

On the street

We asked people at Loyalist College the following question: **Do you vote for student government? Why or why not?**



Tegan Mandeville, 28, second-year biotechnology technician, "Sure I do, so I know who my government is."



Mathew Elashuk, 20, first-year radio broadcasting, "No, because I don't know where it is and I don't have time."



Lauren Haines, 20, second-year developmental services worker, "Yes, I did. One of my classmates was running. I'm going to vote again this year."



Timmy Boulerice, 24, first-year art and design foundation, "Not yet. I didn't see anything about it. I'm still looking into it and waiting to see what my options are."



Mike Giardini, 25, post-grad sports journalism, "I do not. I don't read things posted on the wall, so I don't know when the vote was."



Keshon Archibald, 23, second-year customs border services, "Never voted. It doesn't interest me."

Editorial

Ignition interlock devices could save lives

With one move, drinking and driving could be drastically reduced and lives could be saved.

This can be done by putting an ignition interlock device in every car or at least every new car manufactured.

This in-car alcohol breath-screening device will prevent the car from starting if it detects blood alcohol over .02.

In Canada, the rate of impaired driving has increased for the fourth time in five years. In 2011, police reported 90,277, 3,000 more than in 2010.

Police increase RIDE programs throughout the year, especially during the holidays, but what does that do but catch impaired drivers after they have already gotten into their vehicles and driven God knows how far?

According to Health and Safety Ontario, drinking and driving cause 27 per cent of total driving fatalities followed by large truck crashes, 22 per cent, speed, 21 per cent and then seatbelts, 20 per cent.

Unlike the last three, driving impaired can be stopped because the car simply wouldn't start.

Wouldn't it make sense to take the police officers off the road-sides to combat other crimes and impose the onus for sober driving on the driver?

Safety features installed in cars include air bags, seatbelts and ABS brakes. If ignition interlock devices were installed, eventually they would be as natural as putting on a seatbelt. People would grumble about their civil liberties, but if it meant saving a life, isn't it worth it?

If balancing public safety against personal freedom is an issue, we should look at other laws that people once claimed to be infringements. In the early 1970s, Transport Canada required that seatbelts be fitted in all new motor vehicles in Canada. People complained.

According to Transport Canada, today 93 per cent of Canadians use their seat belts and each percentage increase in the national seatbelt wearing rate has helped to reduce the number of motor vehicle fatalities.

If we want to grumble, why not complain about the annual accident costs to Canadian taxpayers of more than \$15 billion in death, illness, law enforcement and lost productivity? Isn't it time to deal with this in a different way?

The issue isn't about the person who recklessly gets behind the wheel impaired. It's not about babysitting them, nor is it meant to put unnecessary mandates on those that don't drink. It is about saving lives.

Interlock ignitions could save an estimated 1,000 lives a year which according to Transport Canada, is the amount of lives lost annually in Canada because of impaired drivers. It's worth the trouble.

Gail Paquette

U.S. drone strikes in Middle East

In 2004, the Bush administration began an unmanned aerial vehicle, or "UAV" program operated by the CIA to attack Taliban and Al-Qaeda targets near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Since then, reports have estimated more than 3,000 people have been killed with 400 said to be civilians. The strikes increased considerably with the Obama administration and have been criticized by many legal experts and others as being unlawful. However, the U.S. government took the stance of self-defence since Al-Qaeda attacked the U.S. first, which they believe legalizes the drone attacks.

The covert action of the CIA drone program, which has the ability to kill targets thousands of miles away on a large video screen, prompts such questions as the accuracy of the targeting and how to avoid civilian deaths. Who makes the target list for the attacks? In 2009, drones targeted and killed Khwaz Wali Mehsud. More than 5,000 gathered at his funeral in Pakistan, where a drone killed another 89 people.

Forget the debate of legality - how about morality instead? The American perspective is that sending in a UAV diminishes the number of American casualties as well as minimizes collateral deaths around the "high-value targets." But then again, what casualties are being reduced in countries such as Somalia, Yemen, and Pakistan where the U.S. is not officially involved in active ground combat?

