

Are we losing the war against drunk driving?

IT SEEMS THAT HARDLY a day goes by without us hearing about a traffic fatality in which alcohol was involved.

And suspicions that impaired driving is becoming even more of a threat were buoyed by the release of statistics from festive R.I.D.E. (Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere) programs which showed an increase from last year in the number of charges laid despite a slight drop in the number of spot checks.

It's not as though efforts to curb the menace have gone unpublicized. In fact, every driver must know by now that for the average person the legal blood alcohol limit of .08 milligrams per 100 millilitres is reached by consuming just one drink per hour.

There's little doubt that a few decades ago our society saw impaired driving as a nuisance rather than a crime. In those days, the maximum penalty was just two years in jail.

But as awareness of the problem grew, our federal politicians did respond, by amending the Criminal Code to increase the penalties greatly for drunk drivers who killed or injured someone. Today, a life sentence is at least hypothetically possible for such killers.

In the circumstances, it's hard to believe that any intelligent adult would get into a muscle car after a three-hour lunch in which he and three acquaintances downed 31 drinks, let alone speed along a twisting road, lose control and plunge into a river. Yet that's precisely what happened last July, and what now has triggered charges against the directors, two bartenders and a manager of a Muskoka-area golf resort.

Ontario Provincial Police last week laid charges under the Liquor Licence Act against three employees of the Lake Joseph Club and 13 senior executives of ClubLink Corporation, which owns the club. All face charges of permitting drunken behaviour on the premises and serving liquor to people who were obviously intoxicated.

(The club has been described as a laid-

back hangout for the cottage set. Its website lists an initial membership fee of \$62,500, with annual fees of \$4,590.)

Although it's possible ClubLink could lose its licence at The Lake Joseph Club, our suspicion is that the most that will happen is a notional change of ownership accompanied by a commitment to start monitoring members' drinking.

Predictably, public reaction to the charges has been mixed, with some supporting the move and others suggesting the real problem was a lack of parental discipline that led to a 20-year-old son who already had committed driving offences and been found guilty of drunkenness in a public place being left in possession of an Audi.

Ironically, the charges were laid the same week two Toronto lawyers were in court challenging new federal legislation that's designed to eliminate the so-called "two-beer defence" almost routinely raised by those charged with impaired driving.

Before the new legislation took effect last July 2 (a day before the Muskoka fatalities), those accused of driving with more than the legal limit of blood alcohol — particularly if they were only marginally over the .08 limit — would claim the breathalyzer reading must be wrong because they had consumed only a couple of drinks or had drunk the last one just before the breath test, which could have resulted in more alcohol in their breath than was really in their blood.

Under the new changes, part of the government's Tackling Violent Crime Act, an accused who wants to challenge a breathalyzer result must show the court technical evidence proving the equipment was malfunctioning or not operated properly.

In the court challenge, York University law professor Alan Young and Toronto lawyer Joseph Neuberger are representing three male drivers who are charged with having unlawful blood alcohol levels.

The lawyers say the legislation is unconstitutional because the new rules for chal-

lenging breathalyzer results set an impossible standard and leave an accused with only an "illusory" defence to the charges.

"The particulars of the breath machines, including maintenance records, specs and the manufacturer's manual are shrouded in secrecy, withheld by the Crown and the manufacturer," Mr. Neuberger told a reporter.

With hundreds of other impaired driving cases in the system and the constitutionality of the new law likely headed for the Supreme Court of Canada, the lawyers want to take the legal challenge directly to the Superior Court.

Sadly, we suspect there's a real likelihood the law will be struck down as going a little too far in attempting to achieve a laudable goal.

Since the only real question was whether the reading that formed the basis for the criminal charge was erroneous, the new law ought to have been limited to cases where the readings were well above .08 or where one breathalyzer's reading was confirmed by a second machine.

After all, the new law was passed in the wake of countless instances in which judges acquitted drivers who had breathalyzer readings far above .08, simply because they believed a witness who recalled the accused as having had too few drinks to produce the high reading.

As we see it, the main reason the war against impaired driving isn't being won is that drinkers don't see much risk of being caught, let alone being jailed.

In the circumstances, our ever-tougher laws designed to combat the menace must be accompanied by a lot more policing, to the point where everyone leaving a bar will expect to encounter a R.I.D.E. check, any day of the year.

And perhaps the ultimate sanction for repeat offenders should be their designation as dangerous offenders who'll face jail until they're physically incapable of driving.



An embarrassment of riches?

OF ONE THING THERE'S NO DOUBT: the Honeywood/Redickville area is richly endowed, in more ways than one.

Its rich soil and gentle slopes have proven ideal for several crops, but particularly for high-quality potatoes.

Then again, its height — more than 1,700 feet above sea level — has made it an attractive area for those wanting to build wind farms.

And then there's what lies beneath — huge quantities of aggregates atop the precious limestone of the Niagara Escarpment.

