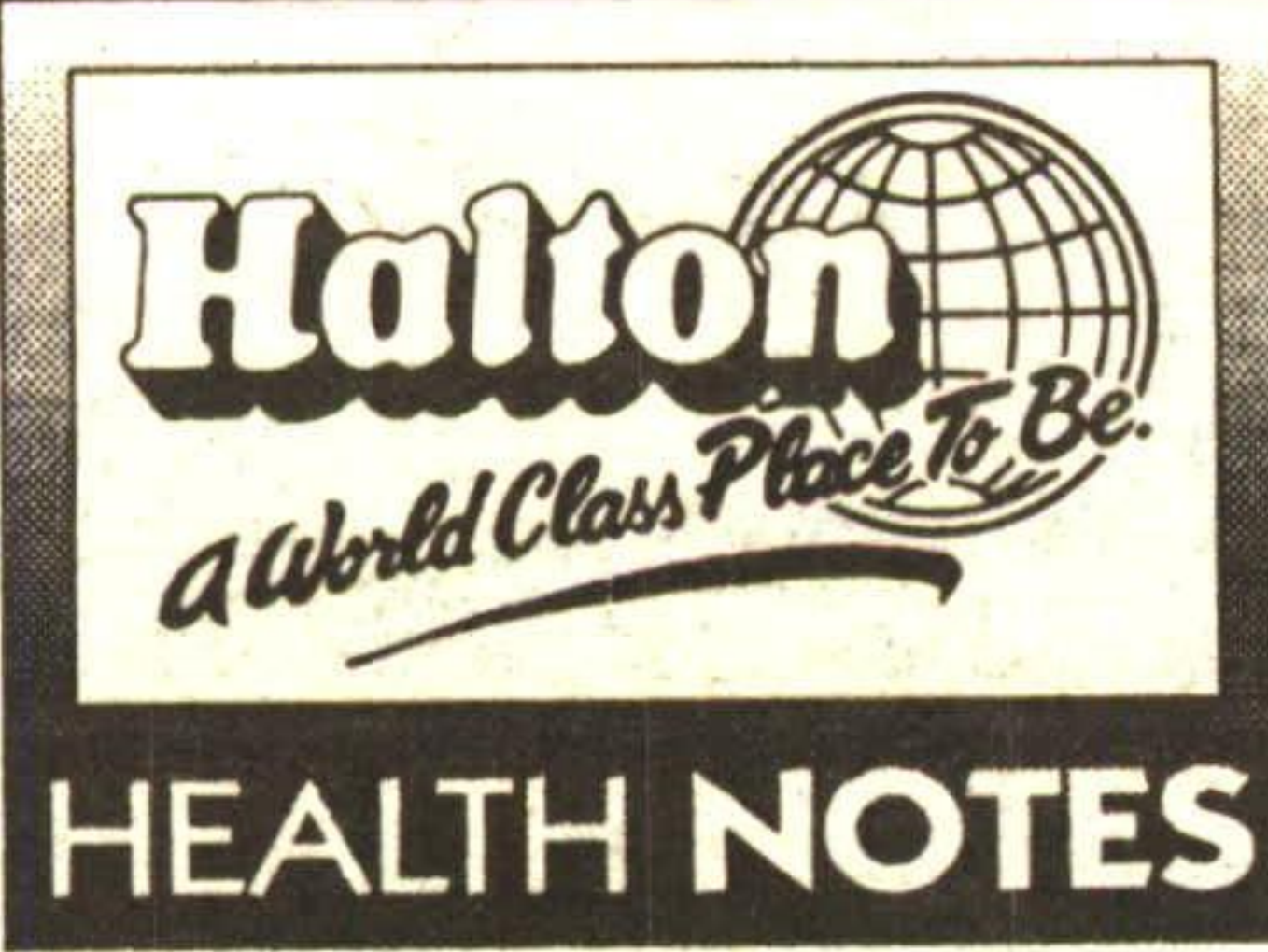


Health tips for the holidays

Christmas is closing in quickly and if you're like most people you've booked the dates for several evening soirees.

Whether it's with the neighbors, your childhood chums or your friends from work, the calendar is filling up — just how many free days in December do you have left?

Complementary to any tasty Christmas hors d'oeuvre is a cool glass of wine or a bottle of your favourite beer — it is Christmas, so why not celebrate? But remember, whether you are planning a party or hosting an event, you want it to be a good time. If alcohol will be involved, some common sense steps are important to protect the partygoers and your legal interests. As a provider of alcohol, an occupier or owner of the property, or simply an organizer of the event you can be held responsible if your guest become intoxicated and injure themselves or others. You can be sued - and sued big! So just when can you be sued?



Many of us have heard of cases in which a bar is sued when an intoxicated person leaves and injures someone while driving home. Licensed establishments may be held responsible if they serve someone past the point of intoxication, or if they serve someone who is already drunk. What many people don't realize is that the same tough principles are being applied to social hosts.

Ways in which you can help prevent a good time from going bad:

- make it a household policy to have only low alcohol beverages available such as light beer,

spritzers and shandys.

- offer non-alcoholic beverages such as liquor-free punches, non-alcohol beer, soft drinks, or, who'd a thunk it - sparkling water with a slice of lemon!

- when rhyming off the long list of beverages choices start with our non or low alcohol content choices.

- serve plenty of snacks; circulate the room with your snacks so the shy ones can also have taste.

- at the end of the party be prepared to provide transportation to those who may need it - a cab is a small price to pay relative to the cost of a life.

As you can see, there are many ways to reduce your risk of legal consequences without compromising the quality of the get-together. Why not be the first of offer the alternative? For more information call the Substance Abuse Prevention Program at 825-6060 ext. 7887.

Health Notes is a column prepared by staff at the Halton Regional Health Department.

Merry CHRISTMAS

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