

## Smokin' idea

It has been a long time coming but we once again find ourselves applauding Halton Region's forward-thinking stand when it comes to banning smoking in public places.

On Feb. 15—appropriately Family Day—Halton parents will no longer be able to puff away in front of public hockey arenas and facilities such as pools and public libraries.

The ban states that no one can light up within nine metres, about 30 feet, of municipal facilities.

The prohibition applies to all buildings owned or leased by Halton Region or any of the four Halton municipalities.

Along with recreation facilities, the list also includes municipal offices, community centres, museums, art galleries, police stations, fire halls, ambulance stations and public washrooms. It would impact about 150 municipal facilities, according to Halton regional staff.

While we are sure there will be some residents who will bemoan this policy, we believe the majority of people using these facilities will be pleased they no longer have to walk through clouds of nicotine as they make their way inside—especially if they have children in tow.

Halton Region has yet to decide on what dollar figure the ticket should be, but said it would be in line with fines issued under the Province's Smoke Free Ontario Act. However, you can't put a price on someone's health.

The Region is also consulting the municipalities and conservation authorities for feedback on a proposed ban on smoking in parks.

Imagine that concept—smoke-free parks. Again, this is all positive for Halton residents who so desperately want to get away from cigarette smoke.

The most recent cancer incidence and mortality statistics for the region should be of concern to all of us. The 2000-04 statistics reveal that despite lower incidence and mortality rates than the provincial average, lung cancer continues to be the third-most common cancer in both men and women in Halton and the No. 1 killer cancer. That is something smokers should contemplate the next time they fumble for a cigarette lighter.

### Letters to the editor policy

Letters must include an address and daytime telephone number. Anonymous letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 150 words and may be edited for content and/or length.

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### WEB POLL RESULTS

A surgeon rushing to the hospital to perform an emergency operation on a patient was recently stopped and ticketed for speeding by a Toronto police officer. Was the officer right in ticketing the doctor?

- Yes. The law is the law (27%)
- No. The officer should have used better discretion and let the doctor off with a warning. (73%)

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## Letters to the editor

### Tories' prorogation a dereliction of duty

*(This letter was originally sent to Wellington-Halton Hills MP Michael Chong. A copy was made available for publication.)*

Mr. Chong,  
I am writing to inform you of my strong objection to Stephen Harper and the government's prorogation of Parliament from the 2009 Christmas break until early March 2010.

In my opinion, this is an act of dereliction of duties, by this government, to the constituents of each Member of Parliament throughout Canada. This 'time out' that the Conservative government has arranged after what appears to be some tactical consideration, is nothing more than a ploy to rearrange governmental positioning on the important and outstanding issues, that have now fallen to the floor, and that have sent Conservatism scurrying to the proverbial mouse hole in the corners of The House.

It is literally a lengthy 'paid holiday', under the guise of budget alignment, the likes of which ordinary Canadians do not enjoy, especially in a time of 'recession'.

The list of broken promises, decimated bills, new agendas, billion dollar debt, lack of accountability and lack of responsible government has daily lengthened. It has deepened the anger of those of us who are attempting to move forward during these hard times. The threat to Canadian democracy is blatant and armed with the Cheshire grin of a leader who feels he is above reproach.

Remember what Canadians did to Brian Mulroney and the Conservatives and it took well over a decade for the 'party' to resurface with any viability. It could well happen again.

Canadians are patient and tolerable people, but they are not the fools they are being made out to be by the ongoing unaccountable and self-serving actions of the government of this day.

M. Kathleen Richards,  
Georgetown

### RIDE stats didn't tell whole story

Dear editor,  
I write in response to the article about the RIDE program

held over the holidays and how the number of impaired drivers has increased dramatically.

I, in no way, support drinking and driving but am disturbed that no one had the common sense to see that the rise in 'impaired related charges' is probably largely attributed to the fact that the acceptable blood alcohol content (BAC) level was dropped to .05 from last year's .08.

The police commented in the article about how they are concerned due to the rising numbers, but nowhere does it mention how many of the people found to be 'impaired' were actually in the new .05 to .08 zone.

Depending on when a person had an alcoholic beverage they could easily blow .05 while still being perfectly capable of driving safely.

Why not tell the entire story when statistics are quoted?

Karrie Fraser,  
Georgetown

*(Editor's note: According to Halton Police, all "impaired related charges" reported in the story involved drivers with a blood alcohol content level of more than .08. The .05-.08 range is used only for temporary licence suspensions.)*