

# MADD wants tougher rules

Proposal calls for longer sentences, better enforcement

BY JEFF MITCHELL  
Staff Writer

Stiffer sentencing and more powers for police are needed in the ongoing battle against impaired drivers, according to the president of the national organization Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

"We need some more common sense approaches in the fight against drunk driving," MADD president Louise Knox said.

Ms Knox was in York Region Thursday as part of a summer lobbying tour, during which she's visiting members of parliament to press for legislative change.

MADD hopes to take its case to the federal justice committee this fall.

"The support I'm receiving from the MPs has been very promising," Ms Knox said. "But what we're really looking for is for MPs to take action on these issues."

MADD wants change in two key areas of the fight against impaired driving: Better enforcement abilities for police and tougher sentences for those convicted of drunk driving offences.

The group has made a number of proposals:

- Lowering the legal blood alcohol from .08 to .05 per cent;
- Greater powers for police, including the introduction of alcohol sensing devices and roadside sobriety tests;
- A tougher stance by the courts on drunk drivers, including doing away with conditional sentences and the use of ignition locks for repeat offenders.

"We need change," Ms Knox said. "Canadians deserve the right to drive on our roads safely." York Regional Police Chief Robert Middaugh agrees with MADD's push for stricter sentencing.

"I'm a supporter of significant sentences on impaired driving," the chief said.

He said the courts must continue to deal harshly with impaired drivers to reflect soci-



**ROBERT MIDDAGH:** York police chief supports MADD's push for stricter sentencing

ety's revulsion toward drunk driving, an attitude that has been fostered by years of law enforcement and communication campaigns.

"You have to be relentless. The minute we stop that (diligence), it starts to develop a complacency and you're right back where you started," Mr. Middaugh said.

The chief said York Regional Police continue their commitment to battling drunk driving with year-round RIDE (Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere) spot checks and quick responses to citizen complaints.

"We have, in fact, the best RIDE program in the country," Mr. Middaugh said. "The roadside breath test and the legislation that goes along with it ... is pretty good."

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Ms Knox vowed to continue MADD's battle for tougher sentences, a campaign that has been ongoing for some time now. "It's slow," said the Alberta resident. "It always is when you're working on federal issues like this."

"It's really surprised me how slow it can be when it's such a good thing."



ECONOMIST & SUN/TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Prime Minister Jean Chretien speaks at a breakfast gathering in Markham in November 2000, announcing John McCallum (right) as federal Liberal candidate for Markham. His Liberal caucus has suffered a split in recent months, with members backing either Mr. Chretien or former finance minister Paul Martin.

## Grit storm brewing

BY MIKE ADLER  
Staff Writer

In York Region's federal ridings, the power struggle between Jean Chretien and Paul Martin Jr. has apparently been stalled by stronger choices — summer vacations, barbecues and gardening.

But local Liberal riding presidents expect the recent trickle of new memberships to become a flood this fall, as the party prepares for a leadership contest.

"I think you'll see the real wheels start to turn after Labour Day," predicted Scott Crone of the York North Liberals, represented by MP Karen Kraft-Sloan.

Four of five local riding presidents said they have spotted no organized campaign to sign up new Liberals in support of any potential leader.

This week, Michael Jolliffe, Liberal president in Oak Ridges said there is definitely heightened interest in the party because of the rift between Prime Minister Chretien and Mr. Martin, his former finance minister.

"There are some people signing up for that reason, but it's not an organized thing," he said, adding it's hard to figure out how many memberships in the riding resulted from its annual renewal campaign. "In a typical week, I'll get between five and 10 new people and that's unusual."

Party members in each riding will vote this fall on reviewing Mr. Chretien's leadership and on delegates for a February convention.

The current situation is not a lead-



**BRYON WILFERT:** Leadership 'race' has sparked more interest in his Oak Ridges riding.

ership campaign, but an interesting time for Liberals, Mr. Jolliffe said. "We've never quite been through what we are going through."

Michael Chan, Liberal president in Markham, represented by MP John McCallum, said the riding has received only 15 to 20 new members recently, but he expects "much, much bigger" numbers in the fall.

The riding association will not be lowering the \$10 adult membership fees to \$1, an option which the party has permitted, Mr. Chan said.

It's business as usual in MP Elinor Caplan's Thornhill riding, said Les Fluxgold, riding president.

"There's no major league activity going on. If there was anything going on I'd be aware of it," he said.

Roberto Bevilacqua, president of the Vaughan-King-Aurora Liberals, represented by Maurizio Bevilacqua, was unavailable for comment.

There have been attempts made in some publications to divide MPs into the camp of the prime minister and that of Mr. Martin, who is scheduled to speak at a dinner for Oak Ridges MP Bryon Wilfert in October and is an unconfirmed guest at a community function in Markham next month.

Mr. Crone said his own riding executive, as a whole, has not expressed a preference.

"I know there are some who would prefer to see Mr. Martin in a position of leadership and others who are saying, 'Let's not rock the boat,'" he said.

Mr. Crone added he expects the Chretien-Martin battle to be played out at the grassroots by individual party members. "There's no puppet-masters behind the curtains controlling this."

Robert Drummond, a political scientist at York University said it is difficult to believe supporters aren't already organizing at some level in York ridings, including informal discussions about forming a slate for delegates. "I'd be very surprised (if they weren't)," he said.

One member of the party in Markham is not looking forward to the expected February showdown.

"It's not very healthy, the way things are shaping," said Dr. Elagu Elagupillai, a Liberal for 20 years.

"Once you have inside fighting, it hurts the party."

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