

Helping readers distinguish 'news' from 'opinion'

We live in an age where the term 'fake news' is used like a shield to deflect criticism from those under public scrutiny.

Whether covering the nation or reporting right here on your Wilmot community, news organizations around the world are grappling with a crisis of trust in journalism.

We believe it is important for the media to be transparent with our readers and one way to do that is to ensure you know whether you are reading "news" or "opinion."

From the most senior levels of Torstar, the parent company of the Independent, down to the New Hamburg newsroom from which our journalists cover your community, we should work every day to earn and maintain your trust.

News is defined as "verified information based on the impartial reporting of facts" and opinion as "articles based on personal interpretation and judgment of facts."

Within the category of news are "Analysis" - a critical and contextual examination based on factual reporting, but which does not contain the authors' opinions and "Investigation" - in-depth reporting in the public interest that reveals wrongdoing and/or systemic problems and holds power to account.

Opinion is defined as being based on the authors' interpretations and judgments of facts, data and events. Opinion articles include editorials, columns written by staff and commentary from non-staff contributors.

Other forms of opinion journalism include Editorials, which present a strong point of view rooted in this news organization's progressive values; and Letters to the Editor, Reviews, Advice, First Person articles and Blogs.

We have spent the last few weeks establishing guidelines to promote consistency in how we identify all "opinion" articles in print and online.

In print, look for labels above headlines that identify the article as "opinion"; and below an author's photograph identifying it as a "column," "analysis" or "review."

Online, you will see labels within the article's URL, and above or below the headline.

At the bottom of columns, you will find what we call a "tagline" qualifying who the author is to put context to the weight of their opinion.

Similar labeling will now be carried across all Torstar daily and community news organizations.

Torstar has long strived to be a leader in editorial ethics and excellence.

Being transparent with you about how our content is gathered and whether it is news or opinion is an integral part of that leadership and we believe key to earning your trust.



ABOUT US



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LETTERS & COMMENTARY

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Salvation Army says thanks

We at the Salvation Army in Georgetown would like to extend our heartfelt thank you to the community of Georgetown for their generosity towards our 2017 Christmas campaign.

With the support of the community at Christmas, we were able to assist over 360 individuals, including 97 families and over 200 children and teens.

We will also have the capacity to assist many more throughout the year.

Our kettle campaign brought in \$75,950, just under our target of \$79,000.

We would like to thank the more than 140 volunteers who contributed upwards of 1,400 hours in total to ensure the success of both our kettle campaign and toy drive.

Thank you to all the store locations that hosted our kettles allowing us to use some of their space. Thank you also to all of the community organizations, businesses, service clubs, churches and schools who contributed donations and time to our cause.

We would like to specifically thank the Business Cares team, the police and the fire department that partnered with us for the toy drive.

This level of support allows us to help those in need in our community throughout the year.

Thank you all for your generosity and your time. Thank you Georgetown for allowing us to help the mar-

ginalized in our community.

Emily Harman
Community Ministry Worker & Local Kettle Co-ordinator, The Salvation Army

Aggressive action needed to curb tobacco use: CCS

What is Canada's leading preventable cause of disease and death? It's tobacco.

National Non-Smoking Week, Jan. 21-27, served as a prime opportunity to remind Canadians that tobacco is still a top public health issue.

Smoking kills 45,000 Canadians every year and is responsible for about 30 per cent of all cancer deaths.

Based on the number of Canadians it kills, tobacco should be treated as an epidemic.

It is well established that comprehensive, well-financed and sustained government strategies are highly effective at reducing smoking.

With the current Federal Tobacco Control Strategy expiring in March 2018, we urge federal Minister of Health Ginette Petitpas Taylor to bring forward an aggressive new strategy with far better funding to achieve the goal of less than 5 per cent tobacco use by 2035.

Canada has made significant progress, but an enormous amount of work remains. The lives of a vast number of Canadians hang in the balance.

Rob Cunningham,
Senior policy analyst
Canadian Cancer Society

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All letters must be fewer than 200 words and include your name and telephone number for verification purposes. We reserve the right to edit, condense or reject letters.

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