

Comment

The Canadian Champion

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Impaired driving — it's just not worth it

Today marks the start of the first of spring and summer's long weekends — a time when among other things, reports of drinking and driving tend to increase.

So far this year, impaired driving incidents in Milton have been relatively low, at least if the The Champion's weekly police blotter round-ups are any indication.

Let's all work at keeping those numbers to a bare minimum — either by practicing common sense ourselves, or encouraging those around us to do likewise.

Feel the need to toss back a few this weekend? Then take a taxi, designate a sober driver for the group or plan to spend the night at a friend's house.

And with the warm weather we've been having lately, is it really so much to ask to leave the car at home and walk

to one's favourite watering hole?

While many may argue that stiffer penalties are needed to truly wipe out drinking and driving, it's still up to us to decide how much we want to eliminate this totally preventable plague.

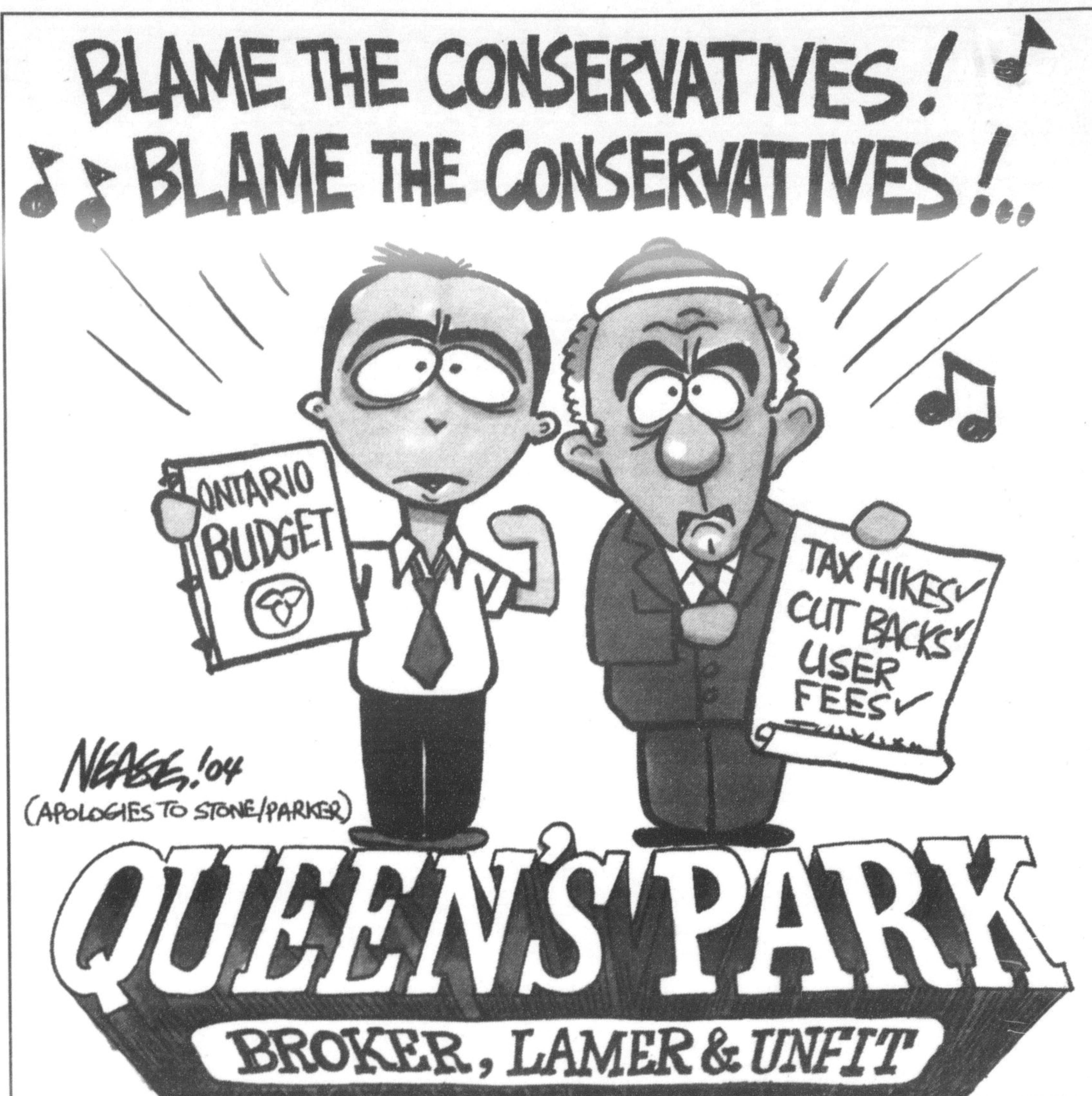
The cure? Simple consideration for fellow motorists, none of whom ever ask to be put in harm's way.

