

Local MADD organization wants to lower BAC, but safety council is against it

By **FANNIE SUNSHINE**
The Champion

It's time to change Canada's drinking and driving laws from a 0.8 Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) to 0.5, said Stephanie Dooley, Halton chapter president of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD).

"Most European countries have a 0.5 limit and have seen improvements with drinking and driving crashes. I see the records and statistics and I believe a change is needed."

On November 28, MADD Canada proposed a change to lower the BAC from 0.8 to 0.5.

"We're definitely in favour of lowering the limit," said Ms Dooley, who's daughter was killed by a drunk driver 10 years ago. "If your daughter was killed you might see things differently."

Recently, the Canada Safety Council released a statement indicating it was against lowering the BAC limit because, in its opinion, a limit of 0.5 would have no impact on the majority of drinking drivers responsible for fatal crashes.

"There is a widespread misconception that lowering the legal limit will solve Canada's drunk driving problem. But the fact is that the worst offenders don't care what the legal limit is. They will drink and drive anyway," it said.

But Ms Dooley disagreed, saying it's time to lower the limit.

"We're (MADD) not the only ones saying it, everyday people are saying it as well."

Safety council says lowering BAC won't make difference

Emile Therien, president of the Canada Safety Council, told *The Champion* lowering the BAC to 0.5 won't make a difference when targeting "chronic" drunk drivers and would only create conflicts with social drinkers.

"If someone has one drink with friends and gets pulled over, even though they're not impaired they will still be charged," he said. "The courts will be vastly overburdened with people charged from having one glass of beer. If we further criminalize the law to 0.5, Canadians will develop tremendous contempt for the law."

Mr. Therien said police need to focus on targeting chronic drunk driving offenders.

"The R.I.D.E (Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere) program is extremely effective. If they know R.I.D.E is out there on a regular basis, they'll be afraid to drink and drive."

Ms Dooley stressed MADD isn't against drinking, only irresponsible drinking.

"Take a taxi or stay overnight. We want to see responsible drinkers. Too many people are killed by drunk drivers."

According to MADD Canada, four Canadians are killed each day and 125 people are seriously injured from drunk drivers. Approximately 50,000 Canadians are impacted by impaired drivers annually.

Currently, MADD Canada is in the beginning stages of lobbying to lower the BAC tolerance for driving under the influence.

"We're busy contacting our local MPs by writing letters and sending faxes," Ms Dooley said.

"We encourage the community members to do the same. We have to keep writing to our MPs and politicians. There's no need for drinking and driving."

"If your daughter was killed you might see things differently."

STEPHANIE DOOLEY

Registration is being accepted for junior, senior kindergarten

The Halton District School Board is currently accepting registration for junior and senior kindergarten for September, 2002.

Milton public schools housing the JK and SK programs for the coming school year include Brookville, J.M. Denyes, Percy Merry, Robert Baldwin and Sam Sherratt.

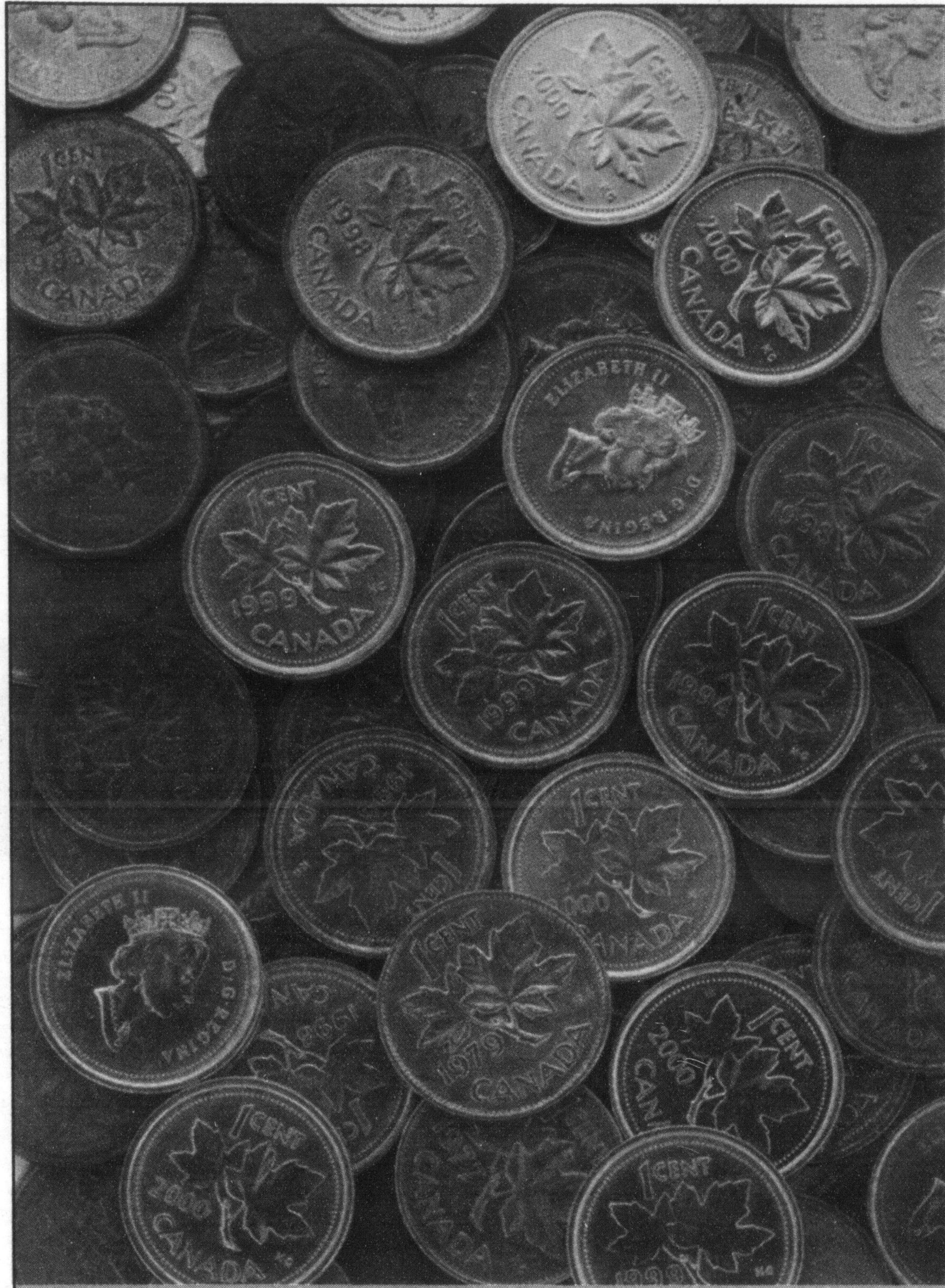
Parents can register their kids directly at the school by making an appointment.

Parents must bring proof of their chil-

dren's age (birth certificate or passport), immunization records, Ontario Health Card, and proof of address. Those who aren't the child's parent must bring proof of custody (court order).

To register for the fall of 2002, JK children must be 4 years of age by December 31, 2002. SK children must be 5 years of age by December 31, 2002.

For more information, call the Halton District School Board at (905) 335-3663 or visit www.haltondsb.on.ca.



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