

Pot and booze most common drugs of choice: students

Students tell Region committee how easy it is for Halton youths to get drugs

Melanie Hennessey
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Alcohol and marijuana are the most common substances being used by Halton teens, according to local students.

A group of high school pupils from both north and south Halton told the Region's health and social services committee about the realities of teen drug use at its meeting Tuesday.

Grade 12 student Kayla Bulatovich of Oakville said even though there are a lot of drugs out there, alcohol and marijuana are the biggest problems in local schools.

"Binge drinking is a normal thing for kids," she said. "We need to reduce the risks associated with drinking by educating youth about safe partying."

She noted there are a lot of myths out there about marijuana, like it's not addictive or harmful.

"Students are making decisions based on misinformation," she said.

Bulatovich added that painkillers are becoming a new trend in student drug use, while other drugs like ecstasy, ketamine and cocaine continue to be a concern.

Fellow Grade 12 Oakville student Lindsay Boyce spoke about how easy it is for Halton youths to get drugs.

"Kids in Halton have lots of money from part-time jobs or

parents," she said. "And drugs aren't that expensive. A joint is \$5, a tab of E (ecstasy) is \$5, and if you buy more from a dealer the price comes down."

She also said some youths are getting drugs at home from their parents or siblings.

The teens are turning to drugs for a variety of reasons, said Grade 12 student Bianca Nagy, including for fun, to fit in with a certain group, become more confident and because they don't think anything bad will happen.

"They don't know the consequences or the long-term effects," she said.

So what's the answer to help steer youths away from drugs?

Grade 11 Georgetown student Marc Stiel said schools

need to find ways to keep youth involved, while parents need to find a balance between being strict and accepting.

Region staff presented a report to the committee with results from the 2007 Ontario Student Drug Use Survey and the previously released results from the 2006 Halton Youth Survey.

The report backed up the information presented by the students — that alcohol continues to be the drug of choice for most students in Grades 7 to 12, followed by cannabis.

The Ontario survey also revealed that there's been a decrease in the use of cigarettes, methamphetamine, crack and steroids across the province.

The committee received the report for information purposes.

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at mhennessey@milton-canadianchampion.com.

Award to be presented at national convention

• from CHAMPION on page A1

Second place in the *Champion's* circulation class went to the St. Albert Gazette in Alberta, while third place was taken by the Orangeville Banner.

The CCNA encourages excellence by sponsoring the annual competition to celebrate the achievements of its member newspapers. Newspapers compete against other newspapers of similar circulation for Special and Premier awards in such categories as editorial, photography, advertising and special promotion. In addition, newspapers compete in the General Excellence Competition, which recognizes newspapers for the Best Editorial Page, Best Front Page and Best All Round Newspaper.

Awards will be presented May 9 during the CCNA's annual national convention, which this year will be held in downtown Toronto.

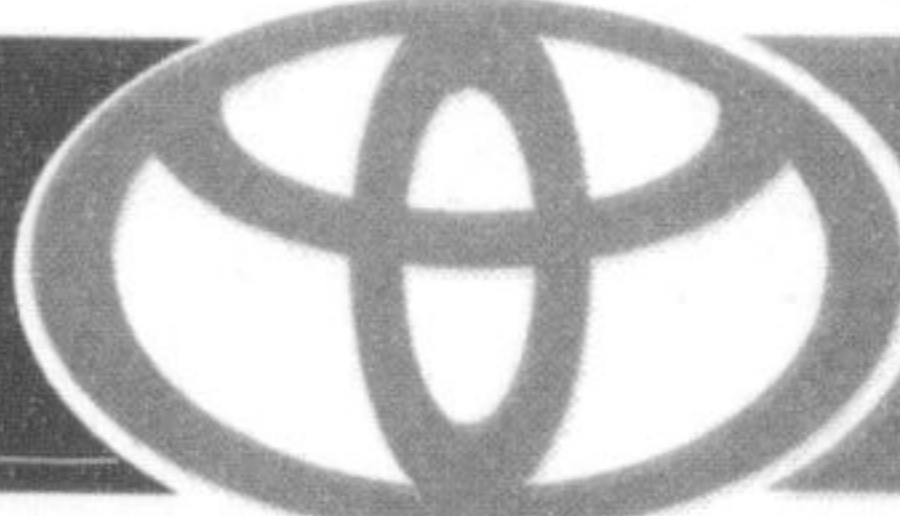
The *Champion* is on a bit of a winning streak, since just last month it was announced the paper is up for the General Excellence Award in a similar competition held by the Ontario Community Newspapers Association.

It took top honours in the category last year.

MASSIVE ONE DAY SALE

UP TO **200** NEW AND USED
TOYOTA'S

**SATURDAY MARCH 22
9AM-5PM**

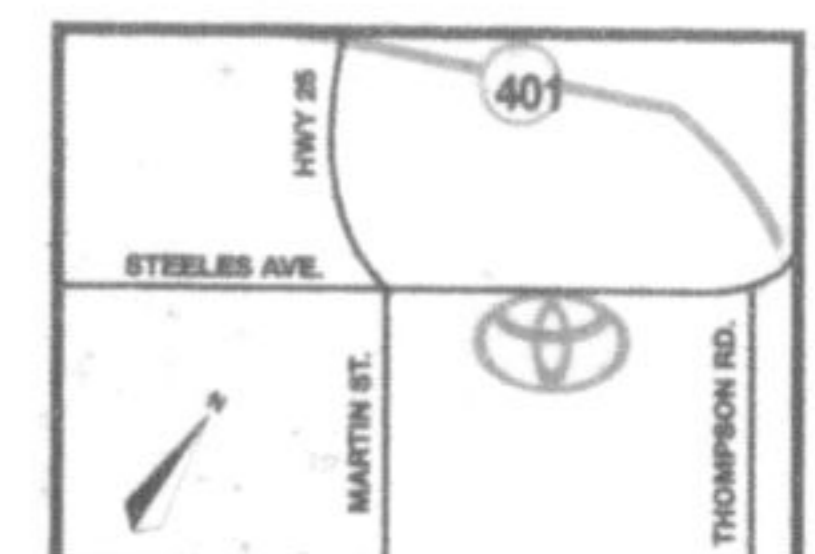
MILTON  TOYOTA

MyToyotaPlace.com

400 Steeles Avenue, Milton

Toll Free: 1-800-617-4025

Fax: (905) 875-1516 info@miltontoyota.com



Bill's
AUTO BODY
(ROYAL ATLANTIC) INC.



*Complete collision repair and
refinishing services*



**155 Nipissing Rd., Milton
(905) 878-2721**