

Comment & Opinions

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EDITORIAL

Summer means rise in accidents

The terrible accidents that sent five people to hospital this weekend in Whitchurch-Stouffville is a sad reminder that as the temperature rises, so too, do the number of motor vehicle accidents.

There are any number of causes: more traffic on the roads, time-pressed holiday drivers rushing to beat heavy congestion, trailers and boats being mishandled on the tow, the heat and frustration of travelling during the summer and speeding are all reasons. We associate accidents with holiday weekends, but of course, they can happen at any time, and anywhere. Most, in fact, occur within a kilometre of home.

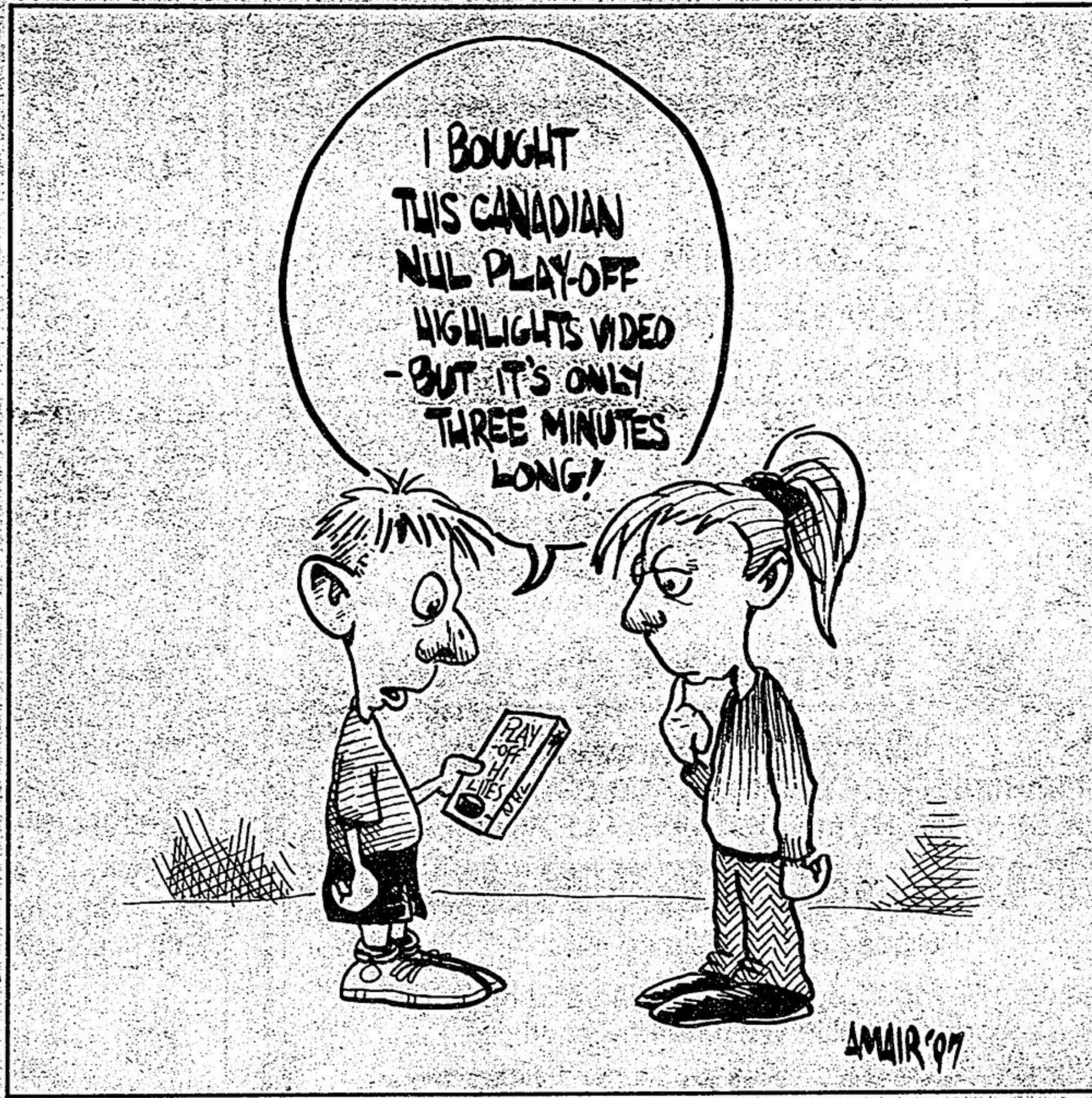
The five people in hospital from the two separate crashes attended by local firefighters and rescue crews are the latest tragic statistic.

The loss of life, limb or productivity from an injury sustained in a car crash hurt all of us. Not only do insurance rates rise with the number of accidents, so, too does our cost to society. Billions are lost in person-hours every year to car accidents, many of which are avoidable.

With children out of school soon, and the number of cars on the road on the rise, we owe it to ourselves to use extra vigilance and precaution when driving.

Summer is a great time of year, but not if you're seeing it through a hospital ward window.

Please drive carefully.



Moms, dads have their day. Why not us?

