



# COMMENT

## RIDE results not bad, but still unacceptable

The results of the recent holiday season RIDE program are encouraging, however just not good enough since they indicate drunk drivers are still on our roads.

As reported elsewhere in this newspaper, two people were charged with impaired driving among 8,543 drivers stopped in north Halton during the 2002 Holiday RIDE Program.

Seventeen people also received 12-hour driver's licence suspensions after being given roadside screening tests.

It's hard to believe that with all the anti-drinking and driving messages out there, people are still getting behind the wheel while impaired. But while it seems unrealistic to think that drinking and driving can be curbed altogether, we can't stop trying to achieve a sober motorist population.

According to police, the 2002 holiday RIDE program was expanded, resulting in more charges throughout the region. Now if only the program could be stepped up throughout the year.

Police enforcement as well as harsh penalties and continued public education are key as thousands of new drivers come on our roads every year.



## OUR READERS WRITE

### Reader says school board should hire two more guidance counsellors

(The following letter was addressed to Halton Board of Education Director Dusky Papke and a copy was filed with The Champion).

Dear Editor:

I was pleased to hear about the new provincial funding for the Halton District School Board.

I'd like to take this opportunity to plead — no, make that beg — the Halton District School Board to add two guidance counsellors to the middle school system, preferably a man for the young men and a woman for the young women.

Now before you accuse me of being politically incorrect, let me assure you that,

young women don't want to discuss any of their personal angst with a male of any age, and young men would feel the same about a woman. Our youth need someone who can counsel them.

Yes, we have pastors, parents and principals. However, they all have rules, regulations and really long memories. And they all don't necessarily agree with one another.

Our youth need someone impartial and neutral, yet savvy to the torments going on inside of them.

They need someone who can recognize danger signs and act on them immediately, and they need someone who can tell the

parents to back off if they're simply going through some growing pains (sometimes it's hard to tell the difference).

For instance, while moving through the middle school system, our youth will potentially deal with:

- A new school;
- Being home alone before/after school;
- A change of senior status back to junior;
- Shared lockers with a friend or stranger;
- Maintaining expectations of multiple teachers;
- Multiple assignments/projects running in parallel, transiting each other, or colliding;
- Multiple tests running in parallel, transiting each other, or colliding;
- Shifting hormones;
- Body odour;
- Body/facial hair growth;
- Changes in friendship dynamic, from one-on-one to group;
- Pressure of wanting to fit in to a new group;
- Peer/group discussions of sex;
- Peer/group discussions of alcohol;
- Peer/group discussions of drugs;

- Discussions on initiations and tasks to perform for acceptance;
  - Attraction to the opposite sex;
  - Attraction from the opposite sex;
  - Homophobic fears if attraction to the opposite sex has not kicked in;
  - Fear of rejection by the opposite sex;
- The Daily (Statistics Canada), Tuesday July 6, 1999, reported: National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth: transition into adolescence.

Within the report, it's stated, "Early adolescence is a period of transition for children.

"Often with the change into adolescence comes the task of dealing with increasingly complex decisions, pressures from peers as well as pressures of everyday life."

Overall, the data indicates that most youth have a happy and positive outlook on life.

Nevertheless, some are starting to report less socially acceptable behaviours, such as smoking, stealing, and fighting.

At this point, it's still too early to know whether these activities are part of an experimental phase or the indication of

• see GUIDANCE on page 7

Do you have an opinion on a local issue? If so, fax us your letters to (905) 878-4943, or drop them off anytime at 191 Main St. E.



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### Pud

by Steve Nease