There's little doubt that this fascinating combination has played a role in the purchase of as much as 7,000 acres of prime farmland by a group headed by John Lowndes.

Now the real question in the minds of the 300 area residents who attended last Saturday's meeting in Honeywood is what really are the long-term plans of the Lowndes group. Does a map showing a spur rail line to the Downey Farms distribution centre west of Horning's Mills not suggest plans well beyond moving potatoes?

CITIZEN MAILBOX

Water bottle issue gets some attention

I read with interest the article written by Wes Keller that appeared in the January 14, 2009, edition of the Orangeville Citizen entitled, "Council approves strategy on bottled water ban."

In the piece, Mr. Keller quotes information provided to Dufferin County by East Garafraxa Mayor Allen Taylor as indicating that it takes "three litres of water to produce a single litre of bottled water;" in Canada, "nearly 90 percent of plastic water bottles are not recycled;" and "an estimated 2.4 million tonnes of plastic is used to bottle water around the world."

Each of these pieces of information is incorrect and represents the kind of misinformation one typically finds on the Internet. According to Agriculture Canada, it takes 1.3 litres of water to make one litre of bottled water.

According to various provincial government and industry organizations responsible for the collection of such information, about 60 percent of plastic beverage containers were recycled across Canada in 2007. According to Stewardship Ontario, plastic water bottles account for one-fifth of one percent of the total waste stream in Ontario. If the bottled water industry were to disappear tomorrow, there would be no appreciable difference in the volume of refuse going to landfill.

As for the amount of plastic used by the bottled water industry to produce a container, the industry is one of the most efficient users of plastic by weight and one of the smallest users of the compound by volume in the beverage industry. For example, the bottled water industry is half the size of the soft drink industry.

Finally, Mr. Keller editorializes that Nestlé Waters Canada President Gail Cosman's argument for continued consumer choice is "an obvious plea for a continuation of the availability of bottled water in vending machines." That is incorrect. Ms. Cosman makes the argument for choice on a point of principle. Nestlé Waters Canada does not sell its products in Dufferin County in vending machines. It sells its products through grocers and convenience stores, which are not affected by municipal bans on bottled water.

While our industry finds the publication of such misinformation troubling, we are more disappointed by the fact that neither the public or ourselves were consulted by Dufferin County Council before it made its decision on this matter and, further, that this misinformation may have formed the basis for that decision.

Our industry and the several hundred taxpayers of Dufferin County who are employed by our industry remain optimistic that common sense will prevail and Dufferin County Council will re-visit this matter with us.

John B. Challinor II
APR, Director of
Corporate Affairs
Nestlé Waters Canada

Bottled Water's 15 Minutes are Up: It's Time to Turn on the Tap in Dufferin County

Toronto's recent decision to ban the sale and distribution of bottled water on city premises was a watershed moment for water justice advocates the world over. What was truly significant about Toronto's action was not that it banned an environmentally harmful product, but that it included a commitment to ensuring access to tap water in all city facilities.

In the past year Canadians have made a commitment to public water services. Across the country municipalities, schools and universities, faith-based organizations, restaurants and unions have stood up for Canada's water services by restricting the provision and sale of bottled water. Increasingly across the country, municipal leaders are showing that there is a strong political will for reinvestments in public water services. To date 17 municipalities from five provinces have banned the bottled and gone "Back to the Tap".

In Canada, municipal water systems are among the safest and strongest in the world. Meanwhile bottled water costs more, is less regulated, consumes more energy and releases more harmful toxics. However, access to municipal drinking water is dwindling with new buildings constructed without water fountains and older ones decommissioning existing fountains. Now is the time to issue strong calls to all

levels of government for greater public access to free potable water and a wholesale reinvestment in water infrastructure and services

It's becoming clear that the recent love affair with bottled water has reached its limits. Bottled water's 15 minutes are up, the marketing scam is out of the closet and the tap is back. The simple fact is that there is no "green" solution to bottled water. While it might serve a function during natural disasters or other contingencies, it is no alternative to the tap.

Dufferin County and other municipalities in Canada are making the right choice to support public water infrastructure and to increase city residents' access to clean, convenient and environmentally sound drinking water - the only question now is after Dufferin County, which municipality will be next.

Joe Cressy
Polaris Institute
Joe Cressy is the Campaign Coordinator of the Polaris Institute in Ottawa and a member of the www.insidethebottle.org campaign on bottled water.

In regards to Wes Keller's

Not the reason for the season

George Hunt, in his letter of January 8th, 2009, is disappointed with the Christmas messages in the paper around the Christmas season. I am sometimes, too, but for different reasons.

George wants to bring the message across that Isaac and Ishamel buried their father Abraham together (Gen. 23:9) and so did Jacob and Esau, who buried their father Isaac together. (Gen. 35:29).

They did their duty towards their earthly father.

