

# The Independent & Free Press

**KEN NUGENT**  
Publisher

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## The toughest job

It is a telling commentary on our society when an information session for parents of problem teenagers attracts 60 parents when it was expected to draw 10.

Halton Constable Kate Pulford, a community police officer in Acton, decided to start a parents group in town after dealing with six sets of parents with teen problems in a three-week period in January. Pulford admitted that the number of parents who were having problems with their teenage children wasn't surprising, but the fact "many parents acknowledged it and were willing to come out to find solutions" was.

Pulford, along with psychotherapist Liana Renwick, hopes to start a Parent Watch group in Halton Hills. The group's mandate is to have parents monitor their kids and the negative influences on them and to empower parents to take action in the best interests of their kids.

The parents will support each other, share information, learn about their rights and what the law and courts can do for them and help them develop an "intelligence network". The group is based on a similar organization that has operated out of Oakville for the past four years. Parents there have held walking tours of kids' hangouts and staged videotape surveillance of beer stores. The program has worked because, instead of being secretive, parents have taken a more in-your-face approach.

Halton Centre MPP Terence Young recently took that same approach when he attended a "Rave"—the new teen phenomenon. For the uninitiated, a Rave is a party, usually large in numbers, where young people gather to dance, drink and take drugs.

But it wasn't just the drug use which concerned the MPP. The sheer size of the event—upwards of some 4,000 young people in a warehouse—could spell disaster. Once inside, there is little visible security and a very real possibility of a fire or assaults taking place.

Young wants parents to find out where their children are heading when they leave the house. Opening up lines of communication or conferring with other parents are a couple of ways to stay in touch with your teenager's lifestyle.

No one said parenting was easy, and these days it is all the more apparent how difficult a job it is.

## Playing favorites?

Dear editor,

I have been reading lately about the highly successful and profitable company called Bombardier. Is this the same Bombardier company that was recently awarded \$150 million in grants and interest-free loans by our federal Liberal government?

I wonder why this profitable company simply did not go to one of our profitable banks and get the working capital they needed like so many other businesses have to do in this country. I also wonder why a government that is \$600 billion in debt with an annual operating deficit of \$15 billion felt it necessary to hand over this \$150 million of taxpayers' money to such a profitable company.

Could the fact that Bombardier has contributed more than \$165,000 to the federal Liberal party have anything to do with this decision, I wonder? Maybe Julian Reed, our local MP, can explain this to the small and medium-sized businesses in Halton who do not have access to such generosity from the same federal government.

Richard Malboeuf, Milton

## Cop commended

Dear editor,

Usually police officers are condemned for their actions or for failing to act. Seldom is a good act mentioned. Well, here is one.

On March 14 at 5:45 p.m. on the Fourth Line near 22 Sideroad South, a young officer got out of his warm cruiser in very bad weather and removed a large tree limb and other debris from the road. He very easily could have driven around the obstacles but he didn't. He wasn't doing this to put on a show as I happened to be the only person in the area.

I wish we had more gentlemen like this officer.

Claude Morissette, Acton

## Letter of the day

### Where there's smoke...

Dear editor,

A Toronto Star columnist recently wrote about the puritans who prohibited bear-baiting, not for the protection of the bear, but to deprive people of the pleasure they derived from the activity. Such seems to be the case with anti-smoking legislation.

No one claims that smoking is good for us. Many agree that it ought to be discouraged. But anyone who believes it can be legislated out of existence doesn't know much about human nature. Each time government enforces a new restriction on our personal freedom, levels of anger and defiance rise. Reactions to the latest ban on smoking suggest that anger is an nth of a degree from the boiling point.

If the issue were simply about protecting non-smokers' rights, it could have been settled easily by allowing each business proprietor to designate his establishment as a smoking or non-smoking environment. That would give clientele and employees alike a choice of which business to patronize and in which to work. This has worked elsewhere. As it is, the issue has turned into a war that neither side can win.

Why is there such anger over smoking bans? Consider the following points:

- As the number of smokers decrease, the number of so-called smoking-related illnesses increases
- People who run a mile from a whiff of cigarette smoke think nothing of spending two or four hours a day in bumper-to-bumper traffic breathing toxic automobile emissions
- We have endured laws to govern nearly all aspects of our lives. If smoking bans are acceptable, what will be next? Policing our diets, our exercise, our personal hygiene habits?
- Government, while claiming to support anti-tobacco law still needs and wants the revenue generated by the industry

"As soon as men decide that all means are permitted to fight an evil, then their good become indistinguishable from the evil that they set out to destroy." (Christopher Dawson).

Eileen Hutcheson, Acton

## Our Readers Write

The Independent & Free Press welcomes letters to the editor from our readers. All letters must be signed and include an address and a daytime telephone number. Letters can be mailed, delivered to our office address at 211 Armstrong Ave., Georgetown, Ont., L7G 4X5, faxed to us at (905) 873-0398 or e-mailed to: independent.freepress@aztec-net.com