

Weekender

# Comment

## Drinking charges down

York Regional Police spot checks are out in force again this year — and they're out for one reason. To catch drinking drivers over the Christmas holiday season.

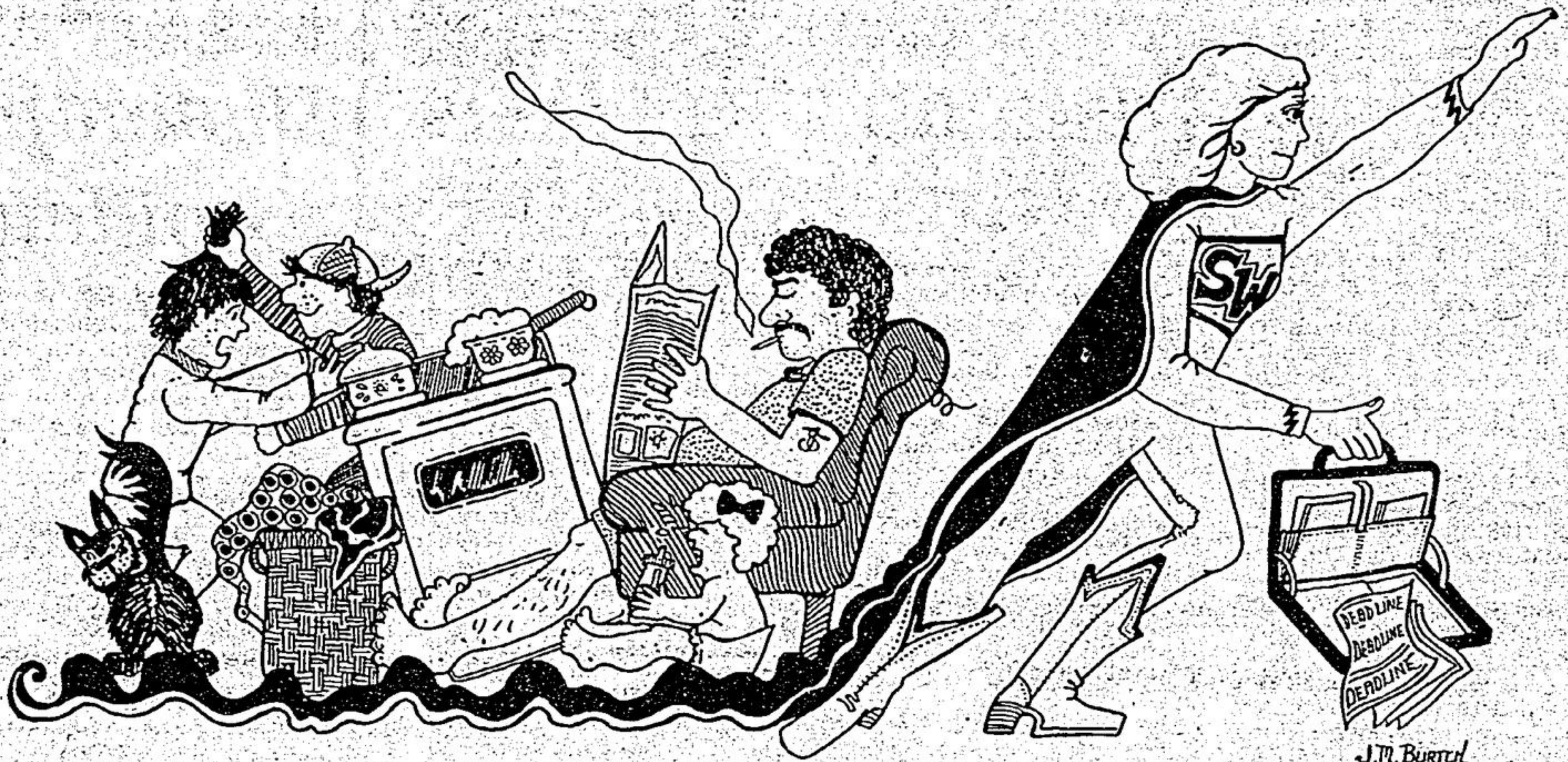
So far more than 5,000 drivers have been stopped since the spot checks began in early November. During the one-week period of Nov. 16 to 22 eight people were charged with impaired driving and one more was charged with failing a breathalyzer test.

All of this shows impaired drivers make up a small proportion of those who drive on our streets and highways — but that minority is a danger far beyond its numbers.

Spot checks seem to be working. Over the past several years, the number of impaired driving charges has been declining — even during the holiday season. While this is good, it seems that random spot checks are needed all-year round as a deterrent to drinking and driving.

Tragedy can strike anytime. But drinking makes it more likely to happen. Be aware this holiday season. Someone else's life — not just your own — may be at stake.

*Somedays it's hard to get going.....*



J.M. BURTAL  
WEEKENDER

## Christmas brings visual delights

Funny thing how that first snowfall of the season catapults us headlong into the realization that another autumn has come and gone, and we haven't even started to prepare for Christmas.

Of course, as we all know so well, the day of that initial wintry blast has enough troubles of its own to keep you from dwelling too much on what lies ahead.

Like where did the snow shovel disappear to over the summer months? Probably the same remote location that your car's snow scraper is occupying.

And why is it that the morning of that inaugural snowstorm always seems to find you walking out the door with those brand new shoes on?

Another one of Murphy's "Day of the first snow of winter" laws is that we are inevitably going to be faced with the necessity of a long drive on that particular day of days.

It never falls on a day that you



had designated for tending to household duties. No, much more likely to occur on the occasion of that business lunch that's been scheduled in Mississauga with that very important prospective client.

It's only after you have survived all of Murphy's tricks, and are, finally, home with your cold, wet feet up, and favorite hot drink in your hand, that your mind begins to dictate its list of immediate Christmas priorities.

The retention of sanity is always of paramount during this most frantic time of the year. So it

becomes imperative to include a few escape activities with all the running and darting about you will be faced with, so that you are able to taste more delightful fruits of the season. For instance, anyone whose travels take them along Kennedy Rd. between 18th and 19th Avenues will be aware of the annual labor of love indulged in by Jack and Muriel Scott.

Their magnificent Christmas light display is worth driving miles to see. Each Christmas season, the Scotts seem to go a little bit further in their visual tribute to the birth of Christ, Santa Claus,

and everything else we associate with Christmas time.

Such is the effect that cars stop in their tracks as drivers gasp in amazement at the magnitude of the layout that is spread out over their vast property. Speakers can be heard filling the air with carols. It is a setting which is bound to find you breaking out in goose bumps.

Truly a magnificent Christmas gift to all those people fortunate enough to stumble across it, as well as to those of us who return year after year.

Of equal grandeur is the miniature village at Cullen Gardens in Whitby. The fruit of the imagination of Len Cullen, this is a fascinating attraction anytime, but it takes on a whole new charm at Christmas.

Re-enactments of classic buildings and streets from all over Ontario adorn the walkways that lead you up hill and down, across

bridges, and alongside a beautiful pond.

The spirit of Christmas is captured in child-like form as families stroll through the grounds bundled up in their winter coats, with red cheeks and fascinated smiles.

And, of course, for children and adults alike, there are the various Santa Claus Parades put on by each individual town in our area. The result of a lot of hard work by volunteers and local business people, these parades are a part of the cement that holds a town together.

There's something so appealing about standing on the side of the road sipping a hot chocolate, waving at old St. Nick as he rides by, bidding everyone a merry Christmas.

So welcome to the Christmas season! And don't be afraid to let your hair down a little. Somehow your Visa card will survive the shock. It always does.

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