

OPINION & LETTERS

The Oakville Beaver

467 Speers Rd., Oakville Ont. L6K 3S4
 (905) 845-3824 Fax: 337-5567
 Classified Advertising: 845-3824, ext. 224
 Circulation: 845-9742

Editorial and advertising content of the Oakville Beaver is protected by copyright. Unauthorized use is prohibited.

IAN OLIVER *Publisher*

THE OAKVILLE BEAVER IS PROUD OFFICIAL MEDIA SPONSOR FOR:



Recognized for Excellence by
 Ontario Community Newspapers Association (OCNA) and Canadian Community Newspapers Association (CCNA).
NEIL OLIVER *Associate Publisher*
JILL DAVIS *Editor in Chief*
ROD JERRED *Managing Editor*
KELLY MONTAGUE *Advertising Director*
DANIEL BAIRD *Advertising Manager*

THE OAKVILLE BEAVER IS PROUD OFFICIAL MEDIA SPONSOR FOR:



TERI CASAS *Business Manager*
MANUEL GARCIA *Production Manager*
RIZIERO VERTOLLI *Photography Director*
CHARLENE HALL *Director of Distribution*
ALEXANDRIA CALHOUN *Circ. Manager*

Metroland Printing, Publishing & Distributing Ltd., includes: Ajax/Pickering News Advertiser, Alliston Herald/Courier, Arthur Enterprise News, Barrie Advance, Brantford Guardian, Burlington Post, Burlington Shopping News, Caledon Enterprise, City Parent, Collingwood/Masaga Connection, East York Mirror, Erin Advocate/Country Routes, Etobicoke Guardian, Fiamborough Review, Georgetown Independent/Acton Free Press, Harriston Review, Huronia Business Times, Lindsay This Week, Markham Economist & Sun, Midland/Pentangushine Mirror, Milton Canadian Champion, Milton Shopping News, Mississauga Business Times, Mississauga News, Napanee Guide, Newmarket/Aurora Era-Banner, Northumberland News, North York Mirror, Oakville Beaver, Oakville Shopping News, Oshawa Today, Owen Sound Tribune, Palmerston Observer, Peterborough This Week, Picton County Guide, Richmond Hill/Thornhill/Vaughan Liberal, Scarborough Mirror, Stouffville/Unionville Tribune, Forever Young, City of York Guardian

Butting out is good news

As of today, the air you breathe just got better and the risks to your health decreased.

With the introduction today in Ontario and Quebec of the latest phase of anti-smoking legislation it is now illegal to smoke in bars, restaurants, private clubs, schools, universities, bingo halls, casinos and virtually any other public place. Designated smoking rooms will also soon be phased out.

While pro-smoking groups will likely denounce the latest legislation as intrusive and an attack on their rights, we are pleased governments in recent years have listened to public sentiment and have adopted these tough measures— for the benefit of all Canadians.

Smoking-related illnesses claim 16,000 lives in Ontario each year and according to the Canadian Lung Association tobacco kills about 45,000 Canadians a year.

That's more than the total number of deaths from AIDS, car accidents, suicide, murder, fires and accidental poisonings combined.

Smoking also puts smokers at high risk for a plethora of diseases, ranging from various forms of cancers to heart disease to pneumonia. But even more alarming is

the fact that smokers— while exercising “their right”— put non-smokers in danger through exposure to second-hand smoke.

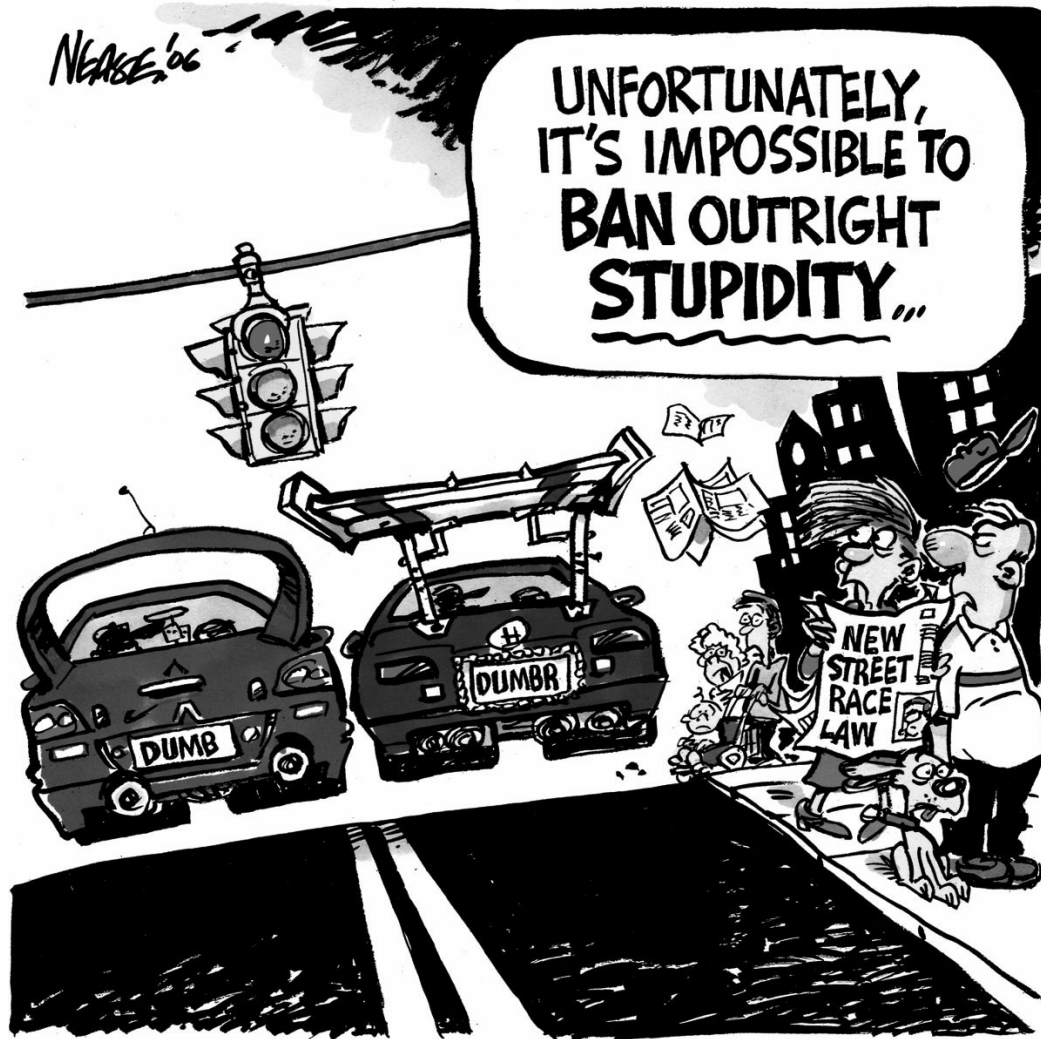
And that is why the Smoke-Free Ontario Act is so welcome.

