

## Expand powers

“Public services should be open to the public, by definition and default.”

Ontario Ombudsman Andre Marin uttered those words Tuesday as he unveiled his annual report at Queen’s Park, noting that in the six years he has held the post the trend in the Ontario government has been to less openness and transparency when it comes to government agencies and programs.

Ontario’s public watchdog highlighted a number of issues in his report, primarily the fact there were more than 3,000 complaints about correctional facilities last year. In one case Marin had to intervene when a group of inmates complained they hadn’t received clean clothes for nearly a month.

He, naturally, also referred to the “granddaddy of all secret manoeuvres”—the granting of sweeping powers to the police during the G20 summit last summer—power that were not publicized.

But perhaps most interestingly, Marin zeroed in on the lack of transparency concerning government institutions such as municipalities, universities, school boards and hospitals (the MUSH sector)—areas where he is refused investigation access.

The ombudsman’s office received nearly 2,000 complaints this year about children’s aid societies, police, long-term-care homes, hospitals and municipalities that Marin said he is powerless to do anything about.

Neither the Liberals or Progressive Conservatives have indicated a willingness to opening up the MUSH sector to Marin’s scrutiny should they win the provincial election.

PC MPP Ken Klees asked “Why it should take an officer of the legislature to do the work of cabinet ministers and elected members is beyond us.”

Why indeed, Mr. Klee, why indeed? But perhaps it does.

### WEB POLL RESULTS

(Go to [www.independentfreepress.com](http://www.independentfreepress.com))

How do you feel about Halton Police ‘speed traps’?

- It’s a good tool to combat speeding (50%)
- It’s a cash-grab for the police service (50%)

### The Independent & Free Press

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## NDP MAKEOVER...



Steve Nease

## Letters to the editor

### Highway proposal is ‘frightening’

Dear editor,

Faced with the threat of what is being called a “super-highway” across the quiet farmland fields of Halton Hills, I think we have no other choice than to raise our voices to the point that no one in Halton Hills can say they didn’t know.

Firstly, there is a largely undiscussed assumption that we “need” another 3 million people in this area. Of course, we don’t. We have a huge country and no need of unwieldy cities.

Secondly, I find no one in favour. I do find many who think it is a done deal. I would say that done deals based on outmoded principles should be rapidly undone. These done deals depend on thinking 20 years old or more, when highway corridors were carved out of farmland seen as superfluous and oil didn’t cost more than \$100 per barrel.

Has no one heard of 100-mile diets? When they hear about “the environment” do people assume they mean somewhere else? Does no one know that the days of cheap trans-

port and widely-spread populations are over?

We have as great a concentration of east-west highways as would be reasonable for any area; and we are required to believe we need another? Times have changed.

The GTA-West proposal is frightening. The only thought more frightening is that we will passively accept its necessity. To paraphrase Edmund Burke, all that is necessary to ensure the success of the GTA-West project is for good people to do nothing.

Bert Jenkins, Georgetown

### CAS-hh says thanks

Dear editor,

Every journey starts with a step, a step that will change the world as you know it. To lighten the burden of any cancer journey Cancer Assistance Services of Halton Hills is here to help make that step less worrisome.

Our April campaign generates a large portion of our budgeted revenue. We are pleased that the response to this appeal for funds has been supported generously. The 2011 campaign generated \$90,995. Thank you for making a difference.

We are blessed that our volunteer canvassers increased in numbers, in some areas, this year. Your support

is overwhelming and you must know how grateful the people needing our services are.

Halton Hills has it all. Our clients are the reason we are here, our volunteers are the reason we are successful, and our donors are the reason we are staying. Thank you.

Anna Mae Moore,  
Campaign Manager,  
Cancer Assistance Services  
of Halton Hills

### Farewell to Malhotra’s

Dear editor,

It was with great sadness to hear that Malhotra’s World Cuisine closed its doors June 1.

I am speaking for many Halton Hills residents when I say it will be sorely missed. The dining experience was more than just eating at a restaurant. It was where people could go and make new acquaintances whilst enjoying a meal that would never disappoint.

In a large way it was an escape for 2-3 hours, enjoying the dialogue with the Malhotras and, of course, the anticipation of a phenomenal meal.

On behalf of our family, a very sad farewell to the Malhotra family and a big thank you for the experiences they allowed us to share.

Harry Wicken, Georgetown

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