

OPINION

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A breath of fresher air

As of today, the air you breathe just got better and the risks to your health decreased.

With the introduction today in Ontario and Quebec of the latest phase of anti-smoking legislation it is now illegal to smoke in bars, restaurants, private clubs, schools, universities, bingo halls, casinos and virtually any other public place. Designated smoking rooms will also soon be phased out.

While pro-smoking groups will likely denounce the latest legislation as intrusive and an attack on their rights, we are pleased governments in recent years have listened to public sentiment and have adopted these tough measures—for the benefit of all Canadians.

Smoking-related illnesses claim 16,000 lives in Ontario each year and according to the Canadian Lung Association tobacco kills about 45,000 Canadians a year. That's more than the total number of deaths from AIDS, car accidents, suicide, murder, fires and accidental poisonings combined.

Smoking also puts smokers at high risk for a plethora of diseases, ranging from various forms of cancers to heart disease to pneumonia. But even more alarming is the fact that smokers—while exercising “their right”—put non-smokers in danger through exposure to second-hand smoke.

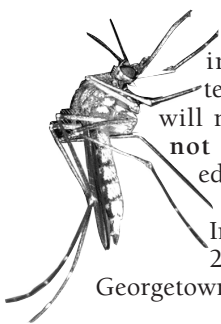
And that is why the Smoke-Free Ontario Act is so welcome. It is one thing for smokers to put themselves at risk, it is another matter altogether when the health and well-being of a non-smoker, child or impressionable teen is also endangered.

Through public awareness campaigns and legislation, anti-smoking attitudes have changed dramatically in recent decades—just picture a restaurant scene from 25 years ago where smokers intermingled with non-smokers—so the message IS getting through. Quebec, long the “smoking lounge of North America” according to provincial Health Minister Philippe Couillard, has seen the percentage of smokers fall from 38 per cent in 1994 to only 22 per cent today. In Ontario, only 20 per cent of the current population smokes.

We're sure there will always be smokers, but any steps to reduce their numbers and to limit their damage to others and the burden they place on the health care system is a positive step forward.

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

Free trade deal with Korea is bad for Canada

Dear editor,

As a resident of Georgetown and an auto industry employee, I am concerned about the federal government's negotiating a Canada-South Korea Free Trade Agreement.

Georgetown is a safe, wonderful, community-oriented place to live. This town has volunteers providing many services, a community centre, nice schools, sport's programs and small businesses that offer a personal touch. Many Georgetown residents are directly or indirectly employed in the auto industry (Brampton's DaimlerChrysler Assembly Plant, Georgetown's Standard Products etc.). Georgetown flourishes from the money that flows from the assembly plants to the indirect industries and into the rest of the economy through taxes and spending (stores, restaurants, housing and services).

Why would a government, entrusted with the economic care of our precious country, further jeopardize this valuable and already fragile industry by negotiating a Free Trade Agreement with Korea? This agreement offers Korea the opportunity to sell Korean-built vehicles in this country and keeps all economic benefits for Korea. Canada will not be protected from the current non-tariff regulations and practices keeping our products out of Korea. As a result last year

Korea sold 130,000 vehicles in Canada and we sold 400 vehicles in Korea. This government will not provide our industries equivalent protection!

Fact: in 2005 Canada's top export to Korea was wood pulp (25¢ per pound). Korea's top export to Canada was finished vehicles (\$15,000 wholesale per vehicle). Canada's trade deficit to Korea \$2.6 billion—about 15,000 jobs.

As a country, Canada will bleed

Murr tournament raises \$52,000

Dear editor,

I'm pleased to report that the 2006 Paul Murr Memorial Golf Tournament was held in perfect weather at Blue Springs Golf Club on May 8 and it was our best year ever.

With excellent support from gold and silver sponsors, 255 golf participants and numerous prize donors we raised more than \$52,000 which will be donated to

to death if our government continues the Third World practices of selling our natural resources while importing finished products and denying us the economic benefits of an industrialized country.

What will happen to towns like Georgetown?

It is time our government negotiated “Fair Trade Agreements” that ensure Canada's prosperity for today and tomorrow.

Cammie Peirce,
Georgetown

the Acton Branch of the Canadian Cancer Society. This brings our 22-year total to almost \$600,000.

I'd like to thank all sponsors, players, prize donors, volunteers & committee members for their assistance in continuing to make our tournament the success that it is.

Next year's date is set for Monday, May 14 at Blue Springs.

Allan Hall,
Acton

Annual drive resulted in 31 baskets

Dear editor,

We truly appreciate your articles on the recent Easter Basket Drive. Norval Presbyterian Church and Discovery Toys are very pleased with the response from our local citizens and businesses.

The result—31 baskets delighted

the young children of single parents in Halton Hills and the Halton Women's Place shelter in Milton.

Thank you all for your support. Our best wishes to you for a happy summer!

Sandy Henderson and
Elly Tuitman,
Georgetown