It is one thing for smokers to put themselves at risk, it is another matter altogether when the health and well-being of a non-smoker, child or impressionable teen is also endangered.

Through public awareness campaigns and legislation, anti-smoking attitudes have changed dramatically in recent decades— just picture a restaurant scene from 25 years ago where smokers intermingled with non-smokers— so the message IS getting through.

Québec, long the “smoking lounge of North America” according to provincial Health Minister Philippe Couillard, has seen the percentage of smokers fall from 38 per cent in 1994 to only 22 per cent today. In Ontario, only 20 per cent of the current population smokes.

We're sure there will always be smokers, but any steps to reduce their numbers and to limit their damage to others and the burden they place on the health care system is a positive step forward.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The *Oakville Beaver* welcomes letters from its readers. Letters will be edited for clarity, length, legal considerations and grammar. In order to be published all letters must contain the name, address and phone number of the author. Letters should be addressed to **The Editor, Oakville Beaver, 467 Speers Rd., Oakville, ON, L6K 3S4**, or via e-mail to editor@oakvillebeaver.com. The *Beaver* reserves the right to refuse to publish a letter.

Make the right call and chop down old oak tree

Re: Region may go out on a \$500,000 limb for giant white oak (*Oakville Beaver*, May 26) Reporter Angela Blackburn wrote May 26, 2006 “It looks like Halton Region has a heart after all — it appears poised to save the giant white oak tree that has stood just north of Halton's Regional Centre for 240 years.”

As a taxpayer who relies on our politicians to do the right thing, gaining a heart at the expense of a brain seems a poor trade off.

Saving an old tree on its last breath at the expense of several younger trees in the path of construction, seems like a bad choice. I wish our politicians realized this exaggerated expense is taxpayers' money not a corporate gift to buy good publicity.

Sure, I love trees as much as the next guy, and as a forestry

graduate I probably know more about trees than the average person, but anyone can see spending half a million dollars on an old tree while chopping young trees seems like the wrong decision.

If my kids were in the hospital and a difficult choice had to be made between saving them or the old man in the next room, I would want to hope that the doctors would do the right thing.

Cut the old tree, erect a memorial as it was suggested (perhaps using the wood from this magnificent tree to build park benches/tables) save the young trees and use the rest of the money to plant more trees through the region. A heart is good, but a brain is better.

MARIO PADOAN

BSC IN FORESTRY, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, 1977

Tree madness grows

One might consider the recent outrage and ongoing dialogue in the local news regarding a tree as madness, and that Regional Chair Joyce Savoline, who stated the tree was never the issue, it was about the community being misled has obviously lost her sensibility.

The community is spending \$500,000 on a tree that is likely going to live for 25 years, assuming it survives all the changes.

The fact is that tree will cost \$20,000 a year for 25 years. Has anyone noted that we could plant 5,000 saplings (at \$100 each) — a small forest?

That would be an investment in the future, not a limited time offer on our past.

In any event, the reasoning, whether it a heritage issue, an environmental issue, an ethical issue, a political issue — the reasoning is bizarre on all fronts.

We are spending \$500,000 on a depreciating asset, when the opportunity to put forward a value decision on a practical basis hasn't even been considered.

How much time and money has been spend discussing this issue?

Truly, as a community we have much more important issues than this tree to deal with, and what is really scary, is the fact everyone involved in this process, somehow thinks this is a serious issue.

Please!

Tree madness in Oakville, it is irresponsible on all fronts.

MIKE BICKERTON

Pud

BY STEVE NEASE snease@haltonsearch.com

