



# COMMENT



## THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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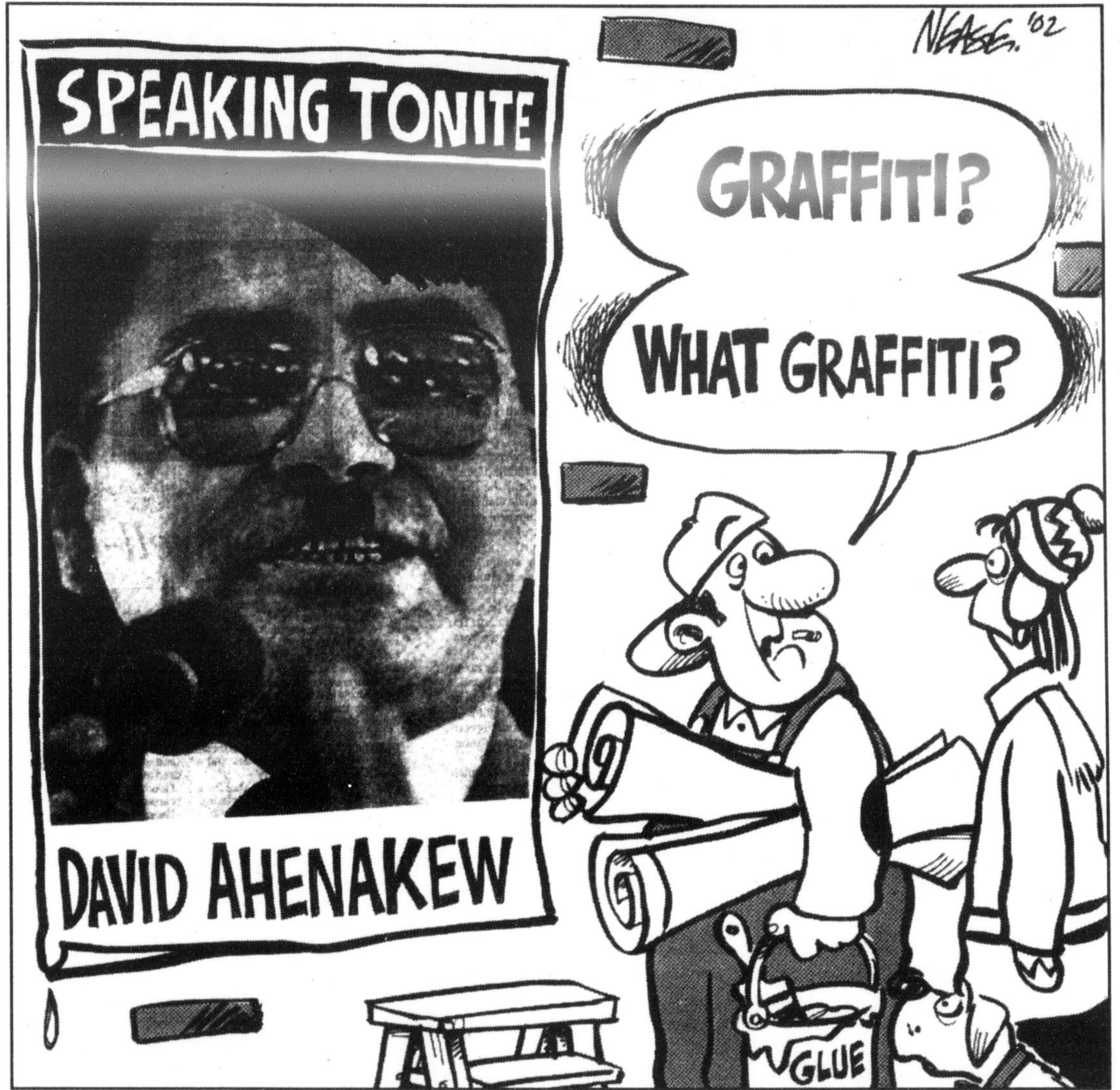
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## OUR READERS WRITE

### Establishing looser laws for marijuana possession won't benefit Canada: reader

(The following letter was addressed to Halton MP Julian Reed and a copy was filed with The Champion.)

