

Keep that flyer!

With the recent provincial election a not-so-distant memory, residents can now turn their attention towards the Nov. 10 municipal election.

Traditionally, to voters, municipal elections have all the appeal of a double root canal without the freezing. That's surprising, given the fact the municipal level of government is, or should be, the one closest to the people. Got a problem with your road? Call you local councillor. Upset with the transportation provided by your school board? Call your trustee. Want to complain about development? Call the mayor.

These elected officials are, or at least should be, the first person to handle your concerns.

Historically though, voter turnout for municipal elections is usually low. Held in the middle of fall when weather is as predictable as a Jennifer Lopez wedding, voters often use any excuse to not cast their ballot.

Halton Hills bucked that trend to a degree in 2000 when more than 39 per cent of those eligible voted. However, this year the town clerk's department is even more concerned about voter apathy, since the election falls only five weeks after a provincial election.

Voting flyers, colour-coded for each polling station and full of election information, were distributed in the Oct. 17 edition of *The Independent & Free Press*. While it is not imperative to bring the flyer you received to the polling station on election day, it will make the voting process easier for the voter and the polling clerk.

If you haven't already put your flyer aside we suggest you dig it out of the recycling box and above all take the time to learn about the candidates and make an informed choice Nov. 10.



Letters to the editor....

Reader disappointed with pesticide reversal

Dear editor,

I am writing to express my disappointment over the town's change of decision to return to the use of pesti-

cides (*Independent & Free Press*, Sept. 12). I see this as a slippery slope back to the needless use of substances about which we all should be concerned.

I am a professional working in the area of child health. It has been an issue for some time that more children than ever have been affected by what we are doing in our environment. Increased respiratory disease such as asthma, increased childhood cancers, and pesticide residue in breast milk are all indicators that we should be looking to change our ways.

The people whose businesses are dependent upon the town's approval of pesticide use are not the authority on these matters. One only has to go to such Web sites as www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca or read a well-researched book, *Having Faith*, by ecologist Sandra Steingraber to know that plenty of research exists to support an alternative to environmental pesticides. Even so, the burden of proof should not rest with the non-users of these

materials to show the harm they can cause. The proof should rest with the users to show that they absolutely do no harm.

I would be happy if someone were to begin selling alternatives to grass for ground cover. Creeping thyme or clover might help us lose our obsession for the perfect lawn. Alternatives could be sold by the town on one of the compost give-away days. It might even generate money to support a no-pesticide program in public areas.

As far as the comment by Bill VanRyn about how we show disrespect for people "who died for us" when the lawns have been unsprayed, what about the living? Are increased breast cancer rates, infertility rates and early menstruation for girls the conditions we want to carry for such a nonsensical statement? Our war heroes fought for freedom and we are fighting too, only now it is freedom from infirmity and disease because of environmental contaminants.

Lori Levere, Georgetown

Hospital cafeteria closes too early

Dear editor,

Re: Stephen Garland's letter (*Independent & Free Press* August 27), Hospital restrictions show lack of compassion.

Recently my husband was a patient in the William Osler Health Centre (WOHC)-Georgetown Campus. Visiting hours are from 2-8 p.m. daily. I chose to stay as long as I could each day. Imagine my surprise, on the first evening, when I eventually found the cafeteria only to read the notice that there was no service after 1:30 p.m.

I had just driven into the parking lot for which I would have to pay \$4 on exiting. If I had to leave the premises for some food that would mean an additional \$4 on parking alone.

The WOHC services an extensive community. Are we expecting too much to ask that the cafeteria remain open until 4 or 5 p.m.? This would enable visitors to get themselves some sustenance to carry on bedside vigils. I was informed that vending machines were accessible for coffee, pop, and candy. Nice diet!

The administration certainly does not hesitate to solicit our donations by mail and phone. Most assuredly consideration should be given to Mr. Garland's letter and mine.

Arline Coultrup,
Acton

Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor must be signed and include an address and daytime telephone number. Unsigned letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 200 words and may be edited.

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