

Question Period needs changes

If one thing has been made abundantly clear to me during my time as a Member of Parliament, it is that ordinary Canadians are disappointed with the behaviour in Question Period and want to see their Parliamentarians focus on the issues that really matter, instead of cheap political point scoring.

Question Period is the 45-minute period each day where Members of Parliament ask questions of the government in order to hold it to account. Question Period is televised and each day its proceedings are relayed to millions of Canadians by the national media. The centre of our democracy is Parliament, and the centre to Parliament is Question Period in the Canadian House of Commons.

Over the years the level of debate in Question Period has eroded. This concern has been voiced by teachers and by truck drivers. It has been voiced by Grade 5 students and by boardroom executives. In fact, teachers have told me that the level of behaviour is such that they will not take another class to see Question Period. This is the surest sign that Question Period must be reformed.

As a result, there is a growing divide between Canadians who are turning away from politics, and a Parliament that is more and more partisan. We need to bridge that gap by reforming Parliament and re-gaining the respect of Canadians.

That is why, on May 27, I will move a motion in the House of Commons to reform Question Period. My motion contains six specific proposals to focus Question Period on the issues that really matter to Canadians. The six specific proposals would:

- Elevate decorum and fortify the use of discipline by the Speaker;
- Lengthen the amount of time given for each question and answer;
- Require that Ministers respond to questions directed at them;
- Allocate half the questions each day

Michael Chong



for backbench Members,

- Dedicate Wednesday exclusively for questions to the Prime Minister, and
- Dedicate the rest of the week for questions to Ministers other than the Prime Minister.

If the motion is adopted, the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs will be ordered to consider these reforms to Question Period and report back recommended changes to the House within six months.

Colleagues of mine in the House from both sides of the aisle have been enthusiastic about this motion. In fact, it has been seconded by 20 members from three different parties, something that hasn't happened in a very long time.

Canadians are hungry for change and for reform. I'm optimistic that Parliamentary reform can re-connect Canadians who feel disengaged by behaviour that would not be tolerated around the kitchen table. I'm optimistic that we can reform Parliament and make it relevant once again.

Canadians want Parliament reformed. They want their democratic institutions fixed and they want the level of debate elevated. This motion is a first, but important, step toward Parliamentary reform.

If you wish to find out more about this motion please contact me at chongm@parl.gc.ca or at (866) 878 5556.

—Michael Chong is the MP for Wellington-Halton Hills

ACTON, BRUCE TRAIL, GEORGETOWN, GLEN WILLIAMS, LIMEHOUSE, NORVAL

Big DADDY Festival

Father's Day in Halton Hills
JUNE 19 & 20

If you're going to have a Big DADDY Festival, you just know that the gang from Glen Williams is going to be in for a party. Thanks to Sheridan Nurseries, who have stepped up to sponsor the Glen Williams "hub" there will be lots to do to celebrate Dads in the prettiest village in the GTA. The Big DADDY Festival has over 50 Dad related activities in Georgetown, Acton and Glen Williams. Please see www.bigdaddyfestival.ca for the complete list.

Sheridan Nurseries has been in business since 1913, when they opened a nursery in a small town just west of Toronto called, Sheridan. In 1913, Sven Herman Stensson, (a gardener at Kew Gardens in England, and formerly chief gardener for the Crown Prince of Denmark at Knuthenborg Castle) came to Canada with his family. Herman and all his children were active in the business until their retirement. The family tradition continues as three of Herman's grandchildren, Bill Stensson, Karl Stensson and Karen Gazley (Stensson) are actively involved in the business today.

For almost 100 years, Sheridan Nurseries' valued guests have made the nursery a favourite destination for both the novice and the more advanced gardener and home décor enthusiast. Sheridan Nurseries not only has 9 retail garden centres, it also has over 900 acres of land, producing over 600 perennial varieties and more than 800 hardy nursery stock varieties.

Join them on Sunday, June 20 for a 30-minute guided wagon-ride tour of their extensive nursery farm located in Glen Williams. Tour times are at 10:00 am, 11:00 am and 1:00 pm. Come and see what Sven Stensson, a fabulous gardening Daddy, created for his family and for our town! Sheridan Nurseries garden centre on the farm property will have plenty of terrific Big DADDY specials all day long.

