

WOODBINE FATALITY



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

York Regional Police investigate a crash that claimed the life of an 86-year-old Tottenham man in Whitchurch-Stouffville Thursday afternoon. Two vehicles, one driven by a woman on Woodbine Avenue and another driven by the deceased on St. John's Road collided near the intersection, according to traffic bureau Staff Sgt. Brad Bulmer.



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Many children and adults with ADD and Dyslexia have seen significant improvement without medication. Dr. Turner is an international speaker and lecturer who has been featured on the *Dini Petty Show*, *National News*, *Canada AM*, *CFTO News*, *Marilyn Denis CITYLINE* and *Riley Live*. He will present a free symposium on Thurs. January 14th at 7:30 pm at the Stouffville Health Centre, 6219 Main Street.

Call 905-640-4440 to reserve your seats today!

No insurance, stolen licence plates, York Regional Police charge

A 46-year-old Whitchurch-Stouffville man has been charged with two counts of possession of property obtained by crime and one count of operating a motor vehicle without insurance.

The charges were laid just after midnight on Jan. 3 when a York Regional Police officer was on patrol in the Ninth Line and Bethesda Road area just north of Stouffville.

The police officer stopped a vehicle for a routine traffic check and discovered it had stolen licence plates affixed to it.

It was also discovered the driver did not have insurance.



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JUSTICE: York expert teaching Mounties

Police target drugged drivers

BY JOE FANTAUZZI
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Many of us have seen the commercials.

The beer glasses pounding down, one by one, until tires screech and an inevitable crashing sound.

The well-publicized war against motorists, blitzed from booze, has been waged for years by law enforcement and advocacy groups such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

But, the battle against drivers impaired by other kinds of intoxicants is a fairly recent development.

York Regional Police say their drug recognition expert program is nationally recognized and one of its officers is working with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, to teach Mounties how to identify drug-related impairment.

York police employ 30 drug recognition expert officers.

Before provisions of federal legislation Bill C-2 became law in July 2008, police could not demand a test from drivers police suspected were impaired by drugs, said Sgt. Ed Villamere, a York police drug recognition expert, during a recent interview at the force's traffic bureau office in Aurora.

Now, Sgt. Villamere said police in York can demand three things of a motorist suspected of being impaired by drugs:

- to submit to sobriety testing;
- to perform an evaluation by a drug recognition expert; and,
- to provide a urine sample to be analyzed.

Impairment by drugs doesn't just mean street drugs. It can also include prescriptions if someone uses medication in a way that is not recommended by their doctor.

"People self-medicate all the time," Sgt. Villamere said. "The last

'Sometimes it's easy, sometimes they roll down the window and there's a cloud of smoke that comes out the window.'

Sgt. Ed Villamere,
York Regional Police

two evaluations I've done for 2009 have both been for impaired driving by prescription medication. You could take too much cough syrup and not be able to drive."

The annual York police festive R.I.D.E. program launched in late November. During the second week of the blitz, two impaired-by-drugs arrests were made by officers on patrol.

The most recent York police statistics show that since Nov. 23, more than 18,000 vehicles have been stopped, more than 160 roadside tests have been administered and eight drug-related charges have been laid.

However, those charges did not necessarily all involve motorists driving while impaired by drugs.

Sgt. Villamere recalled a recent traffic stop of a suspected drug-impaired driver. While there wasn't enough evidence to charge the drivers with impairment, in each case Sgt. Villamere laid drug possession charges.

Red flags include drowsiness from depressants, such as alcohol, and crack has been known to make users agitated, he said.

"Sometimes it's easy, sometimes they roll down the window and there's a cloud of smoke that comes out," Sgt. Villamere said.

But it's often a less-obvious indicator that raises an officer's suspicions, such as little eye contact or how co-operative someone is.

Officer safety is also top of mind for drug recognition expert officers since a lot of the testing has to be done in close quarters.

"One of the tests for a (drug recognition expert) evaluation is an eye test and that's done in a dark room so, you're locking yourself in a room in pitch-dark conditions with someone who is in custody. You obviously don't want them to go sideways when they're in a small room in the dark. So you've always got another officer with you for officer safety purposes. Just in case.

"You sort of do your best to put them at ease as best you can," Sgt. Villamere said.

And, to those who claim they're more relaxed or a better driver after smoking a joint?

"That's absolutely false," he said. "It is still impaired driving. Impaired is impaired."

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