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Impaired driver worse than careless one

The recent amendment to the Motor Vehicle Act under which a motorist convicted of driving without due care and attention appears to have made careless driving a more serious offence than operating a motor vehicle while sufficiently under the influence of alcohol that one's ability to drive is impaired.

A man who pleaded guilty to driving without paying sufficient attention to his driving and without the necessary care that should be exercised in operating a car was fined $75 and had his licence taken away from him for three months. A man who admitted that his ability to drive was so impaired that his car left the road and struck a pole, was fined $75. He was allowed to pay the fine and go forth and drive some more.

The new amendment has given the police an ideal weapon for grounding motorists who violate the Motor Vehicle Act. For instance, suppose a motorist drove deliberately through a red stop light, and then realizing there was a police car behind him, speeded up and raced for his home. Tracked to his home, he was charged. He could have been charged with going through a red light and with exceeding the speed limit. If he had pleaded guilty to these charges he could have been liable to a $15 fine for going through the red light and $25 or $30 fine for speeding. But we'll say that the police, realizing the trouble and danger they'd been put to in apprehending this traffic law violator, thought they'd try to ground him. So they laid a charge of driving without due care and attention. He pleaded guilty, was fined and was grounded.

Yet fresh in our memory is a magistrate's ruling that because a driver was speeding along a narrow street, he couldn't find him guilty of driving without due care and attention, because he believed that to drive thusly a motorist would have to give his utmost attention to the way he was driving. Therefore he was not guilty of careless driving.

To our way of thinking the new amendment is grounding the wrong type of driver, or if the careless driving penalty is thought fair, then the penalty for impaired driving should be boosted considerably and in addition there should be a mandatory licence suspension of at least six months.

No one can convince us that a man who drives carelessly or who doesn't obey a few of the traffic laws, is as dangerous to life and limb as the drinking driver. The careless driver, still has all his faculties, and can if need be, react to danger and correct his driving.

To us the impaired driver is a potential murderer. He has not, as the charge implies, full control of his vehicle. His judgment, his sight, his reaction time are all impaired, either by alcohol or by drugs. In addition he's suffering from illusions, the illusion that he can drive as well when he's been drinking as he can when he's sober. He can kill or maim persons or do property damage without having even the slightest recollection of some of his actions. He's a criminal the moment he steps in his car and drives off.

That's why we feel Attorney-General Bonner should confer with the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles and make it a more serious offence to drive while impaired that it is to drive without due care and attention. In the meantime magistrates can anticipate action by the attorney-general's department by handing out heavier penalties to impaired drivers and making sure they are off the roads and streets. Not only should the fines be increased but there should be automatic suspension of licences for all motorists convicted of impaired driving. Only in that way will some drivers learn the seriousness of their offence against society.

FALSE SECURITY

Youth gives views on hazards of smoking

Entries in a British Columbia and Yukon Division Cancer Society essay contest on smoking throw some interesting light on what teenagers think about the hazards of smoking and the reasons for the widespread and growing use of cigarettes.

In view of the Prince Rupert branch of the Canadian Cancer Society's drive for funds, which starts Monday, we publish excerpts from some of the 226 finalists in the contest:

"By some, smoking is considered a means of showing authority. By others, it is a means of rebelling against authority. Jangled nerves are soothed by the mad puffing of many other nicotine fiends. These reasons are, in my mind, utterly stupid. Which would you rather have, jangled nerves or lung cancer?"

— Dan McCallum, New Westminster

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"The fault of beginning to smoke does not always lie entirely on the shoulders of youth. The burden is very often shared by the parents. To combat the spread of this idea, parents should set a good example, and laws should be established prohibiting the sale of cigarettes to persons under a certain age. Advertisements stressing the joy and relaxation one obtains through smoking should be banned."

— Dietmar Waber, Grade 11, Steveston

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"The best reason (for smoking) is to be one of the crowd. Grown-ups often scoff at this reason, little realizing that they use it themselves . . . Actually, if one can refrain from the habit, his willpower will be admired even if it is disguised by tauntings."

