

# OPINION

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## Clearing the air

Breathing is something most of us take for granted.

For some with chronic cardiac or respiratory conditions, being outside and active during the worst smog days of summer can be a life-or-death proposition.

With each passing year, the number of premature deaths linked to exposure to our polluted air grows more staggering.

According to a recent Ontario Medical Association (OMA) report, smog contributes to the premature deaths of 9,500 residents in the province each year. More than 1,000 of these Ontario deaths occur during or immediately after periods of increased pollution, while the rest can be attributed to long-term, lifetime exposure to air pollutants.

Last year, Halton's regional health department estimated about 190 residents die prematurely each year because of polluted air. This year, the OMA has set Halton's figure at 336.

"The numbers reinforce the fact that the problem of smog is not confined to cities and industrial centres," said Dr. Ken Arnold, president of the OMA. "A staggering number of premature deaths attributed to pollution were found across Ontario, showing that less-urban areas can be equally, and sometimes even more affected by smog than larger cities."

OMA doctors want patients to be prepared this summer so they can take the proper steps to protect their own health. On days when air pollution is high, it is recommended to:

- reduce strenuous outdoor activities
- drink lots of fluids to stay hydrated
- stay in a cool, clean, air-conditioned environment
- speak to your physician about how best to manage your condition.

To help track smog levels federal ([www.airhealth.ca](http://www.airhealth.ca)) and provincial ([www.airqualityontario.com](http://www.airqualityontario.com)) government websites provide pollution monitoring programs that offer current and predicted pollution counts for specific geographical regions.

The federal program, which recently added monitoring stations in Halton, also provides advice about how the general and at-risk populations should react to different levels of pollution.

### What do you think?

Below are the results of our most recent online poll. For the current poll go to [www.independentfreepress.com](http://www.independentfreepress.com)

Where are you most likely to spend your summer vacation?

- At home (73%)
- In the United States (0%)
- Somewhere in Canada (18%)
- Abroad (i.e. Europe, Caribbean, etc.) (9%)

### 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.

E-mail:

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Mail or drop off:

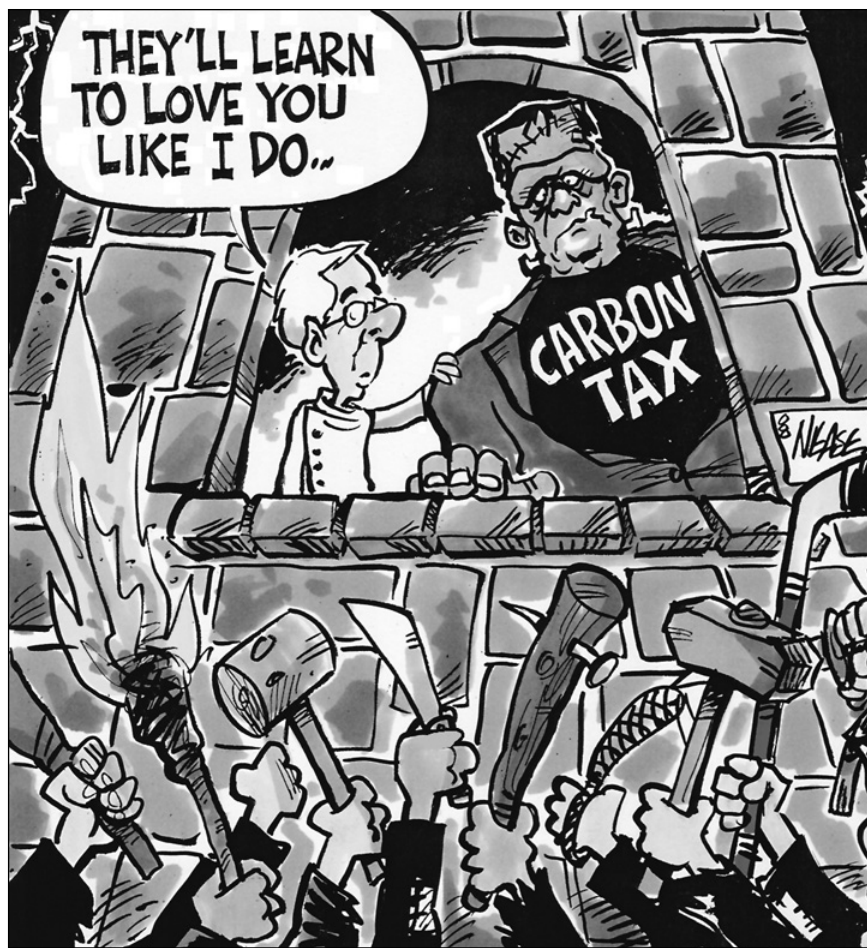
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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### CASHh thank all who helped on campaign

