

OPINION

Get the message

This weekend millions of people across Canada, including thousands throughout Halton Region, will either go camping, fire up a barbecue, hit the open road or host/attend a Victoria Day weekend party.

After all, isn't that what the first long weekend of the spring/summer is all about? A chance to revel in the great outdoors after six months of shivering?

We hope all our readers get a chance to take advantage of this weekend to enjoy themselves, after all, it's almost a Canadian right, if not a tradition. Sort of a reward for surviving yet another winter.

However, we hope that wherever and however you choose to celebrate this weekend you do so by not drinking and driving — whether on land or water.

The unfortunate aspect of this holiday weekend is that several people will not be going back to work or school on Tuesday and their loved ones will be planning funerals all because someone chose to drink and drive.

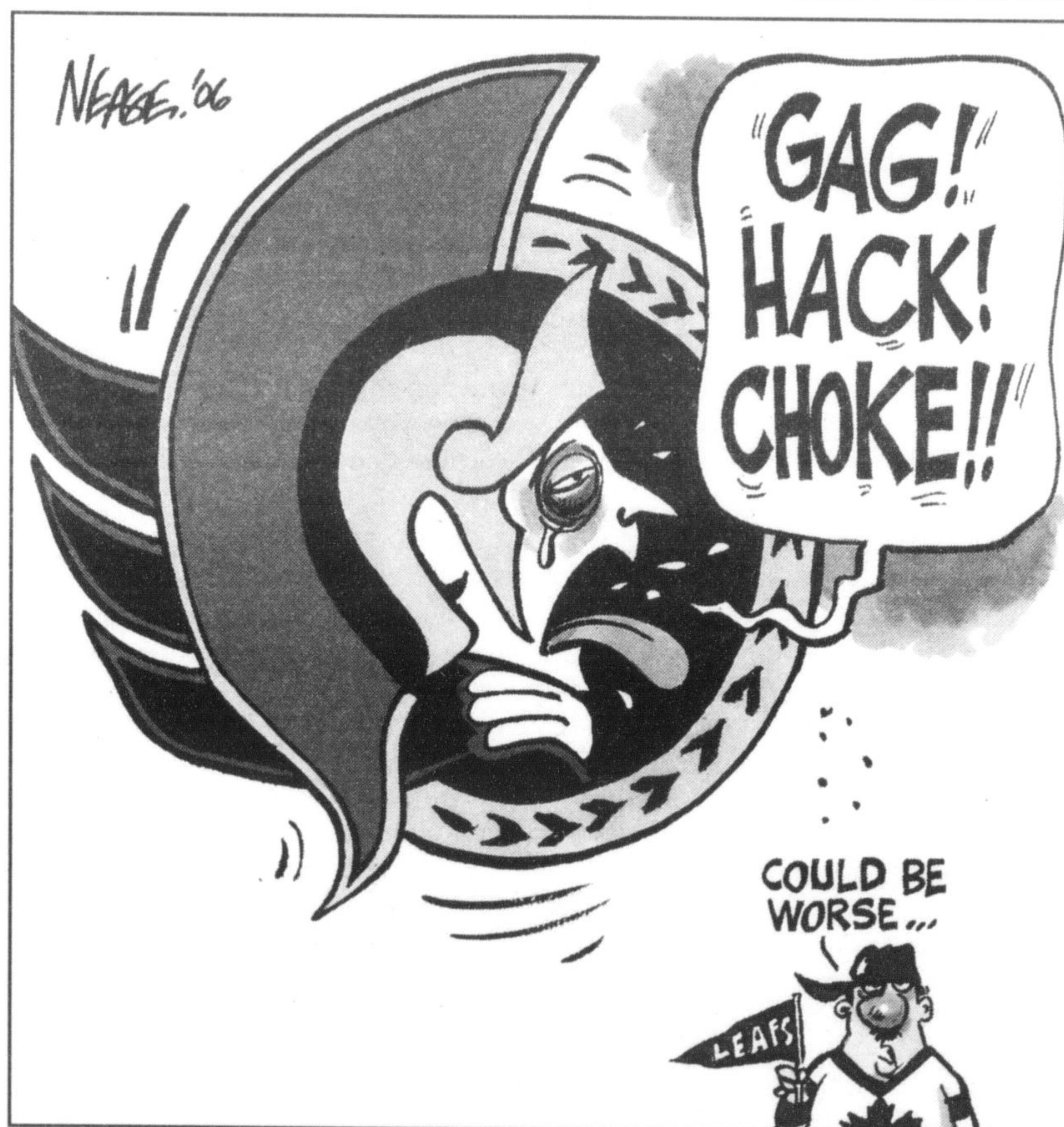
While drinking and driving has certainly become much more of a public taboo in the past couple decades and education programs have helped decrease the number of people willing to drive while intoxicated, there's still a small percentage of the population willing to take that risk.