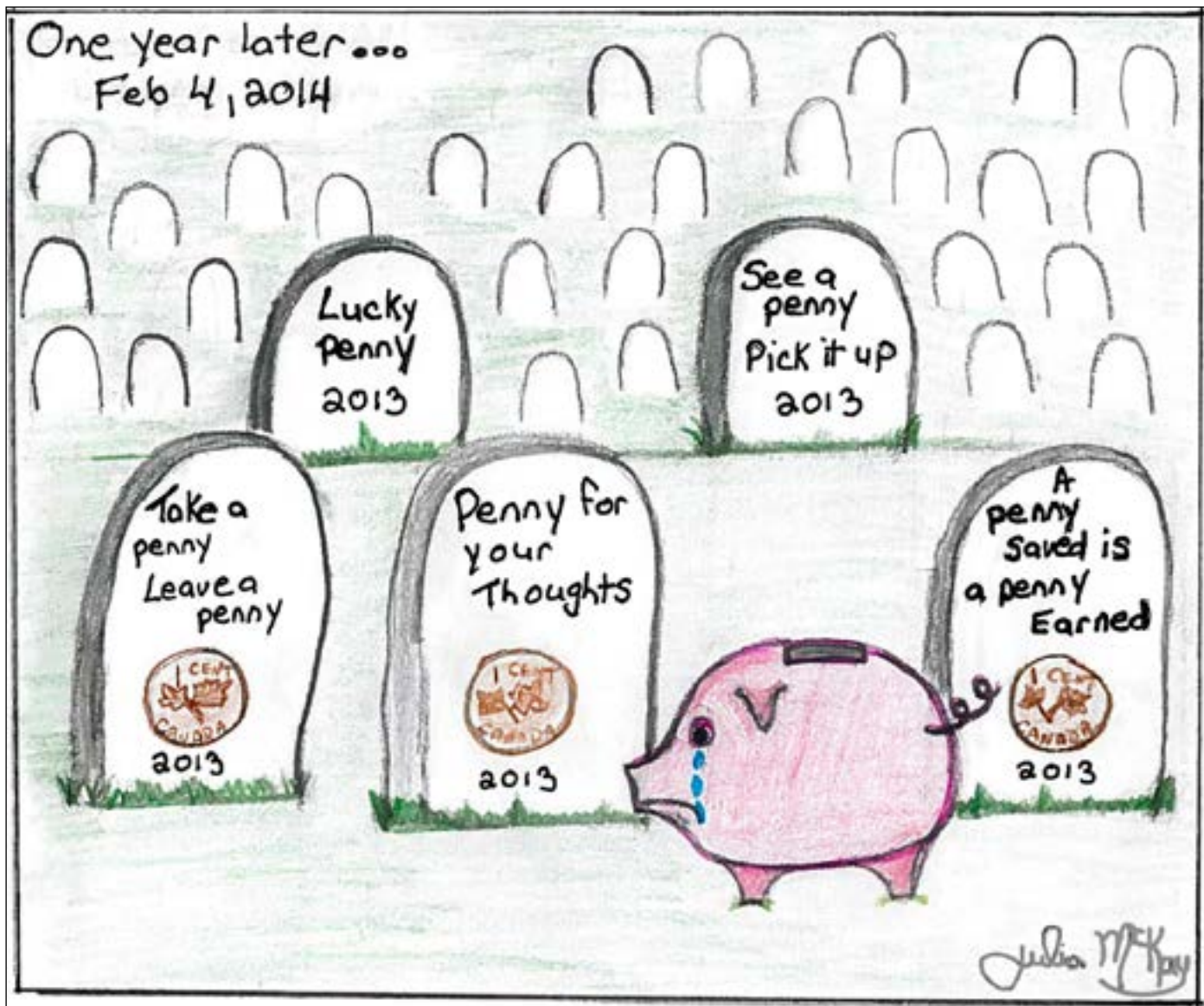
The Pakistani government receives half a billion dollars annually from the American government. Could Pakistan use the money for police and/or military action against the targets, which could possibly reduce the casualty count drastically? Despite the statistics, the Pakistani government approves the drone strikes. In fact, it encourages them despite the mass casualties. To justify drone strikes Afghanistan against targets that result in such high civilian fatality count as national defence, will become insufficient justification soon enough.

