

# OPINION

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## Have a happy, but safe, weekend

In the past several weeks we've experienced more than our share of tragedy in Halton.

From a rock climbing accident to drownings to a industrial accident fatality to a tragic hit and run death, we've run the gamut of bad news.

That's why we approach the Civic Holiday weekend— usually one of the deadliest holiday weekends of the year— with some trepidation.

We urge all residents to enjoy themselves this weekend, but to do so safely.

While driving, obey the rules of the road, keep within the posted speed limits and "watch out for the other guy". There will be thousands of more vehicles than usual on the roads this weekend as people— many of them tourists— take advantage of the warm weather. Please use patience while behind the wheel and obviously refrain from drinking and driving.

And speaking of drinking and driving, that goes for those of you on the water.

The Lifesaving Society is reminding Ontarians that individuals convicted of impaired boating can now lose their driver's licence. An amendment to the Highway Traffic Act last month means boaters who blow close to the legal limit on a Breathalyser can have their driver's licence suspended for 12 hours while those convicted of being drunk can lose their driver's licence for a year.

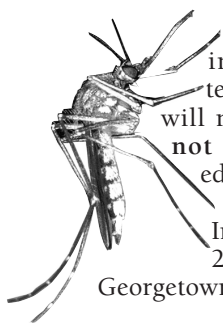
"Ironically, the same people who would never drink and drive their car will often drink and boat," said Ed Bean of the Lifesaving Society. "Drinking and boating is extremely dangerous so this is a huge step in the fight for water safety."

For those who intend to cool off this weekend with a dip in a lake or a backyard pool, please use common sense around water. Drowning statistics show that 80 per cent of Canadian drowning victims are male between the ages of 18 and 24 and that alcohol consumption is a factor in more than 50 per cent of water-related fatalities.

Don't be foolhardy this year and become part of the statistics next year.

## Something bugging you?

Send us a letter!



Letters to the editor must include an address and daytime telephone number. Unsigned letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 200 words and may be edited for content and/or length.

Mail or drop off:

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The Independent & Free Press is published every Wednesday and Friday at 280 Guelph St., Unit 29, Georgetown Ont., L7G 4B1. It is one of several newspapers published by Metroland Printing, Publishing & Distributing Ltd.

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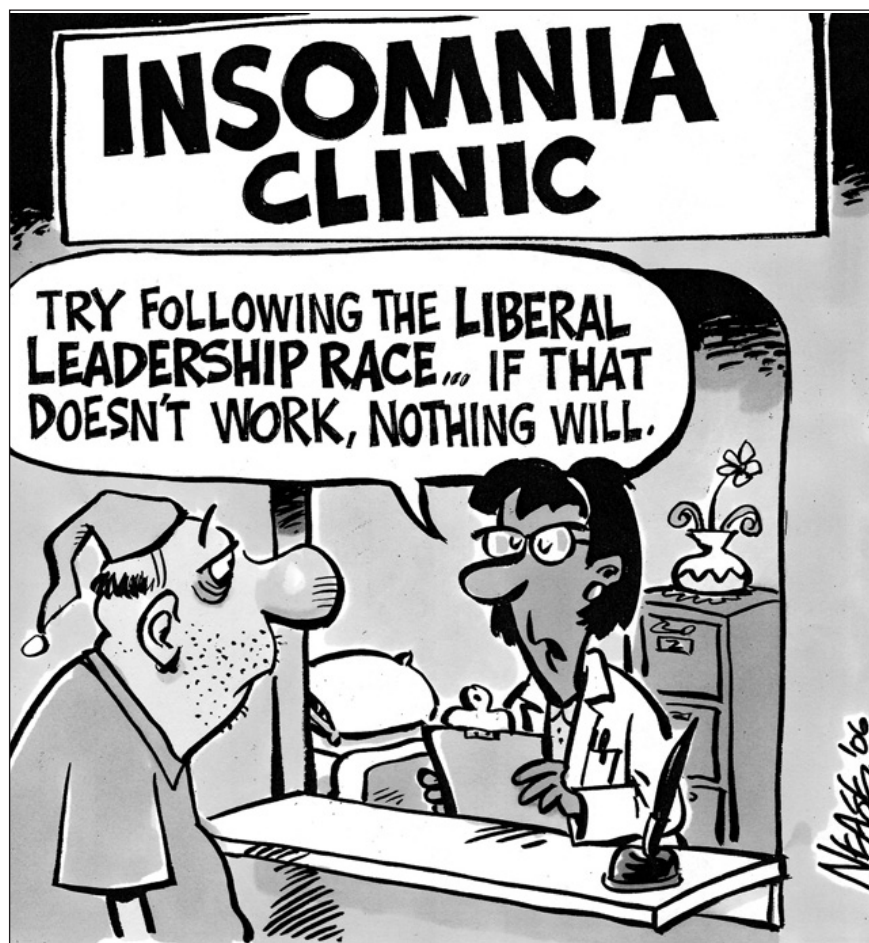
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Price: Store copies 50¢ each; Subscriptions \$26.00 per year by carrier; \$92.50 per year by mail in Canada; \$130.00 per year in all other countries. Plus G.S.T.

