

Editorial

Hypocrisy at its worst

We've used this space often to belabour the point that smoking is a horrible habit, a drain on our health care system and that if smokers were hit with a \$20-a-pack tax we wouldn't shed a tear.

Having said that, last week's Supreme Court of Canada decision to allow provinces to sue tobacco companies for the cost of treating smoking-related illnesses is just plain wrong.

It's wrong because smoking is *legal*. This ruling smacks of hypocrisy. On the one hand, our federal and provincial governments gleefully rake in billions of tax dollars thanks to smokers and now will be allowed to hit up tobacco firms for the health-related problems associated with smoking.

If our various levels of government truly cared about the health of this nation's citizens, they would have banned smoking outright when evidence of the dangers of lighting up became clear decades ago.

But they didn't.

It is flat-out wrong for the government on one hand to be reaping the rewards of smoking, then bleeding the companies that produce the product. If our politicians can hold tobacco firms responsible for the burgeoning health costs associated with smoking then they should do the same for the alcohol industry and costs associated with gambling addictions. There simple is no difference.

Similar court rulings and legislation have already led to a massive settlement south of the border and Canadian provinces are sure to try and reach a settlement with tobacco firms here. Whether the tobacco companies have the backbone (or money) for this type of fight is uncertain.

What is undeniable is, that when millions of dollars are dangled before the eyes of a politician, it is likely they will choose to ignore the morally right path.



Letters to the editor...

Higher gas prices impact volunteer work

Dear editor,

I would like to add my two cents worth on the rising price of gas.

I hope both the federal and provincial governments realize another cost to the rising price of gas—volunteers!

Most people volunteer from the goodness of their hearts and most do not get mileage, especially if they volunteer with a small organization that just gets by fund-raiser.

Many volunteers are seniors on a fixed income, retirees or people who may not earn the "big bucks".

Personally, a friend and I drive 40 kilometres each way, every Sunday, to volunteer at a animal shelter. I work permanent part-time, and she has a full-time job, as does her husband and they have a family to support.

Something has to give and we may end up cutting the time we do volunteer work due to the price of gas. I believe this might affect other charities as well.

Will the government want to pick up the tab to replace work

done by volunteers?

Mr. McGuinty is passing the buck to Ottawa, which we know will probably result in nothing other than another "study" which will waste more taxpayer money.

It seems when they don't want to take action they say they will do a "study" of an issue. Or, they suggest things like, take the bike or walk...sorry but not all of us live in cities, or in reasonable range of required services and not all smaller centres have public transportation.

I don't blame the gas station owners as they have to do what their head offices tell them to do to remain competitive.

We know the problem and we know a solution.....we need some of our tax money back in our pockets so that we can continue to work, play and volunteer.

Debra Hayes,
Georgetown

Walk was worth the effort

Dear editor,

This letter is a thank you to all the generous people who sponsored me in my walk for the Weekend to End Breast Cancer. It was an amazing experience, from beginning to end.

We walked a total of 60 kilometres from the National Trade Centre to Downsview Park and back again, on the weekend of Sept. 10-11. En route, we met inspiring people; people who were cancer survivors, people who had walked in other cities across Canada for the same cause four weeks in a row, people who opened up their homes to accommodate thirsty and bathroom needy participants and people whose feet were so raw they were limping but refused to give up. We met men and women of all ages who each had their own story. It was tiring, yes, but absolutely worth every bit of effort.

The people of Georgetown, and especially Glen Williams, were over the top in their emotional and financial support of this adventure. I want to thank all of you for allowing me to be part of the Weekend to End Breast Cancer walk. I live in an amazing community because of the amazing people who reside in it. Thank you to everyone.

Laura Cookson,
Georgetown

Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor must 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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