

EDITORIAL

with Frances Learment

Sobering stats an easy wish list

With a Ho Ho Ho and a skiff of snow, winter and holidays are closer than we think, offering all the annual traditions, like the R.I.D.E (Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere) programs run on our roads by Halton police and the OPP.

Ever in the festive spirit, OPP this week issued thanks, in advance, to the many drivers who will obey the rules this year and not drink and drive, and to those who will prepare for and slow down when the weather turns bad.

Although the vast majority of drivers are sober, impaired driving is Canada's number one criminal cause of death. Every day, four Canadians are killed and 200 are injured in alcohol-related crashes - scary, maddening statistics that underscore the reality that some people still do not get it.

Ontario OPP laid 1,375 impaired charges and issued 1,208 warn range licence suspensions last year, and hope and expect better results this year, as do Halton police, who laid 383 impaired driving charges last year - 37 during the annual December R.I.D.E. campaign.

The OPP R.I.D.E campaign begins Saturday and runs until January 2. The Halton R.I.D.E campaign runs in December. Don't drive impaired - that's what I want for Christmas.

Family mourns loss

The body of Acton's Nathan French, 31, was found by his family members in the Sauble River on Saturday, three weeks after going out in his boat and failing to meet his brother. A post mortem Monday was expected to confirm drowning as the cause of death and OPP said they do not suspect foul play.

In an e-mail, his mother, Ruth French thanked the media for privacy and said the Sauble River is just a short distance from the family cottage where French had fished his entire life, beginning as a small boy with his father at the Park Head dam.

The French family conveyed its thanks to the many friends and family members from the Halton Hills area who spent the last three weeks searching the river by canoe, kayak and on foot.

French attended Limehouse Public School, Stewarttown Middle School, and Acton High School, and worked at Dufferin Aggregates in Milton.

A memorial service will be held at Jones Funeral Home in Georgetown on November 30 at 11 a.m.



MARKET TREATS: The Acton Town Hall Centre was a hub of holiday cheer and shopping on Saturday at Christmas Market featuring homemade treats and treasures, including those on offer from volunteer Liz Bailey. - Ted Tyler photo

Merry Christmas - not happy Holidays

Now that Remembrance Day is over for another year, the "holiday season" is gearing up rapidly. This past weekend, we had yet another amazing Santa Claus parade, brought to us by the Acton Firefighters Association and the Spielvogels. I don't know how they do it, yet every year seems to be better and better.

The Christmas lights are on the streetlights downtown. Store front windows are being filled with seasonal decorations. There is one store downtown that catches my eye every time we drive because it just looks magical. Even Little J comments about it all the time. I love seeing how the season evolves. However, there are two seasonal things I am not fond of.

I'm really starting to get drained of the entire "Black Friday" goes on. It's really getting out of hand. I don't know how the American's do it - line up at ungodly hour, tired, exhausted, perhaps freezing if you are in a northern state, so you can stampede in hopes of literally grabbing an item from another person to race to endless cashier line ups so you can say you saved a few bucks. Then, to do it over and over and over again ... I don't see the point or



By
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the pleasure of that. Of course, now Canadian stores are beginning to stage Black Friday for our own sales. Thankfully, we don't have the insane line-ups and stampedes that have actually crushed people to death.

Perhaps people want the experience of it. I know a few ladies who have taken time off work, driven to the States, paid for hotel rooms, food, tolls, fuel, etc, etc. Then, they've shopped until they dropped only to return to claim all their savings. For me, I would rather make my list, check it twice then check the flyers in the paper along with local stores and do my shopping in a more sane manner. I often wonder if the cross border Black Friday posies really totalled up their entire out-of-pocket, combined with travel time, border time and physical exhaustion, if they really could brag about their savings. I have this feeling they probably wouldn't have especially if they got caught at the border.

The other thing that gets under

my skin at this time of year is a two-parter. I have to admit, with my angst I also miss reading Mike O'Leary's annual forget the festive column in which he complained about a Canadian chicken restaurant and their Festive Special. Yes, festive annoys me profusely almost as much as "season's greetings". Gaaaa!

Every single time I hear that Festive Special advertisement on the radio it makes me want to not to go to that restaurant. I get it though. They are appealing to the masses for the season. Not everybody celebrates Christmas. I get that too. However, I do. I like that there are Christmas specials whether it be on television with a rerun of *Santa Claus is Coming to Town* from 1970, or a special Christmas chicken dinner, not a Festive Special.

Part two is I will wish you a Merry Christmas. Our kids our taught to proudly say Merry Christmas not Happy Festivus like in the chicken jingle, or Season's Greetings to people, and they do and they like saying it. I like saying it. Just because you don't celebrate Christmas doesn't mean you can't have a merry one. I'm not telling you to celebrate it, just have a merry one. Is that so wrong?



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