



COMMENT



THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Issue has two sides

We suspected The Champion's decision to publish names of motorists charged by Halton Regional Police with alcohol-related offences would not sit well with some residents. We were right.

Even before publishing a single name of someone charged during the seasonal RIDE program, we have already received some criticism.

At The Champion, we strive to inform, educate and occasionally help support the push for social change.

While no one could argue that Canada's laws related to operating motor vehicles under the influence of alcohol are the toughest in our nation's history, far too many people still don't get the message.

Despite the threat of fines, loss of driver's licences and highly-publicized programs such as RIDE as deterrents to this anti-social behaviour, supposedly responsible adults insist on mixing driving with their drinking.

Provincial statistics suggest that one in four traffic fatalities in Ontario each year results from an alcohol-related collision. That represents about 200 families who will have lost a loved one this year due to an easily-preventable act.

Accidents cease to be accidents when one

of the motorists involved chooses to get behind the wheel after drinking. Most of us know better, but far too many still don't get it.

Identifying an accused before their day in court may not seem the fair thing to do in a society that values the presumption of innocence, but it isn't exactly a groundbreaking move either. The Champion routinely names those charged in connection with murder, sexual assault and major drug and fraud cases and rarely does anyone call up or write in to protest that practise. Those cases are followed up in court, and in keeping with that, we will publish news of any confirmed acquittals that result from the impaired driving charges.

We believe the impact on families of the innocent women, men and children killed by drunk drivers each year is far more immediate, devastating and lasting than a name printed in a paper.

We're not so naive to think that publishing names will miraculously end this serious societal problem.

However, if by doing so more motorists opt to grab a cab or get a sober friend or loved one to drive them home, we don't mind being exposed to a little criticism.



OUR READERS WRITE

Traffic situation at Childs Drive and Ontario Street needs to be addressed and corrected, says reader

Dear Editor:

This letter is in response to recent letters to the editor about potential traffic hazards, specifically at Childs Drive and Ontario Street.

The long intervals between traffic light changes at this intersection, outside of rush hour, needs to be addressed. I complained to the authorities at Town Hall some time ago, and they referred me to the regional traffic department. I was told the staff was responsible for altering — where deemed necessary — traffic lights in the region.

I was informed that traffic light changes were essentially deter-

mined by the time of day. For instance, during peak rush hours, Ontario Street traffic has precedence, and understandably so.

However, in my opinion traffic lights should be programmed to change more frequently at side streets outside of rush hour.

There are traffic devices available, as I understand, and are operational in some urban communities and are viewed by the motoring public wishing to exit a side street.

They're electronically designed to change lights as frequently as traffic build-ups on a side street occur. They're able to monitor the

number of vehicles awaiting light changes on these side streets. If three or more vehicles, for example, are backed up on a side street like Childs Drive, the lights will change shortly thereafter.

Lights will then automatically change back to enable traffic on the main thoroughfare to proceed until the next regular change occurs.

I believe changes are needed sooner than later. Why this unnecessary delay? Traffic volume in Milton is evidently on the increase, making these changes urgent.

J. Kenyon
Cabot Trail

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

Give yourself a break — shop downtown Milton

When it comes to Christmas shopping, I must confess — I often find myself at the dreaded shopping mall just days before December 25.

I find myself one of thousands of frustrated shoppers jostling to get to the right aisle and waiting in torturous line-ups, often with a gift I know will get little more than a half-hearted "Gee, thanks." That's after I've managed to secure a parking space, something that could be an entire column in itself.

This year, I'm doing things differently. I'm using my lunch hour to once again browse through all the charming downtown Milton shops I loved visiting when I first started working here. And I've found I've been able to scratch almost everyone off my list.

I realize sometimes it's easy to take for granted what we have here, so sometimes I make a conscious effort to see Milton through the eyes of a

tourist.

As I've re-discovered, the shops downtown are full of unique gifts — particularly for the women on my list, with all the home decor shops.

You can't rush Main Street shopping. It just doesn't do the area justice. You have to walk slowly, noticing every Christmas light in the window and savouring every wafting scent from the cafés and restaurants.

Here's my idea of a great couple of hours spent shopping downtown.

First, head to my all-time favourite home décor shop, Pickets and Primrose, just east of Main and Martin streets. The shopowners are always up for a chat, and the store carries a great selection of antique and shabby chic furniture, pillows, lamps and more. A warning — this is a dangerous store to hit for Christmas shopping because you just may find yourself keeping everything you intend



with **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**

Around town

ed to give.

Just across the street in the Carriage Square plaza, you'll find A Country Mile, which has a million little doo-dads for just about anyone on your list (okay, maybe not the men). The smell inside is heavenly. There's always something new, which means I'm there nearly every week, and there you'll find the greatest selection of old-

fashioned teddy bears.

Just today I walked into Baba's Attic across from the Champion office. What a hidden gem if you're into scouring for that one-of-a-kind item like a crystal candelabra or toile table covering.

For a meaningful gift, the Gospel Lighthouse, beside Knox Presbyterian Church, offers plenty of books, CDs and gift items to remind us of the true meaning of Christmas.

I'm sure you'll find a few more stores you'll have to peruse in between the ones I've recommended.

To end your shopping spree, visit Espresso Yourself Caffé, just west of Main and Martin streets, for a coffee or piece of cake. If you're lucky, the coffee flavour brewing will be Maple Cream or Raspberry Chocolate. This is a cozy cafe with a European atmosphere — the perfect way to end your day as a tourist.