

Change in beer sales goes flat

The recent arrival of beer in a limited number of Ontario grocery stores naturally grabbed headlines, especially after Premier Kathleen Wynne and Finance Minister Charles Sousa made a show of being first in line at the checkout.

As she joked about how nice it was getting carded to prove her age, Wynne trumpeted the ability to purchase six-packs along with oranges and paper towels as “the biggest shakeup to alcohol sales since the end of Prohibition.”

Now, we wouldn't dare suggest Wynne was exaggerating when she characterized it as a historic development. It is sadly so, thanks to a socially conservative electorate and sweetheart deals with the foreign-owned Beer Store, that rigid restrictions have been in place for almost 90 years. But it is also the case, given all the giddiness at play here, that a perfectly steady hand did not pour this particular cold one for public consumption. The result was a sloppy, frothy head that should pop and settle to its true level in short order.

A long-overdue nod to convenience and the fact most citizens can drink responsibly? Absolutely. A seismic shift in the way we get beer into our refrigerators at home? Hardly.

The fact is that introducing the sale of beer in small quantities in less than a third of the province's grocery stores — the eventual goal by 2017 — is but a timid, ginger first step toward really liberalizing the \$3-billion suds business in Ontario. True, the number of places selling beer will go from about 1,100 to 1,550— that's 450 small and large grocery stores, 450 Beer Store outlets and 650 LCBO locations— by the time the initiative is fully implemented.

Sales will be limited to six-packs and singles, the most expensive ways to buy beer. There will be no extended hours. And prices will be the same as everywhere else, disregarding the potential for increased competition. The most that can be said is it'll be a little easier to get the stuff, but still a far cry from more enlightened jurisdictions, including Quebec and Newfoundland, where beer is sold in much more numerous corner stores.

The Independent & Free Press

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Letters to the editor

Time for cooler heads to prevail

Thank you for the recent article outlining the unfortunate issue between the Red Door Gallery and the Georgetown Legion.

This is an unfortunate situation and I hold out hope that somehow the Legion will find a way to allow the gallery to remain in its present space.

While both parties agree that the letter of the Trillium grant was achieved, certainly it is fair to question if there was good faith as the intent was to achieve a permanent gallery in the location where the funds were spent.

The strength of the article is its listing of the facts as both parties know them.

Unfortunately, there are serious discrepancies between the two parties and either one is telling the facts correctly or, perhaps, neither is.

In time, we will know for the simple reason that the spokespeople were quite

specific regarding the issue.

The Legion's position has two main points. First, they need the funds the space will generate on the open market and second, the space is valued at \$2,000 per month.

If the Legion is successful at renting the space for this value, it will justify their position on both scores.

If, on the other hand, it ends up renting the facility for less, perhaps the \$1,200 the Red Door people suggest is its proper open market price (or even less) then the failure of the Legion to make the equivalent offer to the gallery will give reason to question the integrity of their offer to the Red Door.

Worse yet, if the Legion chooses not to rent the space but uses it as part of its facilities, it will totally invalidate every claim made by the Legion. (A short-term rental to hope any furor dies down before absorbing the space for their own use would still be the same.)

As I said, it is not too late for the Legion to re-evaluate its position and make a different offer to the gallery.

If they go ahead and rent long-term at \$2,000 per month, more power to

them.

Anything less and there should be repercussions to the Legion in the community the next time they come calling.

Phil Lewin,
Halton Hills

We must remain vigilant for ISIS

I read in the last edition of the *Independent and Free Press* about Josh Brake's initiative to bring Syrian refugees to Georgetown. While I'm sure he means well, there are a few facts to consider.

In a Pew Research poll (<https://goo.gl/D1p164>), 22 per cent of Syrians think that "ISIS is a positive influence."

That's one in five. In other words, for each family of five, odds are one of them is an ISIS sympathizer. Would you feel comfortable having an ISIS sympathizer as your neighbour? I know I wouldn't.

Let's take a sober look at the facts.

Jean Martin,
Georgetown