But this is not the reason of the Christmas season. Christ came into the world to save sinners and that was accomplished in the cross at Calvary. God promised Abraham and Sarah that from Isaac's offspring the Saviour would be born.

Also God chose Jacob, the younger of twin brothers, from whose descendants the Saviour would be born, instead of his brother Esau.

In both cases that was God's sovereign choice.

article, "County approves strategy on bottled water ban," I wanted to clarify some information regarding PET plastic that I believe is incorrect. In the article Wes mentions that a county report stated that, "In Canada, nearly 90% of plastic water bottles are not recycled."

According to our sources at NAPCOR (<http://www.recyclingtoday.com/news/news.asp?ID=14331>) and Stewardship Ontario (http://www.stewardshipontario.ca/bluebox/efund/projects/audits/waste_audit.htm), in 2007 between 60-80% of PET containers were recycled in Canada, depending on the province.

We also referenced the county report stating that, "the plastic bottles are not fully recyclable."

However, most single-serve plastic bottles people use every day - such as those for water, soft drinks and juices - are made with polyethylene terephthalate (PET), designated by the recycling symbol "# 1," which is safe and fully recyclable.

I hope that in future articles, Wes and your publication better source the recyclability of PET and its Canadian recycling rate.

Josh Waller
FactsonPET@gmail.com

Neither Ishmael or Esau was rejected from God's plan of salvation.

Both Ishmael and Esau were blessed by their fathers, pertaining to this earthly life.

Today there are probably millions in the Arab world who have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Saviour and plead on the blood that was shed at Calvary's cross.

But because of the inherent intolerance in the Koran and of the Muslim religion they keep their faith secret and meet in secret places.

Again we now have war in the Gaza strip because Hamas does not want to recognize the State of Israel's right to exist in peace but keeps sending rockets into Israel.

We will probably get a temporary peace again but the basic issues are not resolved.

It is the underlying hatred by the world against the Jews who are the natural brothers of Jesus Christ.

A place to remember

How does Dufferin celebrate its heritage? Traditionally, by involving the entire community and by celebrating all year long! The staff of the Dufferin County Museum and Archives are looking forward to 2009. Why? Because they are planning events and programs for the whole community for the whole year to celebrate their 15th anniversary at the site on Airport Road in Mulmur Township.

To start, the entire facility will have new exhibits for 2009. First, opening in February, Corn Flower; "Decades of Design" will feature the DCMA's nationally known W. J. Hughes Corn Flower collection showcased with fashion items dating from the early 1920s to the 1980s. The exhibit features everything from sleek geometric deco to the free form styles of the swinging 1960s. Starting during the month of April half of the main gallery will feature the second new exhibit "Celebration 15 - Glitz, Kitsch, Funky and Fun". This exhibit showcases many of the donations from the past 15 years that are unusual, unique and sometimes even tacky.

One case will feature comic character hooked rugs and another the famous 1960s pottery Happy Horning Snake, created by Norma Hutchings of Horning's Mills. This was truly a unique attempt at distinctive Dufferin tourist items. The third exhibit opens in May and is titled "Made of Wood". The hundreds of objects in the DCMA collection that are constructed of wood or wood products are featured. The exhibit not only showcases the texture and beauty of natural woods but also the artistry of their Dufferin County makers. Dufferin-made furniture will impress even the most discerning Canadians collector. In the fall of the year an exhibit featuring our quilt collection will replace the Corn Flower display.

2009 will see other celebrations at the Dufferin County Museum. Ken Weber, well known Canadian author and DCMA supporter, will be part of our historical speaker series. Other new adult programming will teach participants early cooking and craft

techniques. Programs for children and families will continue throughout the year. The summer classical concert series organized annually by Dorothy Jane Needles of Rosemont will continue with an addition of a special 15th anniversary variety show which will feature local well-known and lesser-known, (but really great) Dufferin performers.

The New Year will also see the DCMA "reintroduce" the facility to the community. Promotion will focus on getting the residents of Dufferin to visit their own museum. New volunteers will be recruited for special projects and a community wide membership drive will begin in the spring.

Dufferin County has a unique and interesting heritage and it is being shown off in what has become known as one of Ontario's premier community museum and archives. These 15th anniversary events and exhibits can only produce further pride and knowledge in our community. New residents will get to know our county and the old timers can reconnect with their families' past.

Watch this paper for details as they unfold or better yet, become a member of the DCMA! Family memberships start at \$25, a bargain in today's economy. Call 1-877-941-7787 and sign up today.

Be part of Dufferin County's many new heritage events and celebrations at the Dufferin County Museum and Archives for their special 15th anniversary. See first hand how Dufferin celebrates its special landmarks; you can be part of history to!

The Dufferin County Museum and Archives is situated on the North East corner of Hwy 89 and Airport Rd. For more information, please call 705-435-1881 or toll free 1-877-941-7787, or visit our website, at www.dufferinmuseum.com

Museum Matters

