



COMMENT

Much to celebrate

In this country we have much to celebrate and celebrate we should today.

Despite some significant setbacks this year — like mad cow disease and SARS — Canadians have many reasons to hold their heads high and be justifiably proud of the place they call home.

The official opening of the Juno Beach Centre in France earlier this month is a reminder that while we're typically a people with a reputation for being more modest than our closest neighbours, our nation has repeatedly played a prominent role in shaping the world in which we live.

In just 136 years since the Fathers of Confederation united the Dominion of Canada under the BNA Act, Canada has thrived, expanded and welcomed people from every region of the globe to come join its ranks.

Per capita, we remain an impressive exporter of world class performers in the realms of art, music, dance, literature and film.

In the scientific community Canadians have and continue to be at the forefront of

innovation.

Some of Canada's contributions to the world in the last two centuries include the McIntosh apple, undersea cable, Standard Time, the first radio voice message, the gas mask, the snowmobile, the first AC radio tube, the variable pitch propeller, pabulum, the bush plane, the paint roller and the space shuttle program's robotic Canadarm.

If you call yourself Canadian, you belong to the nation that put the game of hockey on the map, invented the game of basketball and remains the only country outside of the United States to have captured the World Series of baseball — twice.

More importantly Canada has remained a place where freedom of expression is protected, respected and encouraged.

July 1 is much more than a national holiday or a day to go watch fireworks displays. It's a day when we should reflect on Canada's past, look forward to its future and feel extremely proud of where we live.



— AND IT'S STILL THE BEST DAMN COUNTRY IN THE WORLD!



OUR READERS WRITE

Alcohol just as dangerous as pot: reader

Dear Editor:

This letter is in response to Halton Regional Police Chief Ean Algar's views on the issue of decriminalizing marijuana, which were reported recently in The Champion.

I suppose Chief Algar doesn't consider alcohol a drug. Chief Algar, can you justify marijuana as a greater threat to society than alcohol and tobacco?

Michael J. Dee
Maine

Reader agrees that letter was personally offensive

Dear Editor:

Wendy Schau is quite correct when she identifies Peter Berry's personal snipes at Lynn Shire as improper. In rhetoric, it's known as the ad hominem fallacy.

The ad hominem argument isn't automatically incorrect in every case, however.

For example, both the fact that Mr. Berry didn't know his personal comments were out of order and that he's a conservative support the likelihood that he's ignorant.

Glad to be of assistance.

Richard Hodgins
Holly Avenue

Reader says Halton police chief's letter regarding pot law contained incorrect info

Dear Editor:

Don't worry about the new tabled marijuana decriminalization bill. The personal possession laws for 30 grams or less of marijuana have been cleared in Ontario, a precedent soon to spread to all of Canada.

The new bill to decriminalize marijuana possession of 15 grams or less will also be thrown out under the same court ruling that the past law was cleared, since it doesn't make medicinal marijuana and its production available for the sick and dying in Canada.

The new proposal will be voided for not satisfying the Parker decision of July 2000.

As for the misinformation given by Halton Police Chief Ean Algar, I will correct him on two counts. Number one, your own statistics from your RCMP state the average potency of marijuana seized in your

country is 5.7 per cent THC, not the 15 per cent figure quoted. Samples of 18 per cent Thai marijuana were recorded back in 1974.

You may check your own RCMP documents, published in November of 2002.

For further information, visit: http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/crim-int/cultivation_e.htm.

Survey results show that the THC content of the 3,160 marijuana samples analyzed during the three-year period varies considerably.

Although the highest value recorded was 25 per cent, the yearly country-wide averages are much lower: 6 per cent for 1996 to 1997, 5.5 per cent for 1997 to 1998 and 5.7 per cent for 1998 to 1999. In fact, almost a third of the samples were under 3 per cent.

Number two, in regard to marijuana being naughty, I quote the

Canadian Senate Report, Volume One, circa 2002, page 165, "In total, based on all the data from the research and the testimony heard regarding the effects and consequences of cannabis use, the Committee concludes that the state of knowledge supports the belief that, for the vast majority of recreational users, cannabis use presents no harmful consequences for physical, psychological or social well-being in either the short or the long term."

They recommended full legalization, with an age of consent of 16.

Now if you had consulted a drug policy scholar while writing about drug policy matters, versus a police officer, you might have been properly informed.

Matthew Hulett
New Jersey

E-mail all your letters to the editor to miltomed@haltonsearch.com.



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Box 248, 191 Main St. E.,
Milton, Ont. L9T 4N9

(905) 878-2341

Editorial Fax: 905-878-4943

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Ian Oliver **Publisher**

Neil Oliver **Associate Publisher**

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by Steve Nease