Second Class Mail Registration Number 6869. The Independent & Free Press is a member of The Canadian Community Newspaper Association and The Ontario Community Newspaper Association.



Steve Nease



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### MPs urged to support 'pension-splitting'

Dear editor,

At the same time that successive Canadian governments proclaim the family unit and values as a sacred foundation of our society, Canada's Income Tax rules require married couples to pay significantly more income tax than they would if they divorced and lived together. It doesn't seem fair!

An umbrella group made up of 14 aligned retiree organizations are pressing for income tax changes to allow married couples (and equivalent) to split registered retirement income (private pensions, superannuation and RRIFs). They want to extend splitting (sharing) provisions of the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) to all registered pension programs (RRP).

The founders of the struggle believe that pensioners have a special case and because all Canadians plan to retire someday it is not exclusionary. It is a fairness issue for pensioners and anyone subscribing to a pension plan or RRSPs.

Having said that, today's seniors lived by norms of their time and have little option now to alleviate their circumstances. CPP sets a well-substantiated precedent. It is perverse and unfair that failed marriages can split pensions and assets but successful unions cannot, even though sharing is entrenched in family law.

Pension splitting is not a class issue that only favours today's seniors. Sooner or later younger

workers connect with the pension-tax factor. Anyone, regardless of age, who contemplates a pension, superannuation or a RRSP, should anticipate the tax consequence under today's tax rules. RRSPs would become much more attractive once there is an equal playing field.

A research paper commissioned on the subject from Canada's Library of Parliament indicates that allowing all retired couples in Canada to split pension income would cost \$302 million a year. A better question is what is the price for the status quo?

Legislating pension splitting now does not detract from general splitting of family income as a future step. It merely prioritizes a component that has greater urgency because of the age of pensioners and the severity of their situation. They

have suffered the most for the longest period of time and enjoy less time to wait for justice.

On May 10/06 I asked Wellington-Halton Hills MP Michael Chong if he supported "pension splitting". I still don't know.

A pre-budget conference arranged by the 14 allied retiree groups, highlighting pension splitting, is being held in the House of Commons, West Block Oct. 3. Please contact your MP and insist that Canadian couples have the option to split all retirement income in a manner that would minimize their combined taxes.

Ask for a reply and forward it to dfrerichs@cogeco.ca or to 23 Weber Drive, Georgetown ON L7G 1C1

Duane Frerichs, Georgetown

### Don't judge town on racist's idiocy, says reader

Dear editor,

I'm writing in response to the letter in the July 14, *Independent & Free Press*, Resident outraged by 'racist' incident.

I'm hoping you will print this letter as I feel its important. This was verbal and physical assault— simple as that. I hope this woman and her family do not judge all residents of Halton Hills by this coward's behaviour, it was racism pure and simple.

I am personally offended to hear that someone was treated that way

simply because her skin happened to be darker than mine. The gentleman who stood up and made his physical presence known should be commended, while I can guarantee he didn't do it to win favourable opinions, knowing there are men out there like that (who will stand up for others) warms my heart.

Please let this family know that Halton Hills is a warm and safe place— save for the occasional idiot (which you will find everywhere).

Lisa Komadowski, Acton