

Butt ugly

Smoking is not attractive and as of this past Tuesday it became even uglier.

After approving new legislation in 2011 on the back of statistics that say graphic images reduce smoking, the federal government introduced 16 new labels that are required to cover 75 per cent of each cigarette and cigar box. Previously, the images were mandated to cover 50 per cent of each package.

The labels depict such images as cancerous mouths, tongues covered in white splotches and an emaciated Barb Tarbox, Canada's prominent anti-smoking advocate who died of lung cancer at age 42.

Her package reads: "This is what dying of lung cancer looks like."

It's not a pretty picture.

In 2011 one in five Canadians aged 12 and older smoked— about 5.8 million people.

Those numbers represent a decrease to 19.9 per cent today from 25.9 per cent in 2001.

Since 2001, teens have seen the largest decrease in smoking, with the number of males smoking between ages 18 and 19 dropping to 19.8 per cent from 33.2 per cent, and male teens aged 15 to 17 seeing a decline to 10.1 per cent from 19.3 per cent.

Studies estimate 21 per cent of all deaths in Canada are smoking-related.

While the decrease in smoking in the past decade is encouraging, statistics show the numbers have stagnated in the last four years. Hence the need for more anti-smoking measures, such as the new packaging legislation.

While the government is clearly in a hypocritical position (denouncing smoking while happily taking the tax dollars the habit brings), we contend **anything** done to discourage people from smoking is fine with us.

As to Imperial Tobacco Canada's constitutional challenge to the new labels claiming it infringes on its ability to communicate with customers and violates its Charter of Rights we're tempted to say:

"You're blowing smoke."

WEB POLL RESULTS

(Go to www.theifp.ca)

Should people convicted of cruelty to animal charges receive automatic jail sentences?

• Yes (74%)

• No. A fine is sufficient punishment (26%)

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Letters to the editor

Cougars like to play hard to get

Dear editor,
Reading in *The Independent & Free Press* of the recent and potential sightings of one or more cougars in Halton Hills, perhaps I wasn't the only person who asked himself the inevitable question, "What if...?"

It was interesting to read an article dated June 14 on the BBC website in the UK which referenced researchers writing in the *Journal of Wildlife Management* claiming that scientific evidence now shows that cougars, whose numbers have plummeted over the past 100 years in North America, are resurgent as far south as Texas and as far north as the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Manitoba.

Michelle LaRue of the University of Minnesota, one of the authors of the research paper in the *Journal*, comments that cougars are "very fleeting animals, they're solitary and they don't like people."

She adds: "If you were in the woods with a cougar and it saw you, it would run before you even knew it was there."

I'm pleased to hear that I'll never know what I missed.

Graham Willsher, Georgetown

CASHh says thanks

Dear editor,

As a special thank you to all our campaign volunteers an open house was held May 29 at the CASHh office.

We were very pleased that this event was so well attended. It was great to meet some of the new volunteers, and always a pleasure to visit with long time volunteers.

To help make this day memorable, we received gift donations from some Halton Hills businesses for our volunteers, and food and wine for refreshments, and we would like to thank them for their support: Young's Pharmacy, Foodstuffs, Mill Street Cheese Market, Corks Winery, Archer's of Caledon, Tim Hortons, Downtown Spa, Superstore, Food Basics, Metro, Saputo, PL Foods and Mountainview Residence.

And, a very special thanks to the area co-ordinators who did all the home baking. We have an excellent group of volunteers who lead the campaign, and they are great cooks to boot.

Anna Mae Moore,
Campaign Manager, CASHh

Gym coach thanked for being an 'angel'

Dear editor,

I do believe there are angels among us.....you know....the people who give a comforting presence or say things that make a real difference in a life.

Coach Jen (Unsworth) of Cartwheels Gym Centre is my grandson Matthew's angel.

Three-year-old Matthew has autism and gymnastics has given him a venue to gain confidence while learning and developing new skills and having fun.

Jen patiently encourages him, even when he is unsure, leading him on beyond his limitations and restoring him with her smile and gentle manner. (She has passed on this same generous spirit to her six-year-old son Brody who asked for donations to 'Matthew's Village'— the Toronto Walk Now for Autism Speaks held June 17— in lieu of birthday gifts.)

Although not nearly adequate— thank you!

Jane Biffis,
Georgetown