

OPINION

Drunk driving has to stop

July 20, 2007: A Milton man has been charged with drunk driving after an elderly couple from Rockwood was killed last night when their vehicle was pushed into the path of a GO train.

July 30, 2008: Burlington OPP are crediting alert motorists with averting a tragedy following a high-speed dangerous driving incident on the QEW late last week. Police say callers estimated a driver was exceeding 160 km/h on the Toronto-bound QEW... A 61-year-old Brampton man was charged with impaired driving, refusing to provide breath samples and dangerous driving.

September 14, 2008: A Burlington man faces six impaired driving-related charges after a truck driving the wrong direction on Hwy. 403 struck a car head-on early Friday morning, killing both of its occupants.

It's an all too familiar refrain. Drinking plus driving equals tragedy and jail time — that is, assuming you live.

Amy Tiberia knows first-hand the toll impaired driving can have on innocent bystanders. In late 1994, a drunk driver caused an accident that has left deep wounds — both physical and psychological — on the Oakville family.

Amy's son Raymond, three years old at the time of the crash, sustained a severe brain injury. He was in a coma for 16 days. He had to fight for his life and then relearn all that he knew. Today, the teen still has memory trouble and can't retain much information.

"From the second it happened almost 14 years ago, the choice one person made to drink and drive forever altered the path of our lives," said Raymond's mom.

It was appropriate that Amy and Raymond last week kicked off this year's Mother's Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Halton's Red Ribbon campaign in an effort to drive home the real damage impaired drivers inflict.

Sadly, the message isn't getting through. There have already been more than 200 drinking and driving-related charges and four related deaths in Halton this year. In all of last year there were fewer than 200 alcohol-related charges, but eight deaths.

As the holiday season approaches, the Tiberias are hopeful that Halton motorists will tie on a red ribbon to remind everyone that drinking and driving ruins the lives of everyone involved.



ReadersWrite

E-mail your letters to editorial@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

Support for Sophie's Run was amazing

DEAR EDITOR:

The Sophie's Run Team would like to thank, from the bottom of our hearts, each and every person who made Sophie's Run a success.

It was a total team effort.

To the many family and friends who supported us since the first day and joined us in New York and at the post receptions, thank you.

To all of our sponsors, including Gordon Food Service, Pub Concepts, Ned Devines, the Royal Canadian Legion (Uncle Alvin) and Hutchinson, Thompson, Henderson and Mott,

thank you.

Thanks to Fire Chief Brian Ellsworth and the Milton Fire Department, Halton Regional Police, Town of Milton, Halton Region and the City of Burlington, the Milton Adult Hockey League-Womens for your continued support of the run, and to Val Bush and Ryan Denniston for the fundraisers while we were away.

Thank you to Kelly and Jeff Hanley for your support and to Kelly for running the first week with us. Thanks to Julie Bernard for capturing the

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Upfront

Quit stalling and ban cell phones while driving already

Call it a blow against stupidity at a dangerous level.

Or at least it will be once the provincial government shifts out of neutral and officially bans the use of cell phones and other hand-held devices while driving.

Passing a second reading late last month but since tabled for further discussion and possible revision, the proposed law certainly isn't the solution to all our traffic ills. However, it's a move in the right direction.

Quebec, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia have all recently introduced such restrictions — which are already in place in about 50 countries, including Australia, China and France. Now it's time for Ontario to catch up.

My only reservation with the as-yet-to-be-implemented law is that it doesn't go far enough. That's because as it stands, hands-free devices won't fall under the list of items

that'll be restricted. In fact, North American car manufacturers are already building such technologies into new vehicles in anticipation of widespread bans on electronic gadgets.

As far as I'm concerned, that merely creates a lesser-of-two-evils scenario, seeing as the primary objective of the proposed law isn't so much keeping drivers' hands on the wheel as minimizing distractions.

I may have my hands in the 10 and 2 position, but that doesn't necessarily mean I'm completely focused on what lays ahead, behind or beside me.

And undivided attention on the road is particularly important in a growing community like ours, where traffic woes continue to mount and the potential for accidents —

fatal or otherwise — due to careless driving is on a sharp rise as well.

With more than half of those polled in an RBC Insurance/Ipsos Reid survey last month admitting to using a cell phone while driving, the law will no doubt be a source of much frustration once it's finally put into effect.

But given that it's public safety we're talking about here, convenience simply isn't worthy of consideration. Bottom line, when someone operates a cell phone or other device behind the wheel, they're saying that driving doesn't require all of their attention.

News flash, it does.

While not generally recognized as such,

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