

# Anti-drunk driving group's message getting across

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**By KAREN SMITH**  
It's a crucial time of year for the Milton Committee Against Drinking and Driving (MCADD).

The value of the organization's public awareness and education efforts is put to the test during the holiday season when social drinking is often part of Christmas and New Year's Eve celebrations.

Although the police's R.I.D.E. (Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere) Program becomes an everyday event in December, the committee faces a

year-round task of preventing the crime which accounts for about 27 per cent of fatal vehicle accidents in Canada.

## 5% of accidents

Drinking drivers are involved in about 5 per cent of all reportable (over \$700 damage) traffic crashes, says Halton Regional Police.

But ironically, according to data from the Traffic Injury Research Foundation, December, January and February have the lowest totals of

drinking-related crashes, followed by March, April and November.

May and October have the highest impaired driving accident rates (about 65 per cent of the annual total).

Drinking and driving won't ever be eliminated, admits Carol Stoveken, a founding member of MCADD.

"As long as there are alcoholics, there will always be people who will drink and drive," she says.

But impaired driving can be prevented. Reducing the number of drunk drivers on the road is the goal of the committee made up of about 15 local residents including high school students and a Halton Regional Police officer.

MCADD was established in September, 1984 as a result of an alcohol-related train/car crash which took

the lives of six Milton high school students earlier that year.

The group aims to educate the public about impaired driving in order to prevent such accidents. MCADD volunteers spend a lot of

time promoting their cause at local events such as the Milton Fall Fair and Santa Claus Parade.

Ms Stoveken, a Campbellville resident who provides professional counselling services to convicted drunk drivers, doesn't believe stiffer jail sentences would serve as a deterrent.

"Jail only works if you're scared of going," she says.

Instead, she would like to see all first offenders be forced to participate in a counselling program to prevent re-occurrence of the crime.

Ms Stoveken would also like to see the names of convicted drunk

drivers printed in every newspaper.

Because MCADD believes education at the youngest age possible is the key to preventing drunk driving, volunteers often conduct presentations in local schools.

## Men 25-34

Men aged between 25 and 34 years account for the largest percentage of impaired drivers (36 per cent). The next largest group is men aged 16 to 24 years (31 per cent), and then men 35 to 44 years old (18 per cent).

But the good news is, organizations like MCADD are making a difference. Drinking and driving is on the decline in the province.

The latest statistics (between 1980 and 1987) show the rate of accidents involving drunk drivers (per 1,000 population and per 1,000 licenced drivers) fell by 42 per cent and 46 per cent respectively.

In contrast, the number of vehicle crashes involving sober drivers increased by 12 per cent, and the population increased by 8 per cent.

MCADD meets monthly (except July and August). The committee welcomes new volunteers to help in the fight against drinking and driving. To get involved, call Carol Stoveken at (416) 659-7756.



Carol Stoveken

## The procedure

# Festive season greeted with RIDE spot checks

The onset of the Christmas season also signals the beginning of the Halton Regional Police R.I.D.E. Program.

From now until January 1, police will conduct R.I.D.E. (Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere) somewhere in town every night.

R.I.D.E. aims to deter people from drinking and driving by holding random spot checks and roadside breath-testing.

Last year, Halton Regional Police stopped 5,809 cars during Christmas spot checks in Milton and Halton Hills. Eight 12-hour suspensions were issued and five impaired driving charges were laid.

For those who have never experienced the R.I.D.E. Program, this is what happens.

## Procedure at R.I.D.E. spot checks

1. The motorist stops. Officer explains purpose of stop and asks the motorist if he/she has had any alcoholic beverages to drink prior to driving. The officer also checks to make sure the occupants have their seatbelts on.

2. If the motorist says no and the officer doesn't smell alcohol, the motorist will be thanked for stopping and given a Spotcheques Coupon Book.

