

# OPINION

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## Our view

In six days' time voters across the country will be asked to elect a new government that, among other things, can steer Canada through turbulent economic waters not seen in many years.

It is a decision voters should not take lightly.

For the past month we have seen the party leaders in action on the campaign trail and in televised national debates. Sadly, we have been suitably unimpressed.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has played the political game well during the campaign, avoiding major mistakes, but offering little of substance for voters to chew on. His penchant for playing his cards close to the vest may be politically astute, but does little to endear him to voters who already wonder if he can be trusted.

That said, his main challengers—Liberal leader Stéphane Dion and the New Democrats' Jack Layton—provide even less hope for optimism. Dion has failed to shake his reputation as an aloof intellectual and only days into the campaign backed away from promoting his Green Shift plan which clearly failed to capture the fancy of voters. Layton has been more aggressive this time out, obviously smelling blood in the Liberal waters. However, his party's tax and spend policies remain the same as ever and are as unappealing today as they have been in the past.

In Wellington-Halton Hills incumbent Conservative Michael Chong is challenged by Bruce Bowser (Liberal), Noel Duignan (NDP), Brent Bouteiller (Green Party) and Jeffery Streutker (Christian Heritage Party).

Streutker's religion-based party barely garnered 1 per cent of the vote in 2006—a clear indication the vast majority of voters do not share his party's views.

This is Bouteiller's fifth campaign as a Green Party candidate and his performance has improved by leaps and bounds since 1999. However, he only took 6 per cent of the vote in 2006 and while an improvement in the Green Party's fortunes is quite possible, they will likely be satisfied in just getting a member elected. Unfortunately for Bouteiller, it won't be here.

Duignan has long been the NDP's sacrificial lamb in this riding (and before that Halton). He drew 12 per cent of the vote last time and may see a slight increase this time out but it is unlikely he will see a repeat of the surprise provincial NDP win of the early '90s.

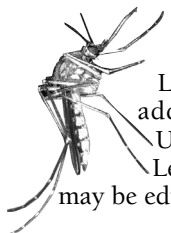
Bowser is a new face on the political scene for the Liberals and in his favour he has a strong business background. He is articulate and appears to have passion for the political game. While his efforts at all-candidates meetings have been good, he has at times looked the part of a political rookie. Experience is his biggest shortcoming.

Chong, who won the riding by more than 11,000 votes in 2006, has been a solid representative for the riding and with his resignation over the "Quebec as a nation" issue, showed he cannot be bullied into toeing the party line. He has come to know the needs of Halton Hills well and has not made outlandish promises in this campaign. For example, he told local municipal leaders last week that additional infrastructure money may not be coming under the current economic conditions. It wasn't what they may have wanted to hear, but it was brutally honest. It is our view that Chong deserves to be returned to Parliament.

That said, we urge all voters in Wellington-Halton Hills to make their *own* informed choice Oct. 14.

## 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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Mail or drop off:

