

SAFETY: Hands on wheel

Drumming driver caught in hand-held crackdown

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You won't be charged with distracted driving if you cause a crash while using an electronic device or eating. Instead, you'll be accused of careless driving, the Ontario Provincial Police warns.

OPP Sgt. Dave Woodford issued the warning as police across the province continue initiatives that coincide with Canada Road Safety Week.

Some drivers have already caught the eye of traffic officers, including a man caught on Hwy. 400 near Hwy. 9 pounding his steering wheel with drumsticks, he said.

The province's distracted driving legislation, which forbids you from gabbing on hand-held devices or checking e-mail under pain of a \$155 fine, is being enforced on provincial highways to a greater extent until Sunday, he warned.

The law does not apply when you make an emergency call, but some drivers view that term differently than police.

Sgt. Woodford recalls one motorist caught on her cellphone making an "emergency" call to a babysitter.

That's not the type of emergency to which he's referring, he said.

If you are planning to use a hand-held device, you must pull off the road and put the vehicle in park. Drivers caught scrolling through e-mails while stopped in traffic will be charged, Sgt. Woodford said.

Many drivers drive dangerously while using hand-held devices, some exhibiting similar behaviour to those impaired by alcohol or drugs, police argue.

Meanwhile, York Regional Police are also enforcing unsafe driver behaviour.

The force plans aerial speed enforcement tomorrow and a joint forces impaired driving crackdown Friday. Officers were to spend yesterday blitzing drivers on hand-held devices.

The police service is committed to ensuring motorists and pedestrians can travel on and share roads safely, York traffic Sgt. Ed Villamere said Monday.



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York police and the OPP are cracking down on drivers using hand-held cell-phones.

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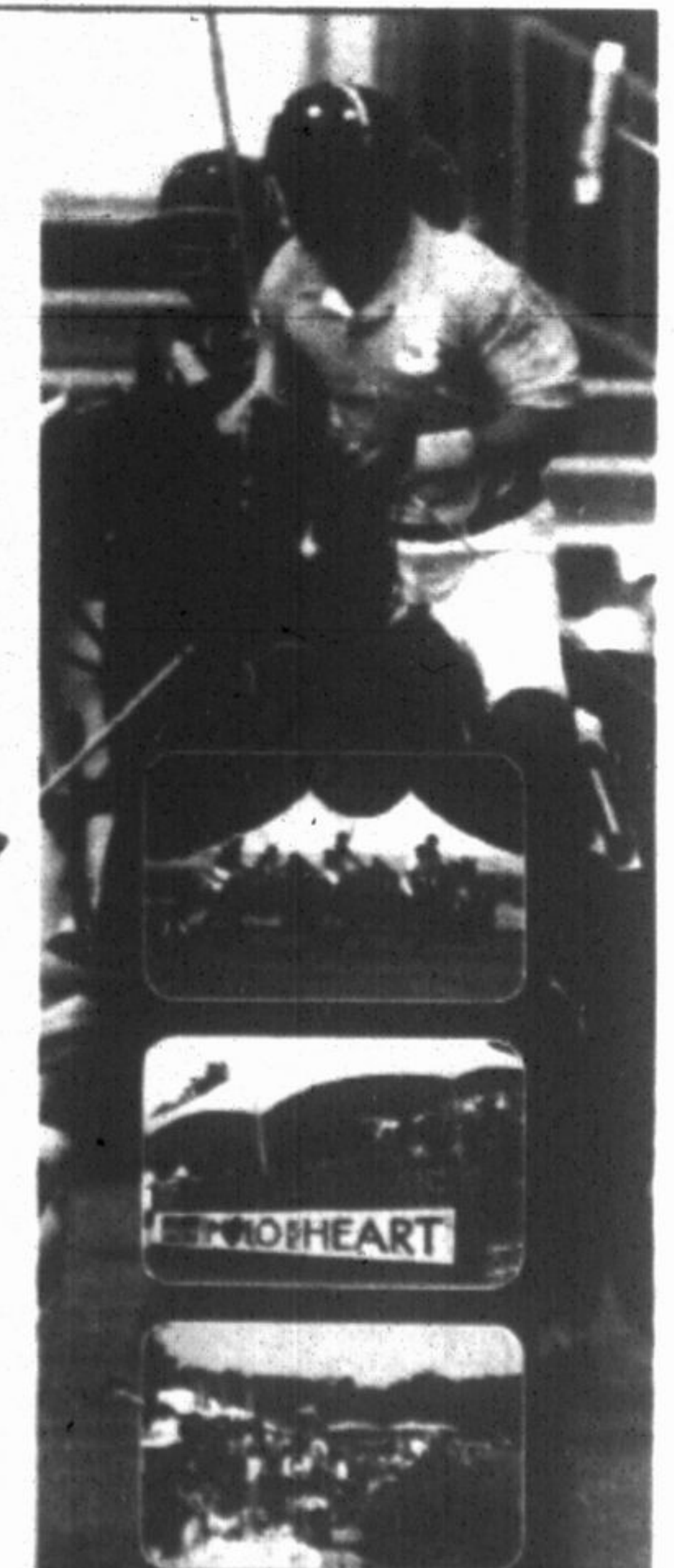
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