— Agnes Krantz, Grade 9, Dawson Creek

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"Just because 90 per cent of the doctors smoke Brand X it does not mean that smoking is good for you. It is a well known fact that doctors neglect their own health."

— Brona Cole, Grade 12, McBride

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"Though common sense tells us not to indulge in the smoking habit, social standing seems to demand it."

— Gail Hitchen, Grade 11, Victoria

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"Subtly, over the years, advertising has created the impression and conception that smoking is a sign of maturity, and is socially correct. Teenagers have suffered as a result, and have been forced to start smoking because their friends were and they did not want to be called a sissy, square or chicken."

— Lavonne Rayner, Grade 12, Vancouver

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"If more people understood what cancer is and what it can do, there would be less people spending money on tobacco and more people using their money to help in cancer research."

— Doreen Pearce, Garde 12, Clearwater

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"So you're going to take up smoking . . . Here are a few things you'll have to accept along with the "joy" of smoking:

You're no longer going to be your own master, instead smoking will become your master. You are not going to enjoy food as you once did. Your throat, lungs and nose will always be clogged with smoke. You cannot appreciate the smell of outdoors. Your hands and teeth will become yellow. You will offend your friends with that smoky smell. You won't have as much energy as you once had and, you are gambling with your life . . ."

— Hannah Lotscher, Maple Ridge

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"The great expense of the habit is one of the factors a person should consider . . . A person who smokes a package of cigarettes a day will spend as much as $140 a year on them. Think of the money one would spend in 20 years.

A family on a low income that has one or two of its members who smoke is seriously endangering the welfare and health of the children. Money that should be spent on clothes and food may be going for tobacco.

Families on an average income may be depriving their members of a luxury such as television or even a start to future education."

— Marion Pepper, New Westminster

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"There are very, very few homes today in which not one member of the family smokes. We must consider the fact that non-smokers will be inhaling the air that we contaminate with smoke. Is this fair to our loved ones?"

— Carole Munroe, Grade 10, New Westminster

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"When a person is upset, he often reaches for a cigarette thinking that this will calm his nerves. This reminds me of a small child sucking its thumb to gain comfort. In both instances this results in false security."

— Barbara Husband, Grade 11, Steveston

HIGHLAND GATHERING, BRAEMAR, ABERDEENSHIRE, SCOTLAND — During late summer and early autumn, amid the glorious colors of the Highland countryside, Scotland is the setting for many foregatherings, where the strength and skill of the Highlanders are shown in their traditional games and field sports. — British Travel Association photo.

The Packsack of Gregory Clark

Copyright: Canada Wide

There was a convention of physicians and surgeons of my acquaintance in the back end of the fishing tackle shop where we do some of our calendar watching, now that the trout season is so few days away. The tackle dealer provides boxes, crates and unpacked cartons for us to sit on, out of consideration for our delicate condition at this particular date. The subject of conversation turned to the recent pronouncements of Sir Charles Darwin, grandson of the famous Charles Darwin of the "Origin of Species," to the effect that in 200 years there won't be room for the world's population even if we are all standing up.

"What makes me mad," said one of the doctors who is engaged on research in the area of public health, "is here we are bending every effort, scientific, political and economic, to increasing the health of the human species for the purpose of making them bigger and stronger so that they will live longer. Already we have made spectacular advances. What science ought to be doing, with all its might right now, is working on plans to make people smaller, and to die sooner. We've got our whole problem back end to."

What was really worrying us, of course, was the prospect of finding a whole horde of strangers fishing on our favorite trout streams when the season opens.

All Aboard with G. E. Mortimore

The small boy in the bus couldn't seem to catch his mother's eye.

"Look, mummy, boats," he called, and pointed out the window. "Look at all the boats!"

He turned his face up toward his mother like a little searchlight, shining with eagerness for attention. But he couldn't even raise a little glimmer of response.

His mother a solid, tranquil woman, stared straight through the little boy as she mooned back and forth to the woman in the seat beside her.

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The little boy gathered all his forces and hurled a bright beam of sound towards his mother's ear.

