

OPINION

Hands off when you're driving

It's now illegal for Ontario drivers to talk, text, type, dial or e-mail using a hand-held electronic device or cell-phone while driving.

And while drivers will likely get a warning instead of a ticket for the first three months, this law is long overdue.

We've all seen the driver who's an accident just waiting to happen. You know the one — the driver busily punching away at the keys on his Blackberry while periodically glancing at the road ahead.

Or the one who sits at a stoplight so engrossed in a phone conversation she doesn't notice — or care — that the light has turned green.

Bad drivers come in all ages and both genders but the recent advancements in technology have allowed bad drivers to become worse drivers.

Driving requires skill and an awareness of what's going on around you. Losing focus, even for a split second, can have disastrous consequences.

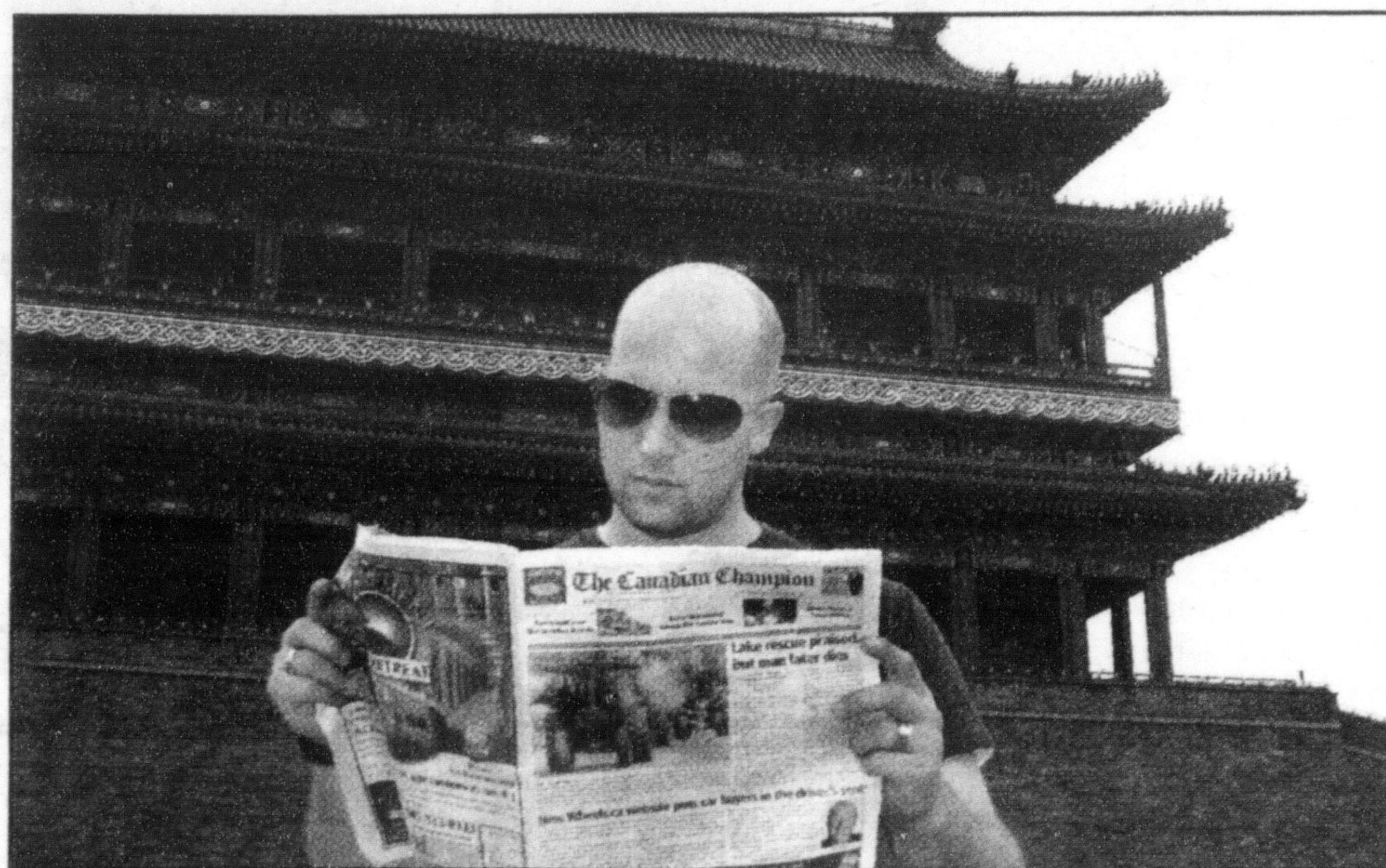
Transport Canada says that drivers who use cell-phones are four times as likely to be in a crash and that driver distraction is a factor in 20 per cent of all accidents.

