

Terrace Bay
Schreiber

News

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Editorial

None for the road

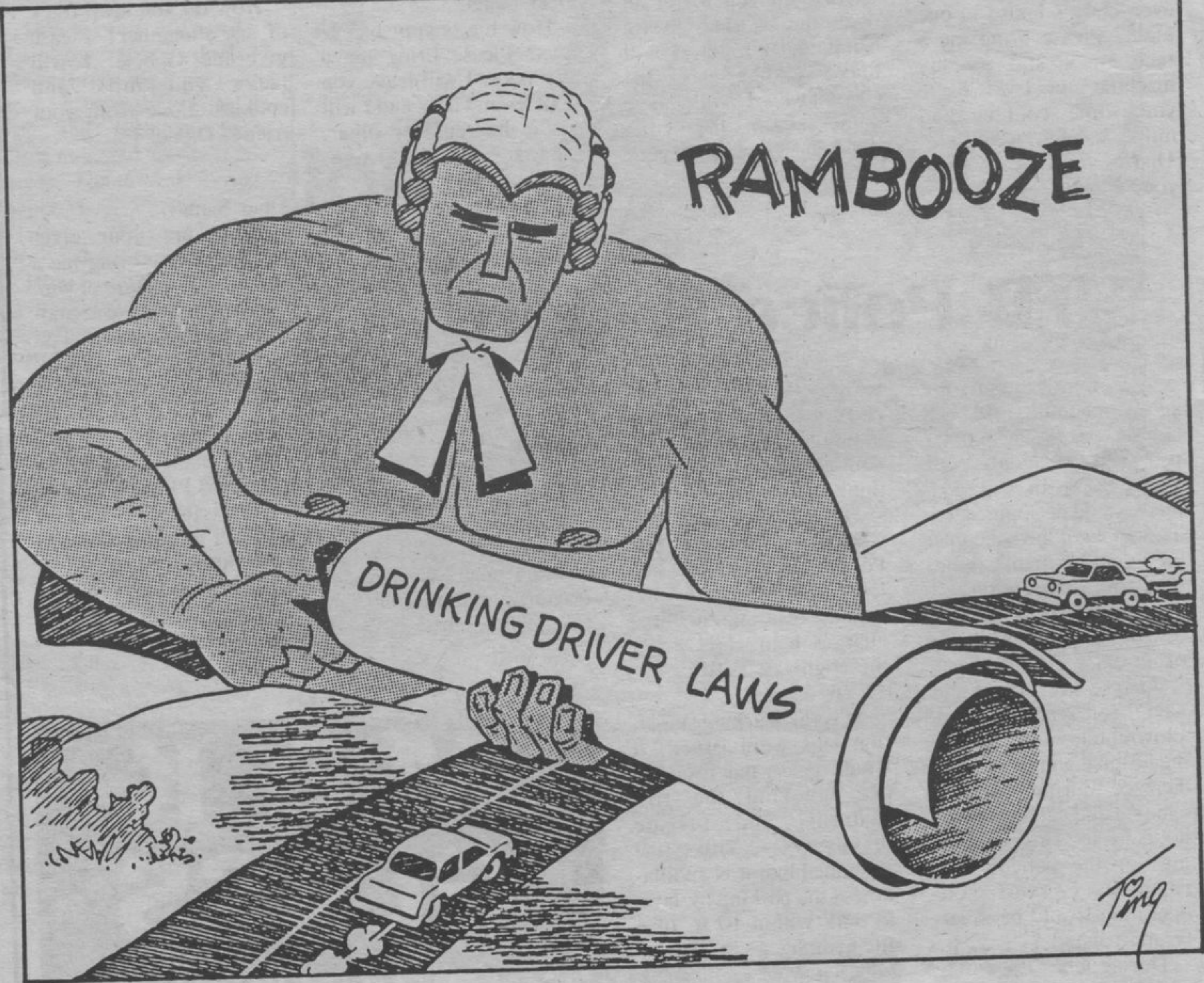
Christmas is a special time of the year, in which we are all full of holiday cheer and don't give much thought to the darker side of the season. Newspapers tend to contribute to this with their soporific, sophomoric yuletide editorials which usually ignore something that, like eggnog and mistletoe, comes with the end of the year, and that is, of course, the perpetual problem of impaired drivers.

No one wants to hear about any of this, especially now that Christmas has descended upon us once again, but this is indeed the right time to remind people who drink and drive that they are just asking for trouble.

Not only is impaired driving illegal, it's also dangerous, both to the driver involved and innocent bystanders. A study which was released last week indicated that almost 50 per cent of Ontario drivers who die in traffic accidents have more than the legal limit of alcohol in their blood.

The Terrace Bay-Schreiber News joins Ontario Health Minister Jake Epp in urging drivers of all ages to avoid using alcohol, marijuana, or other drugs that may impair their ability to drive. The life you save may be your own.