It's to those people we issue this regular reminder. If you chose to drink and drive you may as well play Russian roulette — there's no difference between the two.

Driving while drunk has the potential to change your life, or a loved one's or a complete stranger's — forever. Even if your actions don't result in a death, is it worth losing your driver's licence and paying a hefty fine all for the sake of saving a few bucks on a taxi or having a sober friend take you home?

This weekend the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Halton chapter will join with Halton police in manning roadside spot checks to ensure their anti-drinking and driving message gets through to drivers.

It's a message that shouldn't need repeating.



ReadersWrite

Send us your letters to miltone@haltonsearch.com or drop them off at 875 Main St. E.

Escarpment needs to be protected

DEAR EDITOR:

I applaud Colin Best and certain councillors for their stand to protect the escarpment area from housing development.

This will be noted come election time.

Parkland with numerous trees and shrubs on both sides of escarpment roads — to a width of one-half to one kilometre — would encourage and protect wildlife now in the area.

Why don't groups like the Niagara Escarpment Commission and Conservation Halton do some protecting, which is why their committees were begun?

An exit from Hwy. 401 to Tremaine Road would defeat the purpose of limited traffic to these sensitive areas, and there would be more road-kill of animals.

H. SHAVER
MILTON

Theviewfromhere

Get out of the way — you might just save someone's life

What do you do when you see an ambulance's flashing lights in your rearview mirror?

While most of you probably wonder why I would ask such a seemingly obvious question, the answer doesn't appear to be such a no-brainer to every driver out there.

And with it being EMS Week, I thought this would be a perfect time to drive home an important and life-saving message: pull over and let ambulances through.

The other day as my husband and I were driving through Brampton we saw an ambulance approaching, struggling through a sea of traffic that wouldn't get out of its way.

As it passed by, I could hear the paramedic yelling on the ambulance's loud speaker system at the oblivious drivers, in addition to having its flashing lights and siren on.

As I watched this horrifying display of

ignorance, all I could think about was the person the ambulance was rushing to help. Was it a car accident victim? A heart attack? Would they be able to hang on until the paramedics arrived?

Ironically, a few days after I saw this a regional councillor brought up the same issue during a meeting.

He spoke of his experience tagging along with a Halton EMS vehicle, where he witnessed an "appalling lack of understanding" from people on local roads when it comes to getting out of the way for ambulances.

He also said the paramedics told him the biggest challenge they face is getting from point A to point B.

Now I realize we live in a world that pro-

vides many distractions when people are driving, whether it be they're talking on a cell phone, changing the radio station, etc.

But I also seem to recall learning from my driving instructor that it's important to check your rearview mirror frequently for a variety of reasons, including the fact an ambulance, fire truck or police cruiser might be trying to rush by to an emergency.

At the risk of overstating the obvious, I encourage everyone to be aware when they're behind the wheel and pull over as quickly as possible when they see any type of emergency vehicle coming.

Those few seconds might just save someone's life.



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