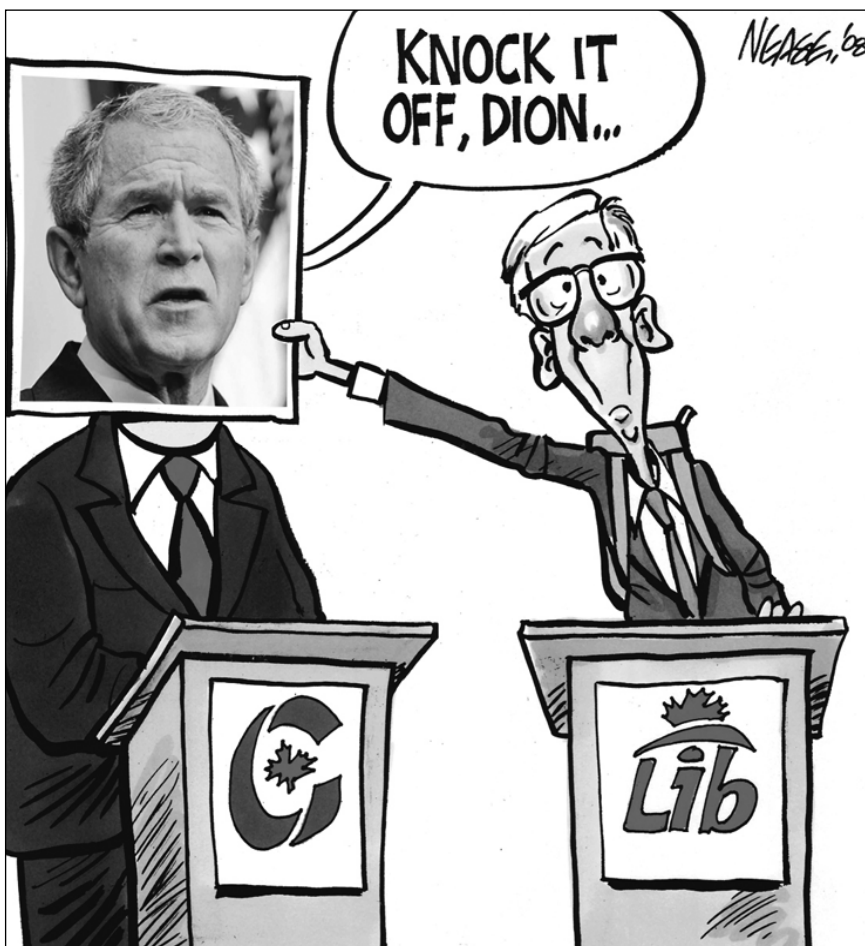
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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Summer reading clubs a huge success

Dear editor,

It's hard to believe that summer is over, and that it is time for the staff at Halton Hills Public Library to say thank you to everyone who helped make our summer reading programs such a huge success!

With the enthusiastic assistance of our summer students Cara McGilloy and Faith Pember we registered more than 1,000 children in the Laugh Out Loud TD Summer Reading Club. That's a lot of reading.

Thank you to those parents, grandparents, teachers and caregivers who **Prior commitment caused candidate to miss meeting**

Dear editor,

I would like to take this opportunity to respond to the article, 'Plenty of no-shows at local debate', dated October 1.

A commitment that I had previously agreed to prevented me from attending the all-candidates meeting in Norval.

I will be participating in nine of the 10 all-candidates meetings held in this riding during this election, affording any interested citizens plenty of opportunities to attend and make an informed decision.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to address the concern raised by the article.

Michael Chong,  
Conservative Candidate  
Wellington-Halton Hills

encouraged their children to participate, and instilled a love of literacy and libraries in our young people. We would like to offer our thanks to those local schools that allowed us to visit their students in June to promote the program.

We are also very grateful for the efforts of our community newspapers, TVCogeco, Halton Hills Radio and the

### Vandal should be put to work on local trail

Dear editor,

On Saturday, October 4 I attended a moving ceremony at the Civic Centre for the unveiling of a special plaque and the re-naming of a town walking trail to the Chris Walker Trail in honour of Chris Walker who died last September.

Chris was a tireless worker and supporter of trails in Halton Hills.

A friend and I visited the site Sunday morning, October 5, to take photographs and found to our horror that the plaque had been vandalized. The name Chris Walker had been

Georgetown BIA for promoting our programs. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the generosity of the branch managers at TD Canada Trust in both Georgetown and Acton for providing prizes. Thank you so much for your continued support.

Lisa Hunziger,  
Children's and Youth Services  
Halton Hills Public Library

crossed out and the word "Ben's" added.

Less than 48 hours after its unveiling, somebody just had to add their name. The plaque had also been scratched.

So reader, if you have a "Ben" in your family with a black magic marker who likes to deface public property, send him to me and I'll give him enough trail building work for the next 10 years and then maybe we'll name a trail after him!

Maureen Smith,  
Georgetown

## 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)

Seatbelt safety blitzes will be held across the province this month.  
How often do you use your seatbelt?

- All the time (88%)
- Most of the time (6%)
- Rarely or never (6%)