

EDITORIALS AND LETTERS

THE OAKVILLE BEAVER

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No raves for raves and bush parties

Summer is a time for parties and no one enjoys a good party more than a teenager. They are a rite of growing up, but along with the fun there is the potential for danger.

That's why the Halton Regional Health Department has teamed up with Halton Regional Police and the two local school boards to promote their opposition to summertime bush parties and "raves."

Raves, bush parties and all-night dance events are not the parties parents might remember attending in their younger days.

According to the health department, these modern-day bashes allow for easier access to illegal drugs like ecstasy, criminal or gang activity and a higher risk of sexual assault. There is also the question of fire safety at raves.

Simply put, there is far less control at raves than at a typical house party and, therefore, the potential for trouble greatly increases.

According to the 2001 Ontario Student Drug Survey which collected data from students in Grades 7-13, 19 per cent of ravers used ecstasy while 14 per cent of bush party-goers did likewise. When it came to using hallucinogens, 27 per cent of rave attendees admitted using the illegal drugs while 23 per cent of bush party-goers did the same.

Parents and guardians are being urged to assume the responsibility for the health and safety of their children by asking them the tough questions and giving them all the information they need to make an informed decision on which parties to attend.

Event celebrates downtown Oakville

If you were among the few people who weren't in downtown Oakville Friday night, you missed a great event.

Over the past 25 years, downtown Oakville's Midnight Madness has become one of the major highlights of summer in Oakville.

It is much, much more than a side-

walk sale. With lots of entertainment, community displays, food vendors and, of course, some marvelous downtown shops, the event has turned into a major celebration of Oakville's thriving downtown core.

So if you missed it this time around, make sure to schedule it in on next year's calendar.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Smoking bylaw infringes on freedom to choose

I would like to make comments to a couple of recent letters that were in the paper over the last couple of weeks.

Firstly, to Ariana (who I am sure everyone that reads these letters commends for the interest and letter at a young age, *The Beaver*, July 12), who has a brother with asthma. Ariana makes the comment that if bars and restaurants are left to making the decision on the smoking bylaw, they will choose the more profitable route and go with having smoking permitted in their restaurant/bar.

I agree with Ariana. However, you have to respect the fact these restaurant/bars are not

charities. These individuals (owners) have invested money to gain the highest return on their dollar.

If there is a market for non-smokers only, the private sector will accommodate that audience by having restaurants/bars that are strictly non-smoking.

Secondly, Ivan Rich writes that the attitude of some letters on the smoking by-law are prejudice to the non-smokers.

Question: Is it not the other way around? The smoking establishments are not telling non-smokers not to enter. In many cases, they are even providing areas where one cannot

smoke.

Once again, we live in a community where one has choice. A democratic society gives us these rights and freedoms.

It seems as though there are many lobbyists that want to take that right away from people.

That's like suggesting, we live in a democracy, so long as it meets their mandate.

Personally, I think smoking is one of the worst habits one can have, and most smokers share that attitude.

But, this is about principle and the rights of restaurant/bar owners and their patrons.

KEITH DEMOE

Ruling makes mockery of marriage

Ed note: This letter was originally sent to Oakville MP Bonnie Brown and a copy was sent to the Oakville Beaver for publication.

Re: Recent Ontario Court ruling on same sex marriages
I feel that the word "marriage" should be reserved exclusively for a union between a man and a woman as outlined in a previous Supreme Court ruling. I have spoken to many of my neighbours in the community and all share my thoughts on this issue.

Canada has always taken pride in being a nation built on respect and tolerance of traditions. Marriage and family is certainly a tradition which has been based on the union between a man and a woman and which certainly has been a part of the building of this nation. To make a mockery of our country by saying that we are going to take Canada into the next century, built on a foundation of men marrying men and women marrying women and to strip away our churches of the right to use this word as meaning a union between a man and a woman, is utterly insane.

With our aging population, declining birth rates, crisis with our schools and financial market troubles, the last thing this country needs to be doing is diverting resources by having our - out of control courts - get involved with more experiments in social engineering.

I would ask that you request that the Justice Minister take immediate steps to immediately challenge this lower court's decision and to put an end to this madness before more money is squandered in court cases in other provinces on this issue.

I would ask that you confirm that you have passed on my opinion to the Justice Minister. Your own personal feedback and opinion on this issue would also be greatly appreciated as I would be curious to know where you stand on this issue.

VERNON BECK

LETTER OF THE WEEK

No war on smokers

I certainly do not want the privileges of *The Oakville Beavers'* Letters to the Editor section to be misused as a vehicle for bickering between smokers and non-smokers (as it's turning out to be). However, I must make an attempt to clear the obvious misconceptions of many smokers as illustrated in the recent letter "*Butt out of my Life*", *The Beaver*, July 17.