Dear editor,

Eight years ago change came to Halton Hills when Cancer Assistance Services (CASHh) was formed.

An organization built from grass-roots, just people helping people, has made a big difference to a special community. When one has cancer in Halton Hills we have a choice, much to the envy of many communities. Our specialized practical assistance makes life easier and less

stressful to cancer patients and their families. Every dollar raised is designated to patients, whether it be transportation, equipment, food supplement, relaxation therapy, etc.

I wish to express gratitude and thanks to all the wonderful people who participated in the residential campaign, as area co-ordinators, team captains, canvassers, and those who delivered envelopes in Georgetown, Acton and surrounding areas. The participants range

from students to retired residents, and because of them we received more than \$94,000, and still counting, from very generous communities.

I would like to give special thanks to a little girl— Emma Andrews— who collected beer bottles, as part of area cleanup, and donated the proceeds to CASHh. Also, it was brought to my attention that two little girls donated change because they wanted to give. Children are our future, and instilling in them generosity and compassion, at such a young age, tells me their parents should be very proud.

CASHh was given a certificate for archery lessons and, from all the names of the students who canvassed and walked delivering envelopes, one name was chosen to receive the lessons. That name is Taylor Begg. CASHh was the recipient of three beautiful hand-made lap quilts, and from all the names of the adults who canvassed and walked delivering envelopes, three names were chosen to receive a quilt. Those names are Lori Sargent, Karen Leonard and Harry Vellinga.

As we put another rung on our Ladder of Success, please be advised that CASHh is very proud to be providing services for Halton Hills. Please visit the office at any time, visitors are always welcome.

Anna Mae Moore,  
CASHh Residential  
Campaign Manager

### Reader found vandalism editorial 'disgusting'

Dear editor,

I was disappointed to read of the incident of fire at the cenotaph, but I was appalled to read the editorial, *Lowest of the low* (May 14).

It was absolutely uncalled for and unacceptable to make the statement; "actions of other not-so-accomplished youths are also highlighted." (in reference to the fire, which has now been deemed "likely an accident" in the Wednesday, May 21 edition) "...we feel we're safe in suggesting the recent spate of vandalism... was committed by "young adults.""

Clearly, some consideration should be taken before making "suggestions" which demean the community's young adults, who are the future.

Even if the fire had not been an accident, the editorial had no grounds whatsoever to make accusations of youth in the community, especially in light of International Youth Week.

I would like to applaud every recipient of a Youth Recognition Award from the Halton Hills Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee (MYAC), a positive representation in the community. In addition to award recipients, kudos are owed to Tyara Woodrich for stepping up in defence of youth. At the May meeting of Halton Region Youth Advisory Committee, congratulations were offered on behalf of the committee to Ms. Woodrich for her well-written support in favour of Halton's youth.

I feel an apology is owed to each and every youth in Halton for the publication of such a condescending, disgusting editorial— truly the lowest of the low.

Hillary Lutes,

Committee member,  
Halton Region Youth Advisory  
Committee (HRYAC)