

OPINION

Election call — why now?

It appears more and more likely Canadians will head to the polls October 14 to cast their ballots in a federal election.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who appeared to be doing his best Mats Sundin (will he or won't he?) impression, last week said, "If I don't think (Parliament) can be productive, then obviously it's my responsibility to make sure the people of Canada can elect a Parliament that can proceed."

Why Harper feels Parliament has suddenly become dysfunctional remains unclear. For the past several months MPs have enjoyed their summer vacation. Prior to that, the governing Tories managed to push through much of their agenda as the Liberals simply stomped their feet and then either backed the legislation or chose not to vote on it at all.

There's nothing like an Opposition party and the Liberals have, thus far, been nothing like an Opposition party.

True, the Tories have passed the usual best-before expiry date of 18 months for a typical minority government, but if the voters are clamoring for another day at the polls Harper must be the only one hearing their cries.

What makes this likely election call even more confounding is that Harper admits Canadians can expect more of the same — a minority government.

"I think that's the reality of the current political climate," he said last week.

Public opinion polls of late indicate he's right — with the Liberals and Tories in a virtual tie with public support in the 32 per cent range while the NDP and Green Party bring up the rear with support fluctuating in the mid-teens.

So why, if little is likely to change and a fixed election date is already in place for October 2009, do we need an election this fall?

Perhaps the prime minister knows something we don't — or perhaps not.



ReadersWrite

E-mail your letters to editorial@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

Gym staff's action simply amazing

DEAR EDITOR:
While at Premier Fitness recently, my locker was broken into and my keys were taken.

The thief was able to get inside my car and steal my wallet.

The staff at Premier recognized a person from a previous incident and watched his suspicious behaviour. They took it upon themselves to stall a suspect, call the authorities and even potentially put themselves in harm's way by blocking my car in with another car.

This goes above and beyond the call of duty. A suspect was swiftly apprehended by police and all my belongings were returned in perfect condition.

A big thank you goes out to the professionalism and quick thinking shown by the staff of Premier Fitness.

And to my fellow gym goers, remember to always keep your keys with you at all times, or turn them into the front desk for safe keeping.

**C. MCDONALD
MILTON**

Aroundtown

Victim impact statements sadly powerful, poignant

On July 19, 2007, life changed dramatically for the Miller family.

As most of you know, that was the day Andrew and Henrietta Miller died in a car crash on Trafalgar Road. They were pushed into the path of an oncoming GO train by a car being driven by 29-year-old Ferguson Drive resident Ingram Rahim Bakhsh.

He was driving drunk. Nearly four-times-the-legal-limit-drunk. Two weeks ago, he was sentenced to seven-and-a-half years in prison.

In my article about the sentencing, I wasn't able to include much about the victim impact statements read in court by the Millers' family members due to the tight press deadline for the late-breaking story. It was a shame, since they were extremely powerful. In fact, the judge said they were among the most poignant he'd ever heard.

So it seems only right to devote more space to the words of one of the two brave women who took to the stand just steps away from where sat the man who killed their loved ones.

Jennifer Miller is the victims' daughter. Her seven-year-old son, Devin, their grandson.

The day of the collision, Devin was supposed to spend the day with his grandparents, but didn't due to a last minute change in plans, Jennifer told the court. It was fate, she said, that kept him safe. By the end of the day she was looking at Devin's twisted car seat, which was in the wreckage, realizing how close she came to losing her son in addition to her parents.

Courageous was the word that came to mind as Jennifer detailed the day that will

forever be imprinted on her mind.

Several times she turned to look at Bakhsh and spoke directly to him from across the room, eye to eye. She didn't flinch. With a cold, clear voice, she told him he was the garbage, not her parents' belongings, which were delivered to her in a trash bag.

She spoke about having to tell loved ones the horrible news and about the difficult days that followed.

As for her son, he wrote in his statement — which Jennifer read — that he missed making pancakes and shopping with his nana, and working in the garage with his grandpa.

Two lives needlessly taken. Countless lives changed forever.



Stephanie Hounsell

The Canadian Champion
Milton's Community Newspaper Since 1860

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Editorial Fax: 905-878-4943
Advertising Fax: 905-876-2364
Classified: 905-875-3300

Circulation: 905-878-5947
www.miltoncanadianchampion.com

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