**Dear Editor:**  
This letter is directed to Halton MP Julian Reed.  
As one of your constituents I want to request that you fully inform yourself on the pros and cons of decriminalizing marijuana before voting.  
I've chatted with a lot of police in the region, as well as those working in rehabilitation centres and deten-

tion centres for youth in this area.  
I've yet to meet anyone directly involved with our teenagers who says anything other than that marijuana is a gateway drug.  
I recently met one 16-year-old youth who spend time in a rehabilitation centre. He has spleen damage, liver damage and damage to both retinas because of substance abuse.  
There are a number of U.S. reports that document the damage done to our teens and the body. Decriminalizing the drug will surely

increase its availability to our youth and compromise the work done by our rehabilitation and detention centres.  
Will it be legalized after that and then taxed?  
Is this supposed to benefit Canadians?  
Please find out the facts before contributing to worsening the situation for our youth and those precious Canadians who are working so hard to keep our youth drug free.  
**Dr. Christopher Eriksson, CEO  
The Art of Healthy Living Inc.**

E-mail your letters to the editor to [miltoned@haltonsearch.com](mailto:miltoned@haltonsearch.com).

## In praise of peace

The holiday season is meant to be about peace. But this year, it arrived as many nations bolstered both their defensive and offensive capabilities following the September 11 attacks.

The war on terror appears to be gearing up for a showdown with Iraqi strongman Saddam Hussein, and peace in the Middle East seems no closer to becoming reality.

On a domestic level, native leader and Order of Canada recipient David Ahenakew embarrassed the nation with his verbal attack on Jews while Republican Senate Leader Trent Lott found his support deflated after seeming to speak wistfully about the good old days of segregation in the U.S. Both have apologized themselves silly, which while good, is irrelevant. The damage has been done.

There is some good news. A war crimes tribunal in The Hague has seen former Bosnian president Biljana Plavsic admit her culpability in the deaths of thousands of innocent Muslims and Croats at the hands of Serbian nationalists.

And the west found an unlikely ally in Palestinian leader Yassir Arafat, who has called upon Osama bin Laden to stop using the Palestinian cause as an excuse for his reign of hatred.

When the last century closed, it did so as one of the bloodiest in history. The new millennium was supposed to change that but this Christmas, a lasting peace seems as unlikely and precarious as ever. Peace on Earth, goodwill toward men? We're still hoping.

## In a split second, a drunk driver could end your life

Imagine how awful it would be to lose your life or that of a loved one to a drunk driver.  
It's hard to imagine it happening, but it has happened to thousands of Canadians.  
And despite the good efforts to remove drunk drivers from our roads, the threat is always out there.  
That reality hit me recently on the way home from my office Christmas party in Oakville — a gathering where our publishers had ensured the "don't drink and drive" message was heard loud and clear.  
It's too bad that message didn't get out to all of Oakville that night.  
I was travelling northbound on Trafalgar Road shortly after 11 p.m. when I noticed a white van pull out of a driveway in the southbound lanes.  
The problem was, the van went north. It was travelling northbound in the southbound lanes — driving on the wrong side of the road.

And a centre median separated the northbound and southbound lanes so there was no quick way out.  
"Oh no," I said to myself. "This guy's going to plow straight into somebody."  
I saw the arm of a passenger in the front seat of the van pointing ahead, maybe trying to direct the driver out of the situation. It was hard to say what was going on in the vehicle.  
The van continued northbound in the southbound lanes for about half a mile. There was nowhere to turn off and he didn't try to turn around.  
Luckily, the southbound lanes were basically bare except for one vehicle, which luckily passed the van without incident.  
He was driving adjacent to me. I didn't go ahead of him so I knew where he was at all times. For my own safety, I wasn't letting him out of my sight.



From the editor's desk with KAREN SMITH

We approached an intersection. Still there were no other vehicles nearby. I hoped he would take the opportunity to get into the northbound lanes, and he did. I let him in front of me and I felt relieved that no one had been hurt.  
Then I started to think about getting his licence plate number and calling the police, although I had no cell phone with me.

Suddenly, the van made a quick right turn from the left lane — across two lanes — and went down a side street out of me sight.  
I continued on my way home wondering if someone would end up being the victim of that driver that night.  
I can't say for sure that the driver was drunk, but in all likelihood he was intoxicated, either from alcohol or drugs.  
Then the next night I was stopped in a R.I.D.E. spot check on Steeles Avenue between Ontario and Martin streets.  
A had a new appreciation for the R.I.D.E. program because of my experience on Trafalgar Road the night before. It got me to thinking that in split second, your life could be over because of a drunk driver.  
And the chances are even greater at this time of year.  
Please be careful out there.