

The Independent & Free Press

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The tougher the better

Recently Solicitor General Bob Runciman brought forward new police regulations for officers involved in police chases.

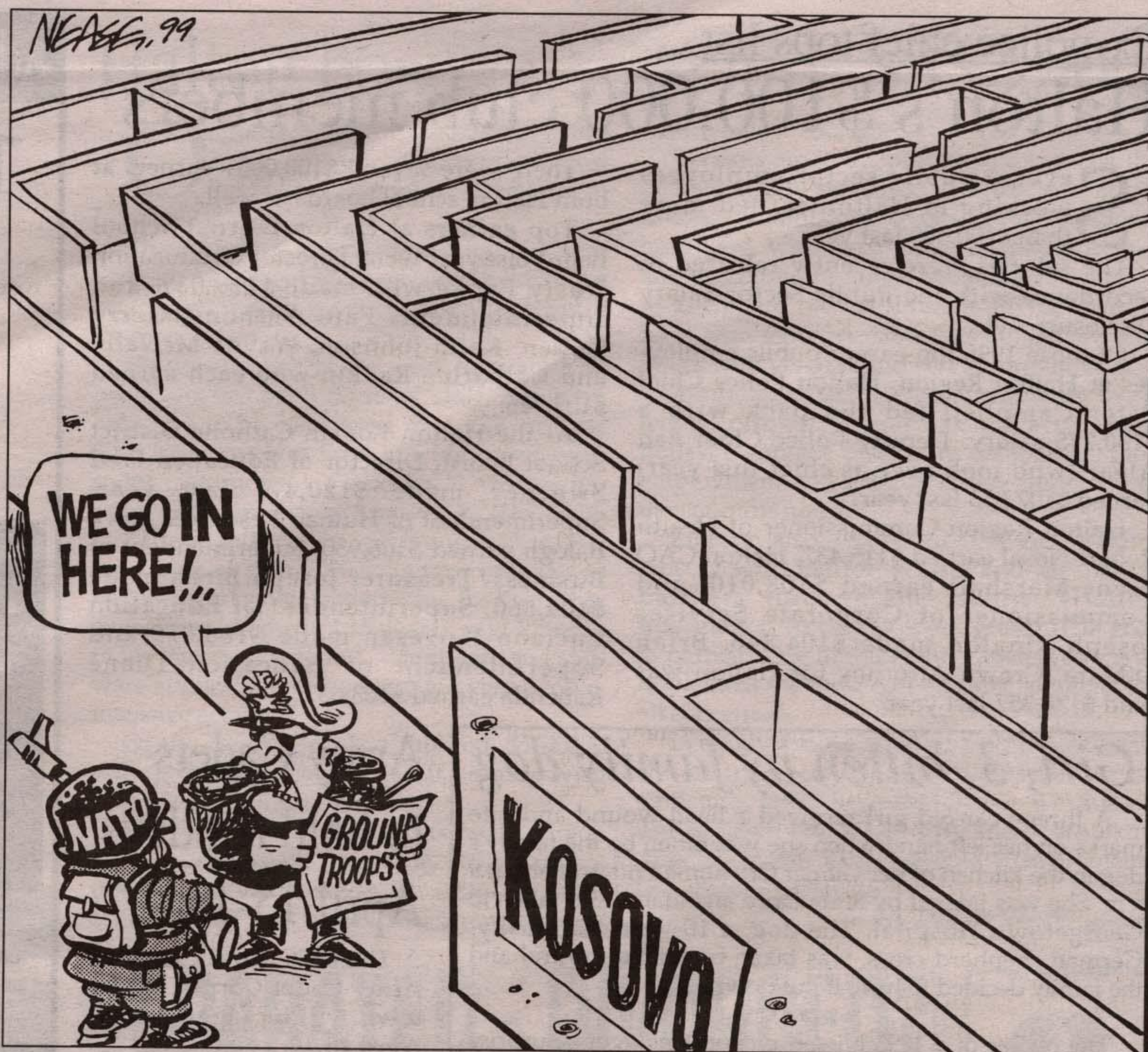
While the regulations are all well and good, the fact remains that an officer is still forced to make a split-second decision about (a) getting involved in a chase and (b) ending a pursuit. It's still a lot of pressure to put on an officer who will face a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" situation each time he/she attempts to apprehend a criminal fleeing in a vehicle.