An Ontario Medical Association report on cellphone use while driving also found that the use of a cellphone while driving leads to dangerous changes in drivers' behaviour including:

- Change in average driving speed
- Slower brake reaction time
- Slower response times to traffic light changes
- Reduced visual monitoring of mirrors and instruments, with some drivers abandoning them entirely

The new "distracted driver" law may prove difficult for officers to enforce — much the same way seatbelt legislation was when it was brought in decades ago — but it's definitely a step toward getting drivers to pay more attention to what they're doing.

A potential \$500 fine has a way of doing that.



MAKING TRACKS: We apologize. The wrong reader identification appeared with this photo last Friday. Here, Darryl Horzelenberg visits Tiananmen Square in Beijing, China. Take your community newspaper on your next vacation and send your 'Champion Tracks' photos to editorial@miltoncanadianchampion.com. Be sure to include destination information and everyone's names.

Readers Write

E-mail letters to editorial@miltoncanadianchampion.com. Letters, which may be edited, must include the writer's name, address and phone number.

Line jumping at H1N1 clinics shameful

DEAR EDITOR:

I find it absolutely infuriating and saddening at the same time that some residents would stoop to lying about their status to jump the line at the H1N1 clinics.

I've heard people openly bragging about the fact that they feigned a high-risk situation and got the shot before the general public. What's worse, they took their children along and made them accomplices.

What a lesson to teach your children. They should be ashamed. I in no

way blame the children for the parents' ways. I hope those individuals who put themselves before the truly deserving can't sleep at night.

To all of those who choose to follow the directives of the Ministry of Health — no matter how worried or anxious they were — thank you for doing the right thing.

To those who choose to take the easy and immoral way and line jump, shame on you.

**LESLIE DENBY
MILTON**

Upfront

It's time to recognize our town's outstanding coaches

They're the first ones at the rink — or gym, or field — and the last ones to leave.

They devote much of their spare time to teaching our children the value of sportsmanship, teamwork and giving it their all — not to mention helping them improve their skills.

And they ask for nothing in return. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't offer something back for all our coaches do.

Now's your chance.

It's time once again to honour outstanding coaches — for which Milton has its fair share — through the annual Ontario Coaching Excellence Awards program.

The awards don't necessarily reflect the

accomplishments of a coach in any one season, but rather are designed to recognize his or her contributions over a significant stretch in the sport. In other words, a coach's win-loss record or championship haul isn't nearly as important as the influence made among a team or program's players.

There are four categories a coach can be nominated in, including: Recreational/Grass Roots, Developmental, School Sport and High Performance. Potential award recipients must have a minimum of three years of coaching experience in Ontario.

Nominations can come from both players and parents and must be in (along with any supporting letters of reference or news articles) by Friday, Dec. 15 at 4 p.m. Nomination forms and all other information about the awards can be found at www.coachesontario.ca or by calling Keeley MacLean at (416) 426-7139.

Pick just about any sport played locally and there's bound to be at least one or two individuals who've been a cornerstone for development. It's time to recognize that with more than just a thank you.



Steve LeBlanc

The Canadian Champion

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