

OPINION

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The walls come down

Anyone visiting a convenience store or other establishment that sells tobacco products in the past few days might have noticed the vast empty space behind most counters where cigarette packages sat row upon row.

The so-called "powerwalls" are now a thing of the past as a result of the Province's Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

The colourful retail displays have been front and centre in most stores for years but as of May 31, they have gone the way of the dinosaur— all in an effort to deter young people from using tobacco products.

"Many young people who begin to use tobacco do not fully understand the consequences," said Dr. Bob Nosal, Medical Officer of Health for Halton Region. "Limiting access to tobacco products, along with ongoing awareness and education efforts, should act as a powerful and timely deterrent."

We have staunchly supported virtually every government, health department and Town initiative to curb smoking over the years.

While we doubt this latest move will do much to get those who currently smoke to stop puffing, we believe this approach may help thwart some impulse smokers, particularly young ones, from starting. It may also deter smokers who are trying to quit, from buying a pack.

The banning of smoking in public places and workplaces, negative advertising on cigarette packages, and numerous anti-smoking programs have all contributed in reducing the number of smokers in Ontario. This is just another step towards making Ontario smoke-free.

While retailers may feel some pain from this decision we're sure those who opt to use the powerwall space for other "impulse" items will quickly make up the difference in any lost revenue.

We hope this "out of sight, out of mind" approach leads to what we eventually would like to see— getting tobacco products out of people's hands altogether.

What do you think?

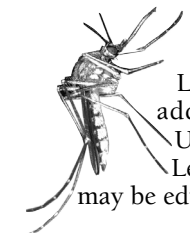
Below are the results of our most recent online poll. For the current poll go to www.independentfreepress.com

How do you view the controversy surrounding former Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier, his former girlfriend Julie Couillard and the secret cabinet documents he left behind in her apartment?

- The entire matter was much ado about nothing and he shouldn't have resigned (20%)
- It was an embarrassment to the Harper government and will hurt them in the next election (60%)
- There is more to this story than we've been told so far. (20%)

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

Council support of track 'incomprehensible'

Dear editor,
Let's be clear, Halton Place allowed the construction of a BMX track on its property without proper development permits.

The Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) has ruled that this construction was "unauthorized" and has ordered Halton Place to "restore, rehabilitate and stabilize" the land back to its agricultural status.

Volunteers thanked

Dear editor,
Recently (May 17-19) Georgetown celebrated its 25th anniversary of Bang-O-Rama.

The Georgetown Hospital Volunteer Association (GHVA) partnered with the Conklin Group for the first time and offered advance sale "ride all day" passes. Each pass saved you \$9 (it was \$26 at the gate) and the GHVA received a percentage of sales— a win-win situation for everyone.

On behalf of the GHVA board of directors, we would like to thank all of our wonderful volunteers who donated their time to sell tickets, as well as all of the customers who supported our hospital with their purchase.

Look for us again next year as we intend to make this an annual event.

Kim Zangrilli,
Director of Fundraising (GHVA)
Ruth Poullos,
President (GHVA)

Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette and his council, in their support for the unauthorized development of the BMX track at Halton Place, have chosen to ignore the fact that the Halton Place property is not located on "public" lands. Rather, these lands are considered "privately held lands" which have been designated for agricultural use under the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

It would appear from numerous past and planned events at Halton Place that the intent of the owners could be to create a "commercial" event centre within a private agricultural area. It is incomprehensible to us, as neighbours of Halton Place,

why our Town council would support this development even though Halton Place has disregarded due process!

The death of Tim DaSilva is truly a tragedy. However, if the mayor and council believe that the ever-increasing recreational needs of young families requires a BMX track, they should find suitable "public" land for constructing such a development, secure the necessary and proper construction permits and fund this project appropriately in Tim DaSilva's name.

Jack Pemberton, Rob Brettle,
Ron Morin, Janet Campbell,
Hilda Darcie and Mike Shantz,
Georgetown

Happy Hatters thank stranger for his generosity

Dear editor,
Special thanks to the gentleman having lunch at the Georgeview Restaurant on April 24 at the same time as the Happy Hatters, a chapter of the Red Hat Ladies, who were having their regular lunch outing.

To our amazement we were told a gentleman had paid for all our lunch-

es (plus tip).

We were able to thank him personally, but wanted everyone to know what a nice guy he is. Blessing from all of us to you, sir.

Norma Maynard,
Queen Mother of Happy Hatters,
Georgetown



The Georgetown Happy Hatters were especially happy when a kind stranger picked up their lunch tab. Submitted photo