And of course it wouldn't be Glen Williams without a whole lot of artistic activities. The Big DADDY Festival activities listed below will all be held on Father's Day, June 20th, but several of the art studios are open on the Saturday as well. Please see www.williamsmill.com for details. A well known treasure in the GTA, The Williams Mill Visual Arts Centre's historic buildings house the working studios of 35 professional, globally recognized artists, specializing in a wide variety of media, such as pottery, painting, fibre, glass jewellery, printmaking, sculpture, wood working and other media. Artists will take families on a tour to see potters, painters and a host of other artists at the Mill and give you an artist's perspective on the creative process.

Countdown to 1st Annual Big DADDY

25 DAYSTO GO

Some have planned hands on activities for Dads and their families. Most of the activities are free and some have a nominal fee to cover the cost of materials. For instance, the Halton Woodcarvers have arranged to do wood burning art with kids and Dads. Special Father's Day stencils have been made and kids can create messages that are burned into chunks of wood that families can take home with them. (Don't worry, we're not letting the kids play with matches!) The Mill artists will also host a hand-casting activity, where Dads and kids can have their hands cast in plaster to take home as a souvenir. Bring a photo from home or get one taken on site and then learn how to make your own frame from a professional framing artist.

And for the thrill seeking Dads, adults will be able to sign up to blow some glass and make an item to take home. Dad will be wearing the full glass blowing protective gear and will receive instructions from one of the seven glass blowing artists who work out of The William's Mill.

The antiquarian Reeve & Clarke Book Store is hosting a painting activity where Dads and kids will paint a folk art fish together. There's also a day long baseball tournament at the Glen William Ball Park, so feel free to watch an inning or two, ice cream cone in hand, for a break from all the artsy fun. There will be tables with crafts for kids to sit at and make a Father's Day card or picture. At the Glen Williams Town Hall, the Glen Star Camp will sponsor a costume activity. Kids and Dads can dress up in all sorts of crazy costumes. Have your picture taken (for the future wedding PowerPoint) or just keep this memory in the camera of your mind. Either way, it's a fun activity with Dad.

Now.....here's a special activity that you just can't get in Downtown Toronto!! At the Beaumont Mill, Glen William's own Noah, Malcolm Black, is hosting a boat building activity. As part of the Kids in Classic Boat Shops program, this "Boats for Folks" activity will support local youth to build a boat over the weekend in conjunction with the Big Brothers program. Families are invited to come on Sunday and assist with the boat build as well as learn about antique boats, participate in restoration activities, and build and float their own miniature boat on a mini-lake. At the end of the day a draw will be held to win the boat.

The Glen Oven Bakery will have its usual yummy fare, as well as several Big DADDY specials and the Copper Kettle pub will also have Dad's favorite beverage on tap.

Come and spend time in Glen Williams and see why it's a hit with Dads all year! For times and locations, see www.bigdaddyfestival.ca before the big weekend begins.

WALK FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T!

WALK for ALS helps to increase awareness of the disease, raise money for equipment and support services for those living with ALS, and garner funds towards research to find a cure.

Georgetown Walk

Location: The Gellert Centre

Date: June 5, 2010

Time: Registration 9:30am

Walk Start 11:00am

ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, is a fatal and rapidly progressive neuromuscular disease affecting more than 1,000 Ontarians and their families.

There is no cure or effective treatment and 80% of those affected die within two to five years of diagnosis.

Please support the Walk for ALS, visit www.walkforals.ca and walk for those who can't.



Early Bird pledge/donation/money drop off on Sunday May 30th at the Real Canadian Superstore in Georgetown between 1 to 3 pm. Parking at the walk will be limited so please carpool or park on adjacent streets.

PROUD SPONSORS:

PAUL C. ARMSTRONG
INSURANCE BROKERS LTD.

Fraser Direct
Distribution Services Ltd.

Buy Wise
WINDOWS & DOORS

Halton Hills
Speech Centre

ACTON
Just add Sobey's

MCDONALD'S
i'm lovin' it

J.S. JONES & SON
FUNERAL HOME LIMITED

APPLE
Auto Glass
navus

TOWN OF
HALTON HILLS
Working Together Working for You!

Please join in the fun ASAP. Please contact Amy Sykes 905-873-0301 ext. 237 or e-mail asykes@independentfreepress.com