Of course, all of the above aside, we do wish all of our faithful readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, but ... let's be careful out there.



Conrad Felber

I hate Christmas. Oh, OK, maybe I don't. You must admit that was a good attention getter, though. But, to an extent, that opening statement is true. I'm not a big fan of this time of year.

I'm not like Scrooge, and I don't go around saying "Bah, humbug" or anything like that, but some things about this season disturb me. Of course, number one on the list is the almost nauseating commercialism. The darn toy commercials don't waste any time poppin' up on the ol' tube, and the radio stations have been playing Christmas tunes for weeks now, just to get us in the holiday spirit so we can go out and start buying presents. Bah, humbug (oops, maybe I do go around saying that after all!).

Something else that gets to me is the sudden proliferation of the colors red and green. There's no escaping

those two festive hues. Of course, the contents of my refrigerator are usually red and green all year ... thing is, I leave things sit in there too long and that's how they get that way (e.g. green meat and red lettuce). Just for a change of pace, I would like to see them use two different Christmas colors next year, like blue and purple, or maybe yellow and brown.

Of course, there's also that annual pain of having to go around and buy presents. Have you noticed the older you get, the more presents you are expected to give? When I was but a kid (mind you, there are some who still consider me a kid — including yours truly!), all I had to do was give one stupid little present, to my folks, and that one was usually hand made! Then, as the years went by, I had to come up with gifts for my younger siblings too, and now I have to shop

around for dozens of presents for dozens of people (and I don't even LIKE some of them!). I'm sure, deep down inside, you feel the same way, don't you?

Ah, but perhaps worst of all (yeah, I know I said "number one on my list" already ... so sue me!) is the change that most folks go through around this time of year. It's pretty scary to watch sometimes. Grouchy people 11 months of the year become perfect saints for those few short weeks around December 25. I'm telling you, it's like a horror movie almost — "Invasion Of The Body Snatchers" or something.

This last point makes me wonder. Why can't we all be nice all year long? Well, I guess that would be asking too much. Besides, I'm grateful that we do have at least one month out of the year where most of us act

at least a bit civilized towards one another. That makes me feel good. Say, I guess I like Christmas after all!

OK, so much for the Message portion of this week's column. Now I'm going to waste some of your valuable reading time to be completely selfish, as I am now going to include a few personal messages. Don't like it? Hard cheese!

First of all, to those of you who have been whining about how this publication is not at your favourite store on Tuesdays anymore, pay attention ... wise up! Now, I am very happy that you are so anxious to obtain a copy of this magnificent periodical as soon as possible, but we are only human down here (contrary to popular opinion) and we do the best we can. The paper will be out as soon as we get it out (and the first place it goes on sale is right here in



the News office, which is located in the Post Office building).

Oops, almost out of room. I just want to conclude by saying Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to each and every one of you (even the whiners!), but especially my family and friends back in Sudbury, Mona and Dean out in Calgary, and a special Holiday Hi to Christina in sunny California. See you all in 1986!

Arthur Black

Old Aunt Belle wouldn't approve

Ahh me. I just finished talking with my Aunt Belle on the phone. There are a lot of characters hanging off the branches of the Black Family Tree, but Aunt Belle is more memorable than most. Aunt Belle spent better than half her life as a farm walf.

She bore eleven children on a hundred-acre farm near Fergus, Ont. — a farm that had no electricity and no hired help. Aunt Belle raised the 11 kids, kept house, baked fresh bread daily that I can still smell. She also collected eggs, chopped wood, milked cows, delivered calves, tended gardens, fought fires and jockeyed the tractor when necessary.

The remarkable thing is that when the kids were grown and her husband had passed on and Aunt Belle was of an age where people usually retire to the sofa to spend their declining years knitting and watching *The Edge of*

nouncement, instead. "Now," she told the rest of us, "I'm going to do some of the things I always wanted to do."

She sold the farm, went down to the travel agent and proceeded to do her level best to see the world.

Her first trip, as I recall, was to the Yukon where she tried white water rafting, among other things. Since then, she's been all over this continent and she's poked around a good deal of Europe, South and Central America to boot.

And Aunt Belle doesn't just travel. She also reads. A lot. Everything from best sellers to seed catalogues. "That's the only way I could travel back when I was on the farm," she explains.

As a matter of fact, that's why I called her up in the first place. I wanted to know if she'd read about

kids. These are real, scaled-down automobiles. They have lights and shocks and an 11 horsepower motor that will push them up to speeds of almost 30 miles per hour. They are on sale at a rather exclusive toy shop called F.A.O. Schwarz in New York. These small-scale replicas are suitable for children between the ages of seven and 14.

Suitable for very rich kids between the ages of seven and 14, that is. The replica model Ferrari 308 GTS sells for \$10,000.

That's ten thou U.S., and yes, we are talking about a child's toy here.