As you charge about the shopping mall this week trying to buy father a gift he surely won't tuck away in his closet to "save for good," pause awhile and give some thought to this:

We have a day for mothers, a day for fathers (inconveniently close together, too), and a day for grandparents. These are all days set aside for the glorification of childbirth in one way or another. As a society, we are saying to the fathers of the world for example, "Good for you, you went

forth and multiplied and now for all your effort, we're going to give you a tie rack."

Is this worthy of a special day? Don't dads also have birthdays, where we celebrate their being put on the planet? Two days, they get?

I ask this from the self-centred point of view of the childless. We, in this society, revel in the norm. Think of the left-handed, for example. What have we done for them lately? Everything in this world is geared to right-



Minute with Mair

Andrew Mair

handers. Same goes for couples with kids. It's the norm. Vacation spots, except the most exclusive, all offer features to attract people with children. "Kids eat free," or "Kids stay free" are common enticements. Par-

ents are treated with reverence and given special treatment. Don't believe me? A further example is that more than 50 per cent of the population owns a pet. But how many hotels offer "Dogs stay and eat free" programs? I am not chastising the parents here. They have their hands full, and deserve every break they can get. I just want to level the playing field a little for people like me - those who have chosen to not have kids.

I am hereby proposing the Double Income, No Kids Day - DINK Day. We, the DINKs of the world, should have one day a year to celebrate our DINKness. I suggest the day fall sometime after Father's Day, say, near the end of July, to give the cheque-book time to rebound from the lawn umbrella, martini glasses and Kiss the Cook barbecue apron purchases we made for dear ol' Dad. DINKs everywhere could go out and buy each other presents (like lawn umbrellas and aprons) you would never normally buy yourself. Both partners would get something, and no one would feel left out. (This, by the way, was a corollary reason for creating Father's Day - Dads felt left out after Mother's Day came along and they whined a lot until they got their own day. The main reason for it, though, was because Hallmark needed another moment.)

After opening our presents we DINKs could then go out for a nice dinner and toast the benefits of not having to pay for a babysitter. We couldn't toast too much, though, on the off-chance it might turn out to be our last DINK Day. We would then go home, sit back under our new lawn umbrella, sip martinis and listen contentedly as the non-DINK neighbors struggle to put their kids to bed. Happy DINK Day.

Regression shakes Chateau Gilderdale

Last week, shocking revelations of recovered memories shook the foundations of Chateau Gilderdale.

Before my very eyes my usually calm, collected and mature daughter regressed to the age of eight as she celebrated her 17th birthday. In the company of 20 of her closest friends, she indulged in the '90s version of primal scream therapy by turning back the clock and re-visiting the horrible reality that was her childhood.

With unflinching courage she came out of the '80s closet to the sound of Tiffany and Joey Lawrence. She and her pals played party games, watched Mary Poppins and enthused over loot bags filled with glow-in-the-dark dinosaurs, revolting gum balls, stick-on earrings and sundry other unsubtle delights of the dollar store.

Still unwilling to face up to the awful truth about my part in Clare's painful early years, I dealt a fatal blow to the environment by decorating the front porch and door of our home with ecologically incorrect balloons. My therapist, if I had one, might have explained it away by saying I was simply struggling to come to terms with my inner monster, while maintaining an air of authenticity by indulging in a



Kate's Corner

Kate Gilderdale

unhealthy dose of the selfish hedonism for which the 80s were justly notorious.

Meanwhile, Clare strove to make this a genuine nightmare of nostalgia. She organized games of statues during which the contestants complained bitterly whenever they were declared out.

Her guests, in keeping with the era they were celebrating, were dedicated to winning that package of happy face stickers (two for a dollar) at all costs.

They fought to gain final custody of the package's less-than-exclusive contents in pass the parcel, frequently accusing each other of cheating, and sorely tested our already dubious standing in the neighborhood by cranking up the soundtrack of Dirty Dancing to megawatt levels.

Cries of "It's not fair, she's already won two prizes" rent the air, as the young ladies shed their decorum and went for the jugular. Since I was all

out of Ritalin, I had to use cake to calm the troubled waters. Here, however, slavish devotion to the good old days gave way to sophistication.

Betty Crocker and neon pink icing were swept aside by a sinful chocolate truffle concoction from Java Junction, a gourmet treat which would be wasted on 8-year-olds, but which went down a treat even among those of us who had attained the advanced age of L.

The historic nature of Clare's party was reflected in some of the gifts she received, among them Winnie The Pooh band aids, Sesame Street soap, Disney bubble bath (wildberry fragrance) and Hershey Chocolate Kisses. It was the best party I had ever almost been to.

And now, a few words from your party sponsor.

To my neighbors, my apologies. To Clare's friends, thanks for entering into the spirit of the party with such genuine enthusiasm and for being unnaturally appreciative for eight-year-olds.

To Clare, just because you've just turned eight, don't think you can wait until your 18th birthday to clean your room.

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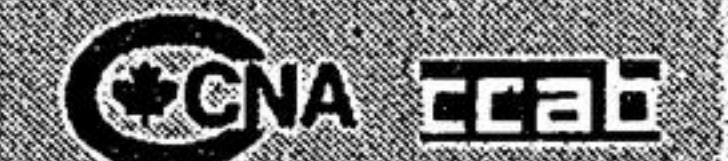
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