And, as we stated after the recent death of Brampton woman Sarah Bowman, we can't help but wonder if apprehending a criminal for possession of stolen property is worth putting innocent people at risk. That doesn't mean we want criminals to be given carte blanche to rob and pillage, but we also don't want innocent bystanders to be victims.

As part and parcel of the provincial government's attack on crooks who spark police chases, Transportation Minister Tony Clement this week announced he would like the Legislature to adopt a series of reforms to the Highway Traffic Act (HTA) this spring. These reforms would, among other things, increase the mandatory three-year licence suspension for offenders who deliberately fail to stop for police and raise fines from the current \$500 minimum and \$5,000 maximum for those who are charged under the HTA for refusing to stop for police.

Amazingly, the Criminal Code does not include a specific offence for fleeing police, something that Clement finds "perverse." A private member's bill in the House of Commons is working its way through the federal system but has not been at the top of the Liberals "to-do" list.

While the jury is still out on the changes to police regulations for chases, there is no question any changes that make it tougher on those who initiate police chases are welcome.



Native heritage is not 'ours'

Dear editor,

I recently read Janet Duval's article in the Georgetown paper titled "Our Heritage: Native people once roamed Halton Hills for food." At first my reaction was pleasant, considering the fact that there was something in the Georgetown paper addressing native people and their issues. As I read on, my reaction changed to one of skepticism.

In fact, to me the article seemed to not only be playing on harmful stereotypes concerning native people, but also following a pattern of suppression started by early Colonialists.

Publishing information and articles titled Our Heritage consists of serious misrepresentations. Since when has the heritage of the Native North Americans become ours? I find most Canadians quite proud of celebrating Canada's history, especially its eccentric aboriginal heritage, but when it comes to acknowledging the fact that this heritage is not only not ours, but is a present contemporary situation so many people are ignorant of.

I recently visited the Georgetown Public Library to research the information and literature available about native people in Georgetown. I found many outdated books playing on our concept of the imaginary Indian, perpetuating the image of what the Colonialists thought were Indians. There was no information available on contemporary situations. Native people have been erased from the Halton Hills region.

Letter of the day

Reader learns hard lesson

Dear editor,

Today someone stole my purse, right out of the office of the store I work in. The cowardly thief snuck into a clearly marked staff area and took my personal property with no thought to the consequences.

While I was at the police station reporting this theft, a gentleman came in with my purse. He was kind and honest enough when he found it to take it immediately to the police. Upon checking the contents I was surprised to find that only a few dollars were missing. Thank you John, for acting so quickly and relieving my anxiety.

This episode worked out well and I am very grateful. However, there is a lesson to be learned: never carry your birth certificate or social security card in your wallet with all your other identification. If you do and it is stolen you will have absolutely no i.d. for obtaining a new driver's license or credit cards etc.

Also, to the staff of local stores, keep your purses locked up. Just keeping them in a back room or under a counter is not sufficient. Also, be aware of who is in your store and where.

Name withheld

In a town where development proposals are signed by the hour and trees coming down by the minute, this type of ignorance does not surprise me.

I would like to inform the writer of this article that the woods and streams are not ours as she wrote: "The people who haunted our woods and

streams." And while we are discussing the issue of haunting, it wasn't until the arrival of the Europeans on this continent that not only the woods and streams but native people as well have been existing in a permanent nightmare!

Naomi Assenheim,
Peterborough

Our Readers Write

The Independent & Free Press welcomes letters to the editor from our readers. All letters must be signed and include an address and a daytime telephone number. Letters may be edited for content or length and can be mailed, delivered to our office address at 211 Armstrong Ave., Georgetown, Ont., L7G 4X5, faxed to us at (905) 873-0398 or e-mailed to: independent.freepress@aztec-net.com