

Don't be a statistic this New Year's Eve

The numbers are nothing short of alarming. Recently, the OPP revealed that close to 500 people have been charged with impaired driving since the launch of the provincial holiday RIDE program.

Many more have received warnings. It is an understatement to suggest that police are surprised by what they are seeing on our roads.

This is a problem trending in the wrong direction, with potentially tragic consequences.

In this day and age, we shouldn't still be talking about how many impaired drivers we take off the road. And those are the ones that are getting charged, said Sgt. Kerry Schmidt, of the OPP's highway safety division.

Schmidt notes that about 7,000 drivers have been charged with impaired driving this year.

When you consider the statistics, it is actually a surprise that just 40 people have been killed this year in collisions involving a drunk driver. It easily could have been so much worse.

But how could anyone with a conscience drive drunk after hearing of the horrific crash in Kitchener on Nov. 27? An alleged drunk driver rear-ended a car, killing 29-year-old mother Susana Dumitru and critically injuring her two-month-old baby.

That same weekend, OPP arrested an impaired driver who was clocked at more than 200 km/h on Hwy. 400.

For police and advocacy groups, like Mothers Against Drunk Driving, it must be hard to imagine what more they can do to combat this problem.

Years of print and TV campaigns (some of them deliberately shocking in their impact), plus social media efforts, have raised awareness of the issue. And we have all seen too many terrible reports of the tragic impact of drunk driving on families.

Yet, people continue to get behind the wheel while impaired by alcohol or drugs.

This is a preventable problem. But what do you do when escalating penalties and information campaigns are not enough?

Perhaps instead of mandating that only convicted drunk drivers are required to blow into ignition-interlock devices before starting a car, those devices should be mandatory on every vehicle.

Too extreme?

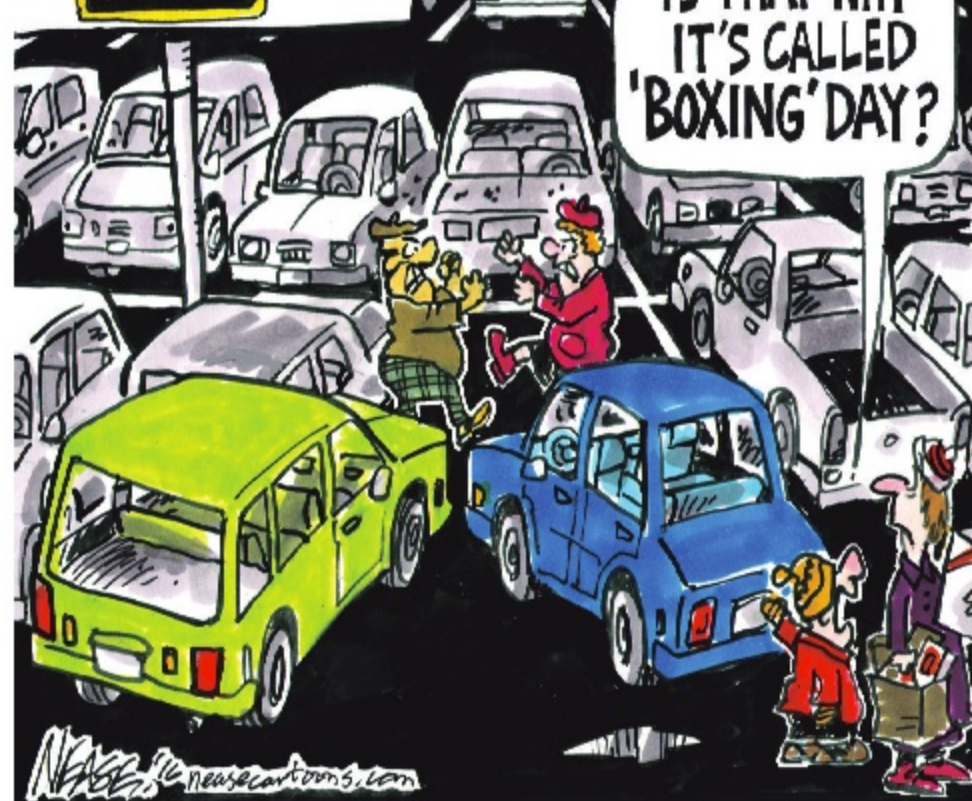
Ask the family of a victim what they think.

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Mall Parking

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Letters to the editor

Residents can appeal to OMB

An open letter from Mayor Rick Bonnette regarding proposed seniors residence.

Thank you for your email raising concerns on the proposed seniors residence on Mountainview Rd.

Staff have to issue a Notice of Decision within 15 days of council's decision in accordance to the Planning Act requirements.

As such this would have been issued prior to the Christmas closure.

The Notice of Decision will be subject to a 20 day appeal period.

Despite the timing, in order for council to reverse the decision it needs two thirds of councillors who voted in the affirmative to change their vote.

I do not see any of the councillors including myself changing their vote and we stand behind the comprehensive planning staff report.

Your option is, as was suggested at the Dec. 12 council meeting by yourselves, is to appeal to the OMB.

Council has to weigh all sides of an issue before making a decision.

We look at the local neighbourhood but also make decisions for the community as a whole.

We have many seniors who have paid years of taxes and contributed to our community in many ways.

Unfortunately there is a time when some of them cannot stay in their homes any longer.

I get asked many times by seniors about senior accommodation.

Many of these seniors have moved out of town which is unfortunate.

Approving this application will give our seniors another opportunity to stay in town.

I believe this will be a great addition to our town.

Mayor Rick Bonnette

Time to ban insecticides

The federal government has proposed the phase out of insecticides, which is a huge step to a better and greener tomorrow. Insecticides have a direct effect on the bee population in Canada, which has proved detrimental to our greenery. Neonicotinoids, a type of insecticide that targets the central nervous system of bees, has caused many bees to die because of paralysis. Even though the phase out of the insecticides is an environmental breakthrough, there is still lots more to do for the dying bees.

Statistics show that between the years of 2014 and 2016, the population of bees had dropped to an all-time low. This is because of the neonicotinoid treatment of corn and soybeans. The deaths of these creatures has resulted in many flowers not being pollinated, causing the plants to weaken and die. Also, not many plants are sprouting because there are no bees to carry the seeds. If this continues, bees will go extinct and there won't be any more food for us humans to eat.

Samia Akhtar