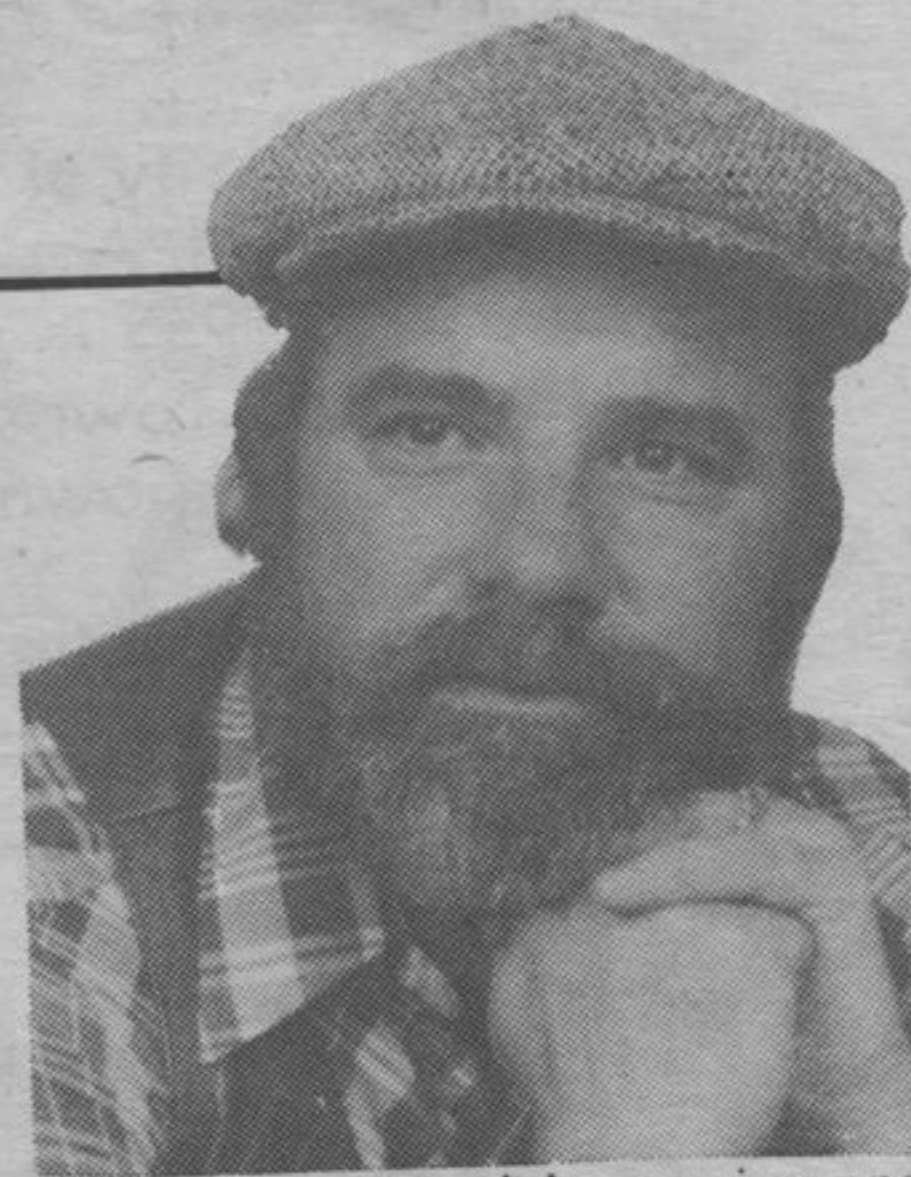
There are other less pricey models available at F.A.O. Schwarz — for example, a pint-sized Jeep Laredo with chrome trim and plastic headlights that you could put under the tree for a mere \$2,400. And for real cheapskates, an Indy 500-style Pennzoil racing car which retails for

a paltry \$1100.

It is somewhat depressig to realize that this Christmas, some spoiled kids are going to get to rip the wrapping off toys that cost more than the tab for feeding a large Ethiopian village for a year.

I wondered what Aunt Belle would think of it all, so I phoned her up. "Aunt Belle," I yelled — she doesn't hear so well — "I want to talk about toys."

Before I could begin she was off and rambling. She talked about the toys she'd had as a girl and about the toys her kids had enjoyed. She spoke of Cornhusk dolls and hand-knit sweaters for the girls, of carved slingshots and homemade wagons for the boys. She reminisced about how scraps of cloth were hoarded all year round, and how in early winter the kerosene lamps burned long after the kids were asleep as Mom and Dad



worked into the night, sewing and knitting, whittling, hammering, gluing and painting.

On Christmas morning, Aunt Belle recalled, each kid could expect to find a woolen stocking filled with apples, some peanuts and a square of maple fudge... and in good years, a store-bought candy cane.

And also, under the tree, one present apiece.

"Just one present each," I asked. "Yep," said Aunt Belle, "and we cherished it."

We chatted for a while longer, then I said goodbye and hung up.

I didn't have the heart to bring up the \$10,000 toy Ferrari.