

OPINION

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Phone: 905-873-0301
Fax: 905-873-0398

Efforts applauded to keep kids from lighting up

We strongly support the efforts of Halton's Regional Health Department to provide a deterrent to retailers who illegally provide cigarettes and other tobacco products to minors.

The health department recently began posting information online about retailers who have been caught and convicted of selling cigarettes to young people— in direct contravention of the Tobacco Control Act. Convictions from the last six months can be found on the website www.halton.ca/health/programs/tobacco/offence_report_TCA.htm.

"The posting of this information on Halton's website is part of a comprehensive strategy intended to deter retailers from selling tobacco to kids," said Halton's Medical Officer of Health Dr. Bob Nosal.

Slowly, but steadily, society has taken a strong stance against smoking in public places. We should be equally diligent to put an end to young people obtaining the very product that could kill them.

More good news related to cigarette sales to our young people is on the horizon.

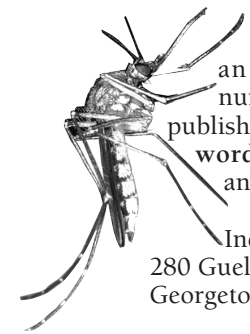
Under the new Smoke-Free Ontario Act, which comes into effect on May 31, cigarette retailers can expect to face up to four compliance checks each year— twice as many as in 2005.

The new legislation also effectively bans smoking in all enclosed public places and workplaces, and toughens the rules prohibiting the selling of tobacco to minors.

Hopefully these news laws will help all Ontario residents to breathe a little easier.

Something bugging you?

Send us a letter!



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 Unsigned letters will not be published.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 for content and/or length.

Mail or drop off:

Independent & Free Press,
280 Guelph St., Unit 29,
Georgetown, ON., L7G 4B1

E-mail:

jmcghie@independentfreepress.com

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The Independent & Free Press is published every Wednesday and Friday at 280 Guelph St., Unit 29, Georgetown Ont., L7G 4B1. It is one of several newspapers published by Metroland Printing, Publishing & Distributing Ltd.

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Price: Store copies 50¢ each; Subscriptions \$26.00 per year by carrier; \$92.50 per year by mail in Canada; \$130.00 per year in all other countries. Plus G.S.T.

Second Class Mail Registration Number 6869. The Independent & Free Press is a member of The Canadian Community Newspaper Association and The Ontario Community Newspaper Association.



Steve Nease



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Road 'surgery' needed if school built

Dear editor,
Re. School's out editorial (Feb. 22 *Independent & Free Press*).

I attended the Region's meeting to oppose the amendment to permit a private school in an agricultural/rural-zoned area. I don't oppose the equestrian centre as its use is permitted.

As noted in your editorial, there are many concerns. I would like to address a few.

At the meeting the applicant's consultant said their traffic impact studies recommend the speed limit be reduced. This infers the Eighth Line under present conditions is already unsafe and with increased traffic will add additional risk. Exactly one of our concerns!

I'm not a planning developer, but if a road is inherently dangerous, it would seem that things can be done to decrease risk. First, the speed limit can be reduced. The speed limit has already been reduced once on Eighth Line, yet I've seen speeding cars "airborne" over the knoll north of my driveway.

Another solution is road improvements. Whether it is a public or a private school— that is irrelevant— that traffic would be substantially increased and safety becomes the relevant issue.

With potential liabilities, the Town/Region may be forced to implement necessary road improvements: eliminating knolls, filling in valleys, etc. Who pays the millions of dollars needed for road improvements to accommodate this commercial business?

Our school board has a policy which does not permit new schools to be located in rural areas. Policy criteria requires municipal services for water, sewage, main collector roads, etc. In other words, this criteria ensures safety is paramount for our children. The location of this facility does not meet the policy's criteria, and would never be considered at the proposed location.

Keep the library where it is

(This letter was sent to Mayor Rick Bonnette. A copy was made available for publication.)

Dear Mayor Bonnette,

I read a letter to the editor in the March 3 edition of *The Independent & Free Press*, titled 'New library not needed'. I concur with the comments made in that letter.

Georgetown doesn't need a new, larger space. If anything, the current library appears underutilized. I have never seen it overcrowded. Even on days with kids' programs offered, the adult sections of the library are never busy.

If the book I want isn't available in the Georgetown library the friendly staff has always been able to obtain the book I want through their interlibrary loan service.

Keeping the library where it is adds to the charm and character of downtown Georgetown. If we start to move all the services out of the core, we will wake up one day to a town where everything is out in the suburbs and there is a ghost town instead of a

Private schools should have criteria to ensure the safety of others.

The consultant feels that just reducing the speed limit would be appropriate to accommodate the school. More than 100 people and counting disagree. It's like using a Band-Aid when what's really needed is major surgery on the road.

Arsenio Braga, Georgetown

downtown.

Instead of spending a large sum of taxpayers' money on a new facility, why not invest some money in new books for the existing library?

Deanne Peter, Georgetown

New library facility 'last thing we need'

Dear editor,
Ken Rumley presented his concerns most effectively and I endorse his views completely (Mar. 3 letter, New library not needed).

I have been a regular user of the library for the last 11 years and have never seen more than a handful of people there at the same time. The staff has always been courteous and very helpful.

Building another multi-million dollar facility is the last thing the taxpayers of Georgetown need. Even if the population were to double, the library would serve its purpose.

Change for the sake of change is a trap that many can fall into.

Trevor C. Trower, Georgetown

STAFF DIRECTORY

Publisher

Ken Nugent

Advertising director

Steve Foreman

(sforeman@independentfreepress.com)

Retail advertising manager

Cindi Campbell

(ccampbell@independentfreepress.com)

Managing editor

John McGhie

(jmcghie@independentfreepress.com)

Business manager

Carol Young

(cyoung@independentfreepress.com)

Distribution manager

Nancy Geissler

(distribution@independentfreepress.com)

ADVERTISING

Retail Sales:

Jennifer Spencer (jspencer@independentfreepress.com)

Adam Spinney (aspinney@independentfreepress.com)

Brendan Louth (blouth@independentfreepress.com)

Michelle Wan (features@independentfreepress.com)

Real estate:

Sue Spizziri (realestate@independentfreepress.com)

Classifieds:

Kristie Pells (classified@independentfreepress.com)

ACCOUNTING:

Rose Marie Gauthier, Jennifer Christie, Michelle Wimmer

EDITORIAL

Cynthia Gamble: News editor

(cgamble@independentfreepress.com)

Ted Brown: Photography

(tbrown@independentfreepress.com)

Lisa Tallyn: Staff writer

(ltallyn@independentfreepress.com)

Eamonn Maher: Staff writer/sports

emaher@independentfreepress.com)

PRODUCTION:

Mary Lou Foreman, Kevin Powell,

Shelli Harrison, Dolores Black, Debbie MacDougall