

OPINION

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Party-flipping must stop

While ethics commissioner Bernard Shapiro cleared Prime Minister Stephen Harper Monday of breaking any rules when Harper persuaded David Emerson to switch parties shortly after the Jan. 23 federal election, the decision is unlikely to appease voters in Emerson's Vancouver-Kingsway riding.

Nor should it.

Voters there have a right to feel betrayed by Emerson who they elected in good faith as a *Liberal*.

The situation is similar to that of Belinda Stronach in Newmarket where the Tory-turned-Liberal pulled a party switcheroo between the last two elections.

Emerson's justification for the move—that he thought he could best serve his constituents from the Tories' cabinet table rather than the Liberals' Opposition benches—is weak at best and dishonourable at worst. During the last election he campaigned against Tory policies, and against Harper, yet at the first opportunity joined the Tory ranks.

As an MP he was elected by the majority of his voting constituents to be their voice in Ottawa. Clearly they supported his anti-Tory message during the campaign by giving him a healthy mandate. To do a party about-face is a slap in the face to all who voted for him.

While Shapiro says no rules were broken, he admits many people were angered by Emerson's move and felt their votes were devalued.

"In the final analysis the most appropriate place to settle issues of this kind is not in the office of the ethics commissioner but in Parliament itself," wrote Shapiro in his report.

It's a debate that our MPs should begin in earnest as soon as possible to ensure future voters are not hoodwinked again.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Private school would impact Escarpment

Dear editor,

After a busy couple of weeks traveling I am now back up on the Escarpment enjoying sunny, but cool, weather. However, my attention has now been drawn into a current hot debate by my wife, and neighbours regarding the proposed Keswick Sutherland School, and the impact it will have on our area.

Initially I thought the school would attract attention to the area, possibly increasing property values.

Then I took one of my regular walks on the Bruce Trail, through Scotsdale Farm. It's amazing what a little fresh air will do!

Forget the additional traffic, and/or water concerns. Hey folks, this is the Niagara Escarpment—a designated World Biosphere! In addition to that, Stewart and Violet Bennett gave their Scotsdale Farm to the people of Ontario, not to private parties wishing to use their property for personal gains. No amendments,

zoning changes etc. should be entertained. The Niagara Escarpment must be protected—period!

For the applicant's planner Glenn Wellings to state, "we may have to look at the aggregate possibilities of the property" is at the very least an arrogant scare tactic, which is one more reason to refuse this blatant attack on our very precious biosphere Niagara Escarpment.

R. Chadwick,
Halton Hills

Revitalizing GDHS the best route for school board

Dear editor,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the recent Halton District School Board recommendation to fund upgrades to Georgetown District High School (GDHS) rather than build a new public secondary school in the south area of Georgetown.

My eldest daughter has been at GDHS for two years and is truly enjoying her time there. In many ways the school reminds me of my grandmother in her later years; her mind was sharp but her body was failing.

The broad offering of subjects and educational streams at GDHS is impressive, seeming to be able to extend an educational opportunity to every member of our burgeoning young labour force and future leaders.

My recent visit for an open house allowed me to witness first-hand the love the teachers have for their sub-

jects and the respect they have for the students participating in their classes. I also recently attended a drama presentation put on by a "lunchtime drama troupe"—a small group of students who, at the inspiration of one of the drama teachers, met over lunch hour for a semester to see what they could create together—it was great!

Second to none, is the physical education program. The coaches willingly spend immeasurable hours developing their athletes and encouraging success. They even go beyond the call of duty when they extend this reach to the feeder schools in the area by mentoring up and coming young athletes.

The music program is leading edge and the staff's enthusiasm is contagious to students who choose to learn and play instruments and then become part of one or more of the amazing bands at the school.

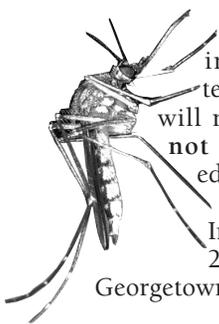
It was also exciting to read in the local news about a recent graduate of GDHS who is completing her undergraduate degree at a U.S. university to which she is attending on a full academic scholarship. Identified as one of the bright young minds in the world, she has now been offered a Rhodes Scholarship to do graduate work in England.

The facilities at GDHS are, however, old and faltering and in desperate need for upgrade. The GDHS administration is trying to invest both sweat and dollars to upgrade what they can. It would be wonderful to see the Halton District School Board fund the revitalization of the buildings, grounds and resources to make this facility leading edge for the present and future students and staff. I fully support my tax dollars going to this effort.

Michele Proud, Georgetown

Something bugging you?

Send us a letter!



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THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS

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.

