

You can be a fire prevention hero

You can be a hero in your own home and prevent the next fire in Georgetown.

That's the message from fire and emergency services during National Fire Prevention Week from Oct. 9-15.

The theme of the week in 2016 is a good one: Don't wait, check the date.

That's in reference to the all-too-unfamiliar need to replace smoke and carbon monoxide alarms every 10 years, and batteries once a year.

Many don't realize that the alarms have a shelf life. Fire experts say they go through millions of cycles in their lifetime. They don't last forever.

There is no need to go by memory. Check the back of your alarms for the date of manufacture. The expiry date is 10 years from that date. If any have expired, replace them, if they haven't, make sure you test them to ensure they are still working.

Working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms have saved and do save lives. There are plenty of examples of that.

That's why it is the law to have a working carbon monoxide alarm outside each sleeping area of a home with a fuel-burning appliance such as a furnace, fireplace, water heater or dryer, and homes with an attached garage.

It is also the law to have working smoke alarms on every level, including the basement, whether it's finished or unfinished. Firefighters recommend, for added protection, installing smoke alarms in every bedroom, too. That's because many fire deaths happen at night, between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m., according to fire experts. You may only have seconds to escape a fire, and an alarm will give you and your family the time you need to get out alive.

While these simple steps, coupled with ongoing vigilance, can save lives, Halton Hills firefighters are also asking residents to reduce the need for alarms by preventing fires before they start.

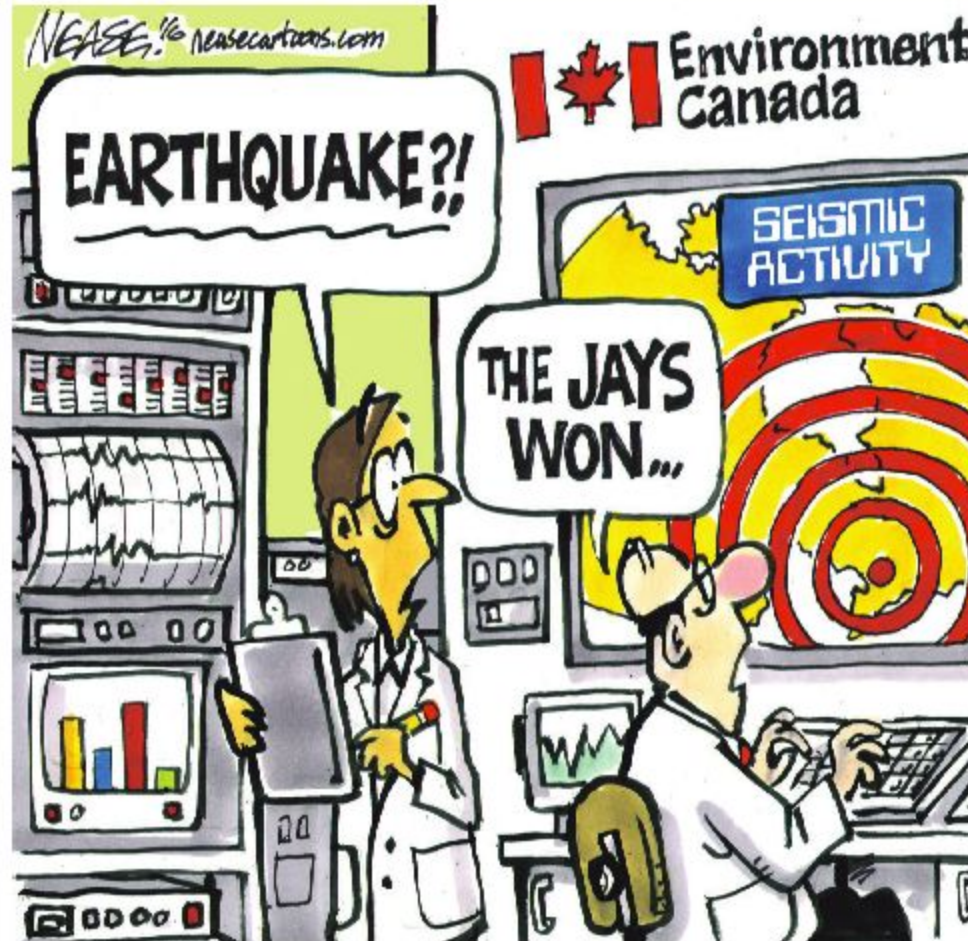
And, they say, it's easy to do.

Most fires start in the kitchen when cooking is left unattended.

Firefighters will be driving those messages home throughout the week. They will be appearing throughout the city at shopping malls, home improvement centres, holding fire station open houses with displays and information, talking about fire safety and fire prevention.

The Independent & Free Press

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Letters to the editor

It's time for some gender education

I felt the need to respond to the letter to the editor on trans identity.

I am all for open discourse and I think it is important to challenge viewpoints that are informed by poor information and that create risk for large groups of people.

It is true that John Hopkins stopped performing sex reassignment surgery at the urging of its chief of psychiatry, Paul McHugh, in 1979.

In fact, the entire premise of the letter is based on the opinion of this psychiatrist who also wrote the *Wall Street Journal* article. Our understanding of gender identity has changed significantly since that time. Both the American and Canadian Psychiatric Associations hold the position that LGBTQ identities are not mental disorders, and that the psychiatric treatment of these

is not supported by science.

Also, despite the assertions in this letter, the scientific community is finding evidence of a biological source for transgender identity. I suggest you check out the recent study from the Boston University School of Medicine.

It is true that gender theory has a political component, though not in some kind of sinister way. It is a matter of civil rights that often revolves around other people's uninformed fears and worries. It also connects to the broader history of discrimination against the LGBTQ community.

One of the most common sources of psychological distress for trans individuals is the attitude and behaviour of those around them. It is not their gender identity. It is often not even their confusion about gender identity. Many of the trans individuals I have met would say that their gender identity is no different than anyone else, even if it doesn't align with their physical form at birth. It just exists without any strong distress or discomfort. To say that sex misalignment can lead to grim psychological

outcomes, without acknowledging that those consequences are primarily the result of stigma and discrimination is disingenuous at best.

If you want to understand trans identity it makes sense to talk to people who identify as trans. There are many online resources created by trans people. I think respect and decency are the minimum we should do.

Peter Snow,
Limehouse

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