3. If the motorist says yes, or the officer smells alcohol on driver's breath, the officer will ask the driver to step from the car and demand that the driver blow into a roadside testing device.

4. The driver can at this point choose to either blow into the

machine or refuse to blow into the machine.

If he or she refuses, the driver will be charged with refusing to provide a breath sample, and will be released with a court date. His or her driver's licence will be suspended for 12 hours, and the car will be impounded or can be driven by a sober friend.

5. If the driver blows into the machine, the test will result in — Pass: Driver is free to go on his way. Warn: Blood/alcohol is between 50-100 mg./100 ml. blood. Driver's licence is suspended for 12 hours, no charges laid. Fail: Driver is taken into custody for a breathalyser test at the station. His or her car is impounded.

If the breathalyser confirms the driver's blood/alcohol is over 80 mg./100 ml. blood, the driver is charged criminally with a drinking and driving offence.



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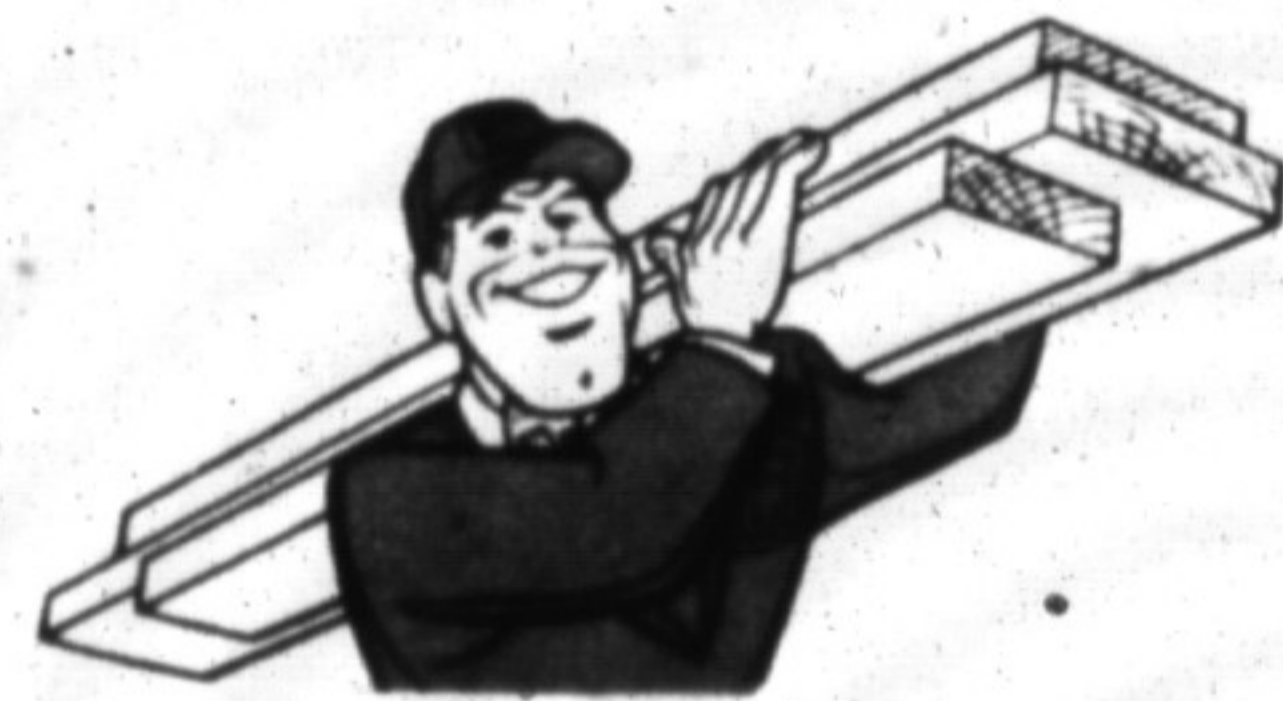
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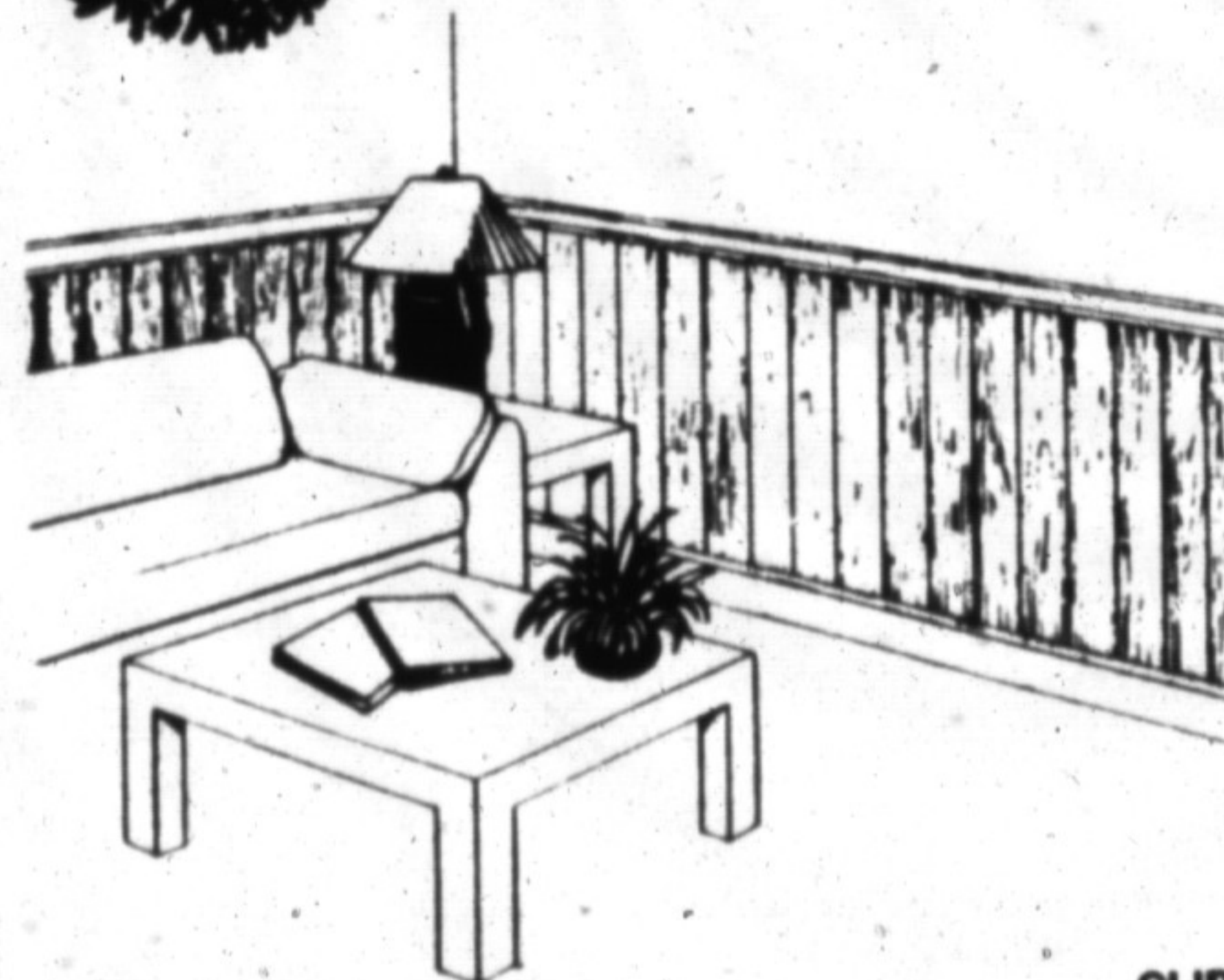
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