And for those of the more selfish variety, just remember that the life you save could be your own.

As always, volunteers from MADD's Halton/Peel chapter will be out in full force this weekend to conduct a public awareness campaign to help prevent tragedies.

Remember that many of these people have lost loved ones to drunk drivers. Then ask yourself if you want to risk adding to their grief.

We think not.



Our Readers Write

PAM president says thanks to those who helped make recent talk on natural lawn care a success

Dear Editor:

On behalf of Pesticide Alternatives for Milton (PAM), I'd like to thank all those who helped make our recent talk on natural lawn care techniques a success.

Thanks to our speakers — including Susan Koswan, Wayne Blampier and local business owner Margarate Schlorke from Landscape Garten — who spoke about native plants.

Organic lawn-care service provider Roborganic generously supported our group, as did Loblaws, Taylor Nursery and Dominion Seed House with their

door prize donations.

Audience members took home practical tips to eliminate the use of pesticides on their lawn. Their interest was appreciated, especially in light of the Pesticide Literature Review that was recently released by the Ontario College of Family Physicians.

This thorough review of pesticide studies showed that the health effects of pesticides include hematologic cancer, tumours, birth defects, skin reactions and genotoxic effects on lymphocytes.

Children and pregnant women were shown to be particularly vul-

nerable. The literature review concluded that we should reduce our exposure to all pesticides.

A free copy of PAM's Green Guide to a Healthy Lawn is available to those who were unable to attend the presentation but would like to learn more about natural lawn care practices.

This guide was created with the help of a grant from the Town of Milton's Community Fund and can be requested by e-mailing p_alternatives@hotmail.com.

Erika Ristok, N.D., president
Pesticide Alternatives for Milton

The time has come for Milton to get an arts centre

I've never written a column in response to a letter before, but here goes.

A while back budding young thespian Nicki Patafio — part of the Milton Youth Theatre Production's debut performance, Dracula Spectacula — wrote about the need for an arts centre in town.

Citing the fact that her group had to perform its full-scale production in Meadowvale, she spoke of how this community could capitalize on many opportunities by having an all-encompassing venue for both the visual and performing arts.

First let me say to Nicki and her youth theatre cohorts that Dracula Spectacula was a heck of a good production — not just for a first-time effort, but darn good period. Started less than a year ago, the group already has quite a professional persona to it and should be a great addition to our artistic community.

And I would agree whole-heartedly that the time has come for Milton to have its own arts

centre. Or at least it definitely will a few years down the road, when council and consultants are looking at having an arts and entertainment facility attached to the new library at Milton Hydro's current location at Thompson and Main. At the risk of personal injury by some of our bigger athletes here, I'll admit that there's more to life than hockey — and even sports in general.

However, I would advise Nicki and all other local artists to be careful about drawing comparisons between arts and sports — at least when trying to emphasize the need for certain facilities in Milton.

The reality is that the potential for getting an arts centre in this town has very little to do with whether or not we get another two hockey rinks or another 20 — primarily because in most cases sports facilities are much more financially viable.

Furthermore, facilities like an art centre aren't eligible for growth-related revenue like sports fields and arenas, so an arts centre will definitely



with STEVE LeBLANC

need some fundraising.

It'll also require a collective effort by this town's arts and community groups, to ensure that an arts centre — which is still very much in the preliminary stage and slated to be examined by town council in the fall — is sufficiently utilized.

Spearheaded by Arts Milton, efforts in this department are already well underway, and public input meetings are tentatively scheduled for June 1, 2 and 9 at an as-yet unconfirmed venue.

Stay tuned for specific times and locations.

In my opinion, raising enough interest and support for an arts centre is certainly an attainable goal — at least if we can get everyone on the same page and show that this community truly wants this.

Perhaps Milton's arts groups could join forces and stage a major fundraiser each year until a centre is ready to be built — something with a catchy title like Milton's Fall Flair Fair.

And contrary to what many may believe, I don't think it should be that difficult to find enough activities and users for an arts centre to be a worthy venture.

It's just going to take a lot of dedication and creativity — things our visual and performing artists have anyway.

Those interested in offering ideas and suggestions about a proposed arts centre can do so by calling Arts Milton president Bill Smelser at (519) 856-0909.