"Mummy! Mummy! What's on at the show? What's going to be at the show?"

She did not even lift an eyebrow to acknowledge his question, but droned on steadily to her neighbor in a bovine monotone.

I couldn't quite hear what she was saying, but it sounded like "A-dum-a-dum - a-um-um-um."

The little boy stood silently for an instant quivering with excitement and frustration, like a little mouse. How could he be the child of the large, placid creature who loomed above him? They did not seem to belong to the same species.

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He let loose a shrill, desperate and plaintive cry:

"Mummy! Mummy! How do they make the pictures? How do they make the pictures come?"

He caught his mother's attention this time. She smiled down at him — that vague, tolerant and loving smile of a female who is at peace with the world.

"Yes, dear," she said. And the smile stayed fixed on her face as she kept on talking in the same quiet monotone.

Comparison

From the Toronto Telegram

Oshawa is one of eight municipalities specially authorized by the Legislature in 1957 to fluoridate their water supply because they were already doing it. In Oshawa's case it was introduced eight years ago, and the city can now report an average reduction of 72.2 per cent in decayed, missing or filled permanent teeth. And what can Toronto, lacking fluoridation, report? By the age of 10, over 98 per cent of high school pupils have decaying teeth. Less than one per cent of the adult population are free of tooth decay. So speed up fluoridation.

To build brotherhood

Until you have become really, in actual fact, a brother to every one, brotherhood will not come to pass. No sort of scientific teaching, no kind of common interest, will ever teach men to share property and privileges with equal consideration for all.

—Fyodor Dostoyevsky.

Mesozoic telescope

Said the Dinosaur, "Infinity Is limitless, so there can be No outer rim assigned to it. Infinity is infinite."

"Nor," said the Paramoecium, "Has it an inner minimum; Divided, has no final decimal, Infinity's infinitesimal."

—Gergie Starbuck Galbraith.

The lighter side

Friend: "Which of your works of fiction do you consider the best?"

Author: "My latest income tax return."

Short sermons

No man becomes a fool until he stops asking questions.

It must be wonderful to be young enough to know EVERYTHING.

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Elmer G. Letterman:

"The dictionary is the only place where success comes before work."

TIME AND PLACE . . . by Stan Rough

It was a bleak mornig as I stood on the dock waiting for Gordon Robinson to pick me up for a day's fishing. It had rained all night, the clouds were low and mist filed every pocket in the surrounding mountains. The tide was extremely high and as a result the channel was a mass of driftwood and seaweed. The wind from the southwest drove a drizzle of rain into your face.

At 7 o'clock Gordon and Russel Ross in the gillnetter arrived and we were off. Due to the uncertain weather, we decided to go no further than Costi Island, 10 miles down the channel and jig for red cod and halibut. We had a plentiful supply of fresh and frozen herring for bait.

On the way down the channel we stopped and snagged two dozen sea cucumbers with a herring rake. Sea cucumbers, when boiled, are quite a delicacy, although I would imagine the average person would turn squeamish at the thought of eating a sea slug that looks like an over-ripe dill pickle with orange warts.

We set our skate and I jigged a red cod and hooked an octupus which measured, when gaffed and boated, about four feet across. At this time (8:30 a.m.) the weather began to clear and as octupus makes the best bait for halibut, we decided to head for Sue Pass, another 10 miles down the channel.

We killed the octopus but it continued to twist as we skinned it and cut it into sections. One tentacle, as I was skinning it, wrapped itself around my hand and I had to use some force to free myself. For a time afterwards there were a number of white welts on my hand made by the suction cups. We later ate some of the octopus and the remainder we took home and stored it in a deep freeze for future bait.

As none of us had breakfast, we put on the coffee and warmed up the stew and were well fed by the time we reached the now calm and sunlit waters of the Pass. Lauretta and Maitland Islands give this part of the channel a lakelike appearance on a calm day.

We set our skate, placed our crab trap, and jigged for cod without success. One halibut had five small crabs in its stomach. We also pulled up a sea anemon that looks like a clump of weeds and another of an orange-red hue about the size of a quart oil tin.