The writer suggests that the extraordinary number of people who have written a letter supporting this bylaw (including myself) is an effort to get people to stop smoking. This is not our intent, nor do I believe is it the intent of the bylaw being passed. Quite frankly, with the amount of taxes contributed to each carton purchased, smoke your lungs out.

There have been other views expressed that bar owners are private business people and should be able to decide what they allow in their establishments. Let's get back to the unemotional facts for a minute. When these business people decide to register a public establishment they are agreeing to abide to the local, provincial, and municipal laws, put in place to ensure the safety of the public whilst in their place of business.

These include fire codes, the Liquor Act, building codes, and now due to our responsible municipal government recognizing the indisputable health implications, a smoking bylaw. This isn't butting into your life and preventing you to smoke. Conversely, it is protecting the lives of others who wish to visit these licensed establishments.

The writer suggested a move to Toronto's bylaw whereby smoking is allowed in bars, but not restaurants. He/She must be thoroughly convinced that non-smokers truly are "bored" and that we only go out to eat. No, we too would like to visit bars and pubs and enjoy a pint with our friends and possibly some of the live entertainment many of these places offer, without being subjected to cancer-causing conditions.

As for the possible lost revenues for the bar owners I must convey that I have led large organizations providing goods and services to the public and in doing so have had to adjust our business and marketing strategies to changing market, political, and environmental conditions. These entrepreneurs will also need to call upon their creative business savvy to design other ways to attract patrons. An ash tray is not going to be enough any more. (I'm sure the asbestos manufacturers and installers were required to shift gears).

The bylaw has been passed and life will, thankfully, go on. Smokers will continue to smoke and will get accustomed to stepping outside for their butts. The issue now is the enforcement of the bylaw.

In closing, one last comment for the writer of "*Butt out of my Life*". I find it a little perplexing that you state your recognition of the negative health implications of second hand smoke promotes you to be willing to "never smoke around your nine year old" and yet you are not willing to step outside for your other fellow human beings.

D. LADOUER

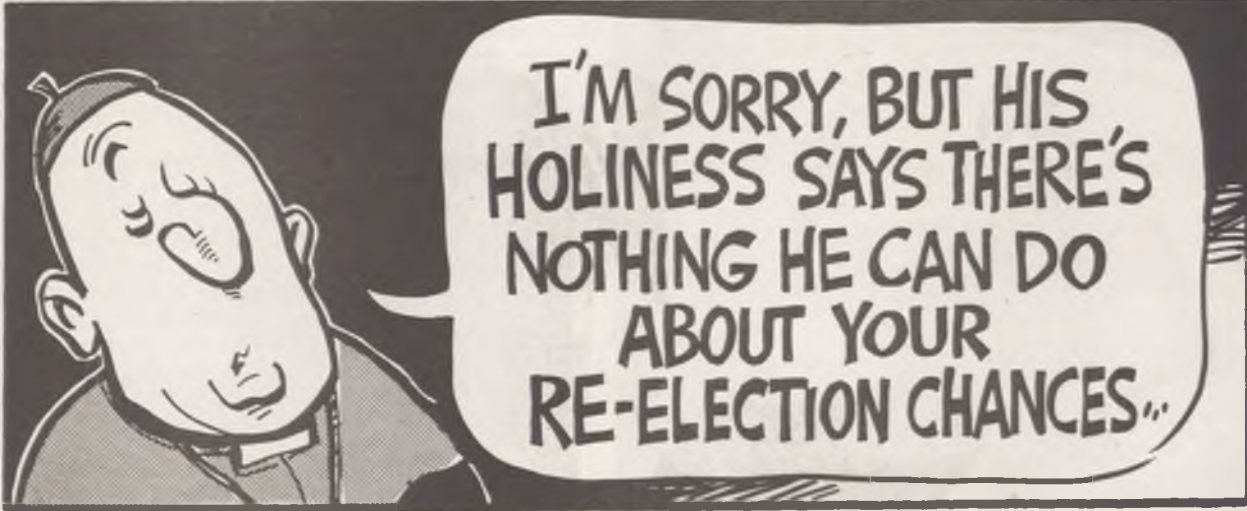
We welcome readers thoughts, opinions

The *Oakville Beaver* welcomes letters from its readers. Letters will be edited for clarity, length, legal considerations and grammar.

In order to be published, letters must contain the name, address and phone number of the author.

Letters should be addressed to **The Editor, Oakville Beaver, 467 Speers Road, Oakville, On., L6K 3S4**, or via e-mail to editor@oakvillebeaver.com.

The *Beaver* reserves the right to refuse to publish any letter.



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