

OPINION

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It's all right to be a quitter

There has never been a better time to be a quitter.

As of May 31, provincial legislation will effectively ban smoking in all enclosed public spaces and in all workplaces. That means smokers will have fewer places than ever to practise the habit that has been proven to be hazardous to their health and to anyone exposed to long-term second-hand smoke.

Regional health officials realize that quitting smoking is the single greatest challenge many smokers will face in their lifetime.

The 2006 Driven to Quit Challenge may offer the additional motivation smokers need to help kick their smoking habit.

The contest encourages adult smokers in Ontario to quit for the month of April. One person who quits during the month will win a new car. Seven others will win a widescreen high definition television.

Not a bad reward for doing something that will significantly lessen your risk of damaging your cardiovascular and respiratory systems and reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, aneurysms, lung cancer and oral cancer.

The Driven to Quit Challenge is being presented by the Canadian Cancer Society in partnership with public health units across the province.

Locally, the contest is being supported by the Halton's health department.

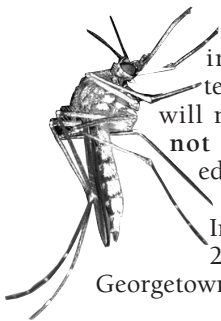
"The Smoke-Free Ontario Act may encourage many smokers to consider quitting, and Halton's health department is available to support them in their decision," said Halton Region Chair Joyce Savoline.

People interested in the Driven to Quit Challenge can register online and find information about quitting at www.driventoquit.ca.

Registration is open until Friday (March 31).

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 Unsigned letters will not be published.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.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MP must step up and maintain public's trust

(This letter was sent to MP Michael Chong. A copy was made available for publication.)

Dear Mr. Chong,

I read your February 8 column in *The Independent & Free Press* with much interest.

You stated: "The first priority of our government will be to introduce sweeping new accountability rules." Well, I hope those of us who elected you will hold you to those words. I certainly will.

Because, within one hour of your government being sworn in, Stephen Harper undertook a course of action that he spoke so vehemently against during the campaign. I speak, of course, of the appointments of David Emerson, a Liberal MP who crossed the floor on a promise of a cabinet appointment, and Michael Fortier, an unelected member of cabinet.

David Emerson stated during his Liberal-sponsored campaign, "I would like to be Stephen Harper's worst enemy."

Now, David Emerson is a Conservative cabinet minister in Stephen Harper's inner circle. Michael Fortier as the unelected Minister of Public Works does not have a seat in the House, and therefore no accountability before the people of Canada. Prior to the election his personal situation prevented him from wanting public office.

It appears that you and Stephen Harper may have enjoyed a one-

hour honeymoon with the Canadian people after being sworn into office. Since then your party has been consumed with defending these decisions.

My concern, however, is focused on you Michael. I believe that it is your credibility that is really at issue. The people of Halton elected you on your platform of "accountability".

You, and your government, campaigned on promises to be ethical and a party of integrity. You campaigned against the very tactics now employed by Stephen Harper. You must make a statement regarding your position on these events.

Do you support these cabinet appointments after having spoken against this type of conduct?

If your answer is yes, how will you justify what appears to be a hypocritical position?

If your answer is no, what will you do as a cabinet minister, and

do you believe these cabinet ministers should resign?

Halton MP Garth Turner has made his comments and concerns well known, and he is clearly disappointed by these events. Your article speaks of accountability. Well sir, it is time to step up to the plate and maintain our trust. We elected you to be better, to be stronger, to be ethical, to be a person and to be a party of integrity.

Are you, Michael Chong, a person of integrity, or do you simply speak of such things? Your answers and your actions will define who you really are.

You and your government may have very easily lost a trust that took 12 long hard years to regain.

I await your response. In fact, many in Halton Hills are most likely are waiting for your response.

David Eagleson
Georgetown

How can we change school boundaries?

Dear editor,

In response to the letter to the editor of March 15 re: board should revise school boundaries. I couldn't have said it better myself.

I agree that the boundaries are outdated for Georgetown District High School and need to be changed, but....how do we get these school boundaries changed?

And/or who do we contact to get

some action taken regarding this matter?

My daughter had to apply for alternate attendance to attend GDHS even though it is a closer school for us, and because of the school boundaries there is no bus-ing provided for us.

D. Reid,
Georgetown