The hour was up and we went back to our skate and took one more halibut and a grey cod, plus four repulsive-looking rat fish. The day was getting on and we decided to go back to the rocks at Costi Island for one more try for red cod.

The sea was calm and the driftwood had disappeared from the channel, left on the beach as the tide receded aided by a southwest wind. On the four-mile run we noted several wood logs that we would pick up the following day.

Arriving at the small rocky island just off Costi, we saw an otter. We circled the island but the animal did not appear again. We anchored our boat to a rocky outcropping and began to jig for cod in 50 fathoms of water, deep enough to anchor a battleship. Russel went ashore and dug up some camus lily roots. These roots when peeled contain rice like grains which are considered a great delicacy by the Natives. Raw they taste sweet and crisp.

As we headed for home the sun was setting. The hemlock and cedar covered mountains along the channel were dark shapes, while in the background the higher snow top peaks made a striking contrast. The sky was an orange - red and the sea was very calm as we chugged home at a seven knot rate. Soon it was dark and conversation died down as the three of us in the cabin watched the dark water ahead for possible floating logs. Soon we picked up the lights of Kitimaat Village stretched along the shore and later the lights of the new Kitimat in the distance. Gordon broke the silence, "This is the time of day I love," he remarked. There was no answer for he expressed our thoughts.

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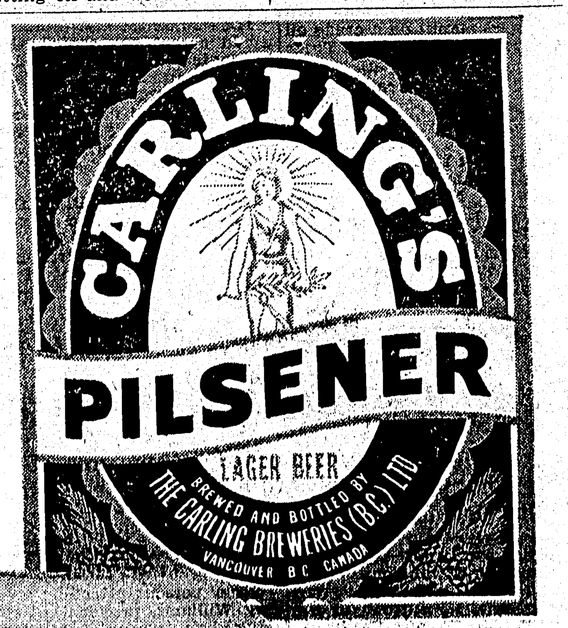

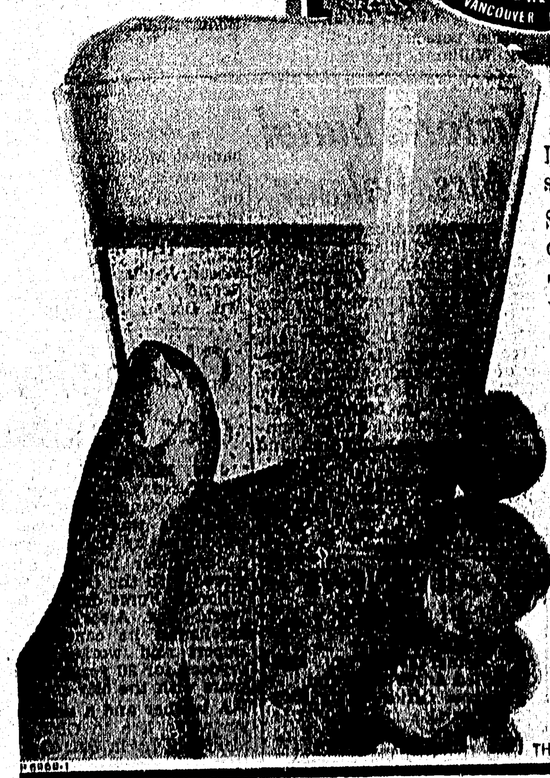

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