

Comment

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Know anyone who'd make a good politician?

There may be a spring federal election - the latest date in the rumor mill is June 16.

Who is running for nomination in your riding? Are they good quality people? If so, are you supporting your choice by helping sell memberships, hosting drop-in socials or doing behind the scenes leg work or telephone research? Have you bought a membership to the party of your choice?

If your answer to these questions is no, you might not be aware of how to get started.

Call your local riding association and request to take part in the executive process, but beware. This trains future candidates. Volunteer work for a political party can not only pave the way to fuller participation in politics but it expands one's network of business and personal friendships. The period just prior to elections can be fun, even electric, and there is lots of work for newcomers to share.

The real business of politics happens before the all-party election night. It's happening now. Good people are attracting a grass roots movement and support builds up around them. The momentum results in the best candidate being selected for each party.

Starting soon, if it hasn't already happened, you'll be getting house calls from potential candidates who want you to

pay \$10 to join their party. But it isn't your money they want most - it's your commitment. Without support here, the process stops.

We need more young people and women as candidates. Perhaps by involvement they will not only become part of the system but rejuvenate it

too. Do you know of someone who would make a good candidate? It's not too late to start collecting memberships and make it happen.



Cigarette cops in York and Durham have differing targets

Yes, I'm sneaky.

Having said that, you'll want to know this: A kid can buy a pack of smokes faster and easier in Stouffville than in Uxbridge.

Last week, in keeping with my Nosey Parker personality, I convinced the boss to let me send a kid from store to store in search of cigarettes.

The plan was to publish who was bad and who was good in regards to the tobacco laws.

In Stouffville, the bad won. The teen bought cigarettes in nine out of 10 Stouffville stores.

In Uxbridge, my 17-year-old partner-in-crime scored cigarettes in four out of 10 stores.

To mark National Non-Smoking Week I had a choice: I could write a dreadfully dull, "Don't Smoke. It'll Kill You" story or I could try to find out what the refusal-to-sell-tobacco-to-minors rate is in Stouffville and Uxbridge.

The question, Do local stores still peddle tobacco to the kids? deserves an answer.

Two years ago, *The Tribune* carried out a similar survey. The story was well read. As well, it upset a few people. At times, upsetting people is a good thing. It makes us all think.

Last time out, the manager of an Uxbridge store was upset because *The Tribune* exposed her for selling smokes to a minor. The woman felt trapped. She was trapped. A while later, the same store was caught red handed by the cigarette cops. Charges were laid and a conviction was secured. A while later,



the cigarette cops paid another visit to the store. While under new management, charges were laid. It was a four C story: Caught, charged, court and convicted.

Six people came to dinner the same day as the gas person

On the day I'd invited six people to dinner, my stove had a nervous breakdown.

I called Consumers Gas and they sent out a repairperson (male) to investigate. Relieved that I had actually cleaned my self-cleaning oven just a few days earlier, I awaited his diagnosis with equanimity. No one told me he might need to open the drawer underneath the oven.

He tugged manfully (sorry, it's the only word I could come up with) but the precarious arrangement of casserole dishes, baking sheets and sundry other kitchen utensils had resulted in a logjam (owing, it turned out, to a rogue frying pan handle) and the drawer remained stuck firmly between open and closed.

Flexing his muscles for the final assault, Gasman managed to pry it open and win an unobstructed view of the horrors that lurked beneath the

Last week, my teenage friend entered the same store and bought cigarettes. Guess what? Yesterday, the owners of the very same store (K & Y Convenience) pleaded guilty to selling cigarettes to a minor. It makes you think.

Here's something else to think about: Canada-wide, we're out of sync in Stouffville and on the mark in Uxbridge. Government figures from a 1996 survey show that 60 per cent of stores

do not sell smokes to minors.

The cigarette cops in York seem to target the smoker, while in Durham, they go after the stores. Too bad each doesn't have the manpower to snag both.

Seeing an adult sell cigarettes to a child is a sad sight. I wish the adult who sold me my first pack of cigarettes had landed in court. I bought my first cigarettes at age 10. When I quit six years ago at age 45, I was close

to three packs a day. I was in the cheering section in 1995 when the government introduced legislation making it illegal to sell or to give tobacco products to anyone under 19 years.

And, I'm thrilled to report that not only does Durham lead Ontario in the number of charges laid under the Tobacco Control Act, cigarette cops laid the province's first charge in Durham Region.

make real coffee without a recipe. We recently had a new kitchen floor installed. Halfway through the day, when my stomach had sent out for sustenance, I went downstairs to find the floor covered in glue and the fridge at the far end of the room, beyond my reach.

This was a good news/bad news scenario. The good news was, I was denied access to the coffee maker. The bad news was, I couldn't fix myself lunch and, since I was down to my last 25 cents, I couldn't even afford to buy a sandwich.

Since my office is in my home, I am grateful to Robert Frost for providing a passable excuse for my woeful ignorance of practical matters pertaining to Le Chateau.

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others whose mission it is to fix or improve the ambiance of Chateau Gilderdale.

Because I work at home, it is usually my lot to greet all manner of home improvement experts and to make sure they are cognizant of things of which my own knowledge is hazy, if not completely lacking.

Things like where the main water switch is and which circuit breaker serves which area of the house. Then there's the thorny issue of refreshments. If they accept the offer of a cup of coffee, I have to search for the instructions provided with the coffee machine, since Mr. Walthead is the only one who can

make real coffee without a recipe.

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