

Acceptance of drunk driving a failure we need to rectify

I used "drunk killer apologizes" as my Internet search to find news reports of Marco Muzzo.

Muzzo is the 29-year-old drunk killer of three children and their grandfather, whose sentencing hearing was held last week in Newmarket, Ont. One news report includes a photograph of smiling faces of the three siblings whose lives were so senselessly taken: Harrison, 5; Milly, 2; and Daniel, 9. Their mother pointedly left the courtroom before Muzzo stood to express his remorse. How do you apologize to a mother of children who are no longer with us because you chose to drive drunk?

Muzzo addressed that impossibility in a prepared statement: "As I listened in horror to the catastrophic consequences of my actions, I knew my words would be of no consolation."

The mother's words to Muzzo, in her victim impact statement: "I would not wish this

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horror I am living on anyone but you. You deserve to know exactly what it feels like to have every single child you created meet someone like you."

Muzzo's actions, unfortunately, are not isolated. The very first page of my Internet search brought up reports within the last couple years of three other recent drunk killers.

An Oct. 6, 2015, report was of Sebastian Prosa, an Ontario man, who at age 19 while driving at twice the legal alcohol limit, caused the deaths of a father and his 16-year-old daughter, leaving the mother severely injured.

Prosa was sentenced to five years in prison.

A Nov. 3, 2014, report was of Amie Nottebrock, a Calgary woman whose driving at approximately three times the legal

alcohol limit caused the deaths of her passenger as well as the 20-year-old driver of a vehicle she t-boned. Nottebrock was sentenced to 4

1/2 years.

A May 12, 2014, report was of 24-year-old Ryan Gibson, whose drunk driving took the life of a 17-year-old Cochrane, Ab., teenager. The judge in that case increased a two-year "plea deal" to two years and eight months.

None of these killers are monsters. Muzzo had 92 letters of support describing him as a humble, generous person.

Prosa was described by the sentencing judge as having "otherwise excellent character."

Nottebrock was the young mother of a 14-month-old son

Gibson was described by his sentencing judge as someone who "... appears to have led an exemplary life which would make any parent proud."

None of them had a

criminal record.

What can we take away from these reports?

The horrific consequences of the choice to drive drunk are the unintended consequences of good people making a bad decision to drive drunk.

They occur "by chance," similar to the chance of the single bullet in the spun barrel of a revolver ending up in front of the hammer in the deadly game of Russian roulette.

These cases represent the tip of the iceberg of drunk driving consequences.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving estimates that four Canadians are killed and 175 are injured in impairment related crashes every day.

We are drawn to vilify drunk driver killers. We want them put away for as long as the criminal justice system will allow.

We are shocked by the apparent leniency of sentencing. But I am going to go out on a limb to suggest that the drunk killers ought not to be our focus. Putting

focus on those individuals takes the mirror away from focusing on the real problem. Instead of vilifying drunk killers,

we should be taking responsibility of the society we live in and rectifying our utter failure to vilify drunk driving

itself.

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Regional Board Highlights – February 2016

Responsible Dog Ownership Bylaw Updated

The Regional Board has adopted the first amendments to the Responsible Dog Ownership Bylaw since it was introduced in early 2014. Among the changes: increasing the number of dogs allowed from two to three; opportunities for owners of nuisance and aggressive dogs to have a second chance and have their designations removed after a period of time without further incidents; increased license fees for dogs deemed nuisance, aggressive and dangerous; and increased fines for dogs at large/fail to leash in public places and in parks that are not designated off-leash. www.regionaldistrict.com/dogs

Strategic Priorities Plan Adopted

The Regional Board has adopted its 2015-2018 Strategic Priorities Plan. It's the framework that guides the Board and provides direction for staff in six strategic priority areas and also outlines strategic initiatives for each.

Westside Waste Disposal Centre Fees

The Regional Board has adopted user-pay yard waste tipping fees at the Westside Residential Waste Disposal and Recycling Centre. The new yard waste disposal fees are needed to offset budget shortfalls associated with higher than anticipated transportation and disposal charges for rising volumes yard waste. Residents and customers of the facility will be advised of the April 1st introduction of yard waste disposal fees through advertising and information provided at the facility. Until March 31st up to 250 kilograms of yard waste may be dropped off for free.

Fire Service Recognized

The Regional Board has recognized a quarter century of firefighting service provided by two residents of the Wilson's Landing community. Both Dale Zeich and Stan Rotinsky have been presented with certificates and medals from the Provincial Government for providing 25 years of fire service.

Next Regional Board Meetings

Thursday, March 10th – following 8:30 am Governance and Services Committee meeting – 2nd Public opportunity for comments on 2016-2020 Financial Plan www.regionaldistrict.com/budgets
Monday, March 21st – 7:00 pm



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