Many experts agree that terrorism can only be toppled by a comprehensive system of encouraging a stable government coupled with economic growth and a strong education system. The drone strikes just create more hostility in the region and worsen the already fractured character of the American presence in the Middle East.

Perhaps it is the ease of use that the drones offer. The pilots operate them remotely without any attachment and connection to those whom they kill. It is almost like playing a video game. You have your crosshairs on the monitor and connect it with a target, and the little black-and-white target disappears from the screen.

The legal implications will change because of this. UAVs have decreased in 2013 because of public disagreement. But as extremism spreads throughout the world, the level of drone involvement in covert warfare is unknown. But it is safe to assume it will continue for the near future.

Jason Prupas



Opinion

Cigarettes aren't the only vice around

Smoker is tired of being picked on for his bad habit

By Benjamin Priebe

I am a cigarette smoker. I realize it is unhealthy and carries potential risks of disease and cancer. I choose to continue smoking because it is my choice and frankly, I enjoy it.

Now, every time I pull out my pack for the occasional cigarette to relax or share with friends, the graphically disturbing blatant and obvious warning label on the pack bothers me. I can hardly tell whether I am smoking a du Maurier or a Number 7. I am not bothered by the fact that smoking cigarettes may cause me to develop certain diseases but by the disturbing and unrealistic photographs showcasing extreme cases of neglect and abuse.

A syringe piercing a human eyeball or a tongue deformed by cancerous tumours would be deemed inappropriate for most other forms of media and I for one do not appreciate the stigma it has created around smokers. Everyone who purchases cigarettes on a daily basis is already a smoker and surely understands the risks and decides to participate anyway.

The government has created a campaign of terror utilizing shock images with the intent to scare people away from a legal and taxed product. Don't get me wrong, I am all for educating the public on the risks of smoking and firmly believe that every Canadian should be above the age of 19 before they are able to make the decision to purchase and smoke tobacco - just

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the same as alcohol.

The problem lies in the unfairness that is given to smokers. They are labeled because they can cause harm to the human body, so I ask ... why do we not label fast food boxes with images of cholesterol crusted hearts or pictures of the morbidly obese? Why do we not label liquor with drunk driving mortality rates and graphic photographs of diseased livers?

This is not the case because such warnings would hurt the profit margins of industries and turn people off of their products. There would be a public outcry from every fast food patron and alcohol drinker in the nation!

All I question is the fairness of picking on one vice, which 5.3 million Canadians partake in every year.

Addressing the growing issue of obesity

Taxes a simple solution to consumption of junk food and sugary drinks

By Jennifer Robertson

Obesity has always been an issue for people of all ages in North America, and taxes would be a simple solution to this problem.

Junk food, such as soda and sugary drinks, is one of the leading causes of obesity in the population, especially among youth. These products have become easier to buy in public places such as schools, workplaces and even on the

streets. Junk food has even often been described as being just as bad as tobacco and alcohol.

More often than not, debates have been made over whether or not putting taxes on sodas would make an impact on obesity rates. It's believed that if consumers were to be forced to pay an extra tax on these sugar-filled drinks, they may, in fact, buy less or stop buying completely.

A study done by the New England Journal of Medicine showed that drinking soda and sugary drinks is linked to risk of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. These drinks contain added sucrose, high-fructose corn syrup, and fruit-juice concen-

trates which all contribute to these health problems.

In Richmond, as well as El Monte, California, the idea of taxes on soda and sugary drinks was rejected in November. There were several different ways the soda tax was considered. One option was to tax the drinks a penny per ounce. Another option was funding programs to help prevent obesity and diabetes.

Taxing these sugary drinks would help people lose weight and become healthier. Cutting soda out of your diet completely will improve health and help weight loss.

A soda tax can make a difference in pushing us all to save ourselves from destroying our bodies.

The Pioneer

The Pioneer is currently produced by photojournalism students for Loyalist College and the surrounding area. In the spirit of the pioneers who settled our community and who were rooted in tradition, these pioneers always had an eye on the future. Our students strive to serve the public interest, seek the truth and uphold the highest standards of our profession.

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