

Chalk Talk

Greetings | Feature | News | Facts & Figures

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Subscribers,

One of my favourite neighbours is a loving husband, a wonderful father and a smoker. I vividly remember the day his daughters — then 8 and 10 years old — arrived home after a school lesson on the dangers of tobacco and tearfully pleaded with him to stop smoking. These same girls, unfortunately, but not surprisingly according to the statistics, grew up to be smokers themselves.



A disturbing fact, uncovered by a [Harvard Medical School study](#) comparing the Canadian and American Healthcare systems to be published soon in the American Journal of Public Health, is that while Americans have higher rates of nearly every serious chronic disease, such as obesity, diabetes, and lung disease, Canadians are more likely than Americans to be smokers.

The anti-smoking movement has been very much in the news lately as more provinces introduce ever-stricter smoking bans. The passing of anti-smoking activist [Heather Crowe](#), who died last week of cancer contracted as a result of exposure to second-hand smoke while working for decades as a waitress, makes this week's new smoking bans in Ontario and Quebec all the more poignant. Beyond the obvious health issue, the other objective of the restrictions is to create a new "model" for how smoking is viewed in our society, especially by children. The theory is that if children don't see people smoking in public areas or the prominent display of tobacco products in stores, they will no longer view the activity as "normal".

While studies agree that the most powerful deterrent is in the home, work done in the classroom by teachers plays a critical role in opening up this dialogue. This week's *Chalk Talk* takes a look at the issue and provides useful links.

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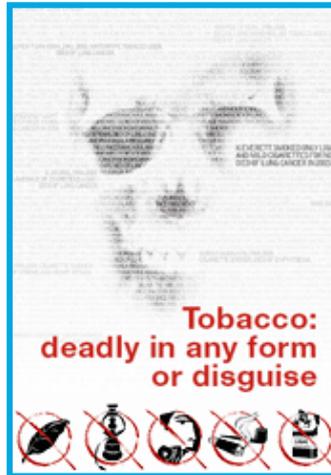
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WORLD 'NO TOBACCO DAY' — May 31, 2006

The purpose of [World 'No Tobacco Day' 2006](#) is to encourage countries and governments



to enact effective strategies that can have a significant impact on tobacco consumption, such as, legislating bans on advertising, creating smoke-free environments in all public and work areas and to raise awareness through the use of large, clear, graphic health messages on tobacco packaging. The theme of this year's Tobacco Free initiative is [Tobacco: deadly in any form or disguise](#) has been endorsed by Health Canada and its [Go Smokefree!](#) campaign.



Statistics Canada offers an excellent lesson plan called [Smoking today = Smoking tomorrow](#).

For additional information on teen smoking and how to become smoke-free, check out the following Health Canada websites:

- ["Children See, Children Do"](#)
- ["Quit4Life" Youth Program](#)
- ["Youth Zone"](#)

Quote of the Week

According to the report "Smoke Signals" based on the results of extensive focus group research exploring the issue of teen smoking, teenagers cited peer pressure, a sense of their own invincibility, and parents who smoked as the major reasons for starting.



Despite acknowledgement of the harmful effects on health, there were still some teens who voiced skepticism, saying that the government would ban it if it was really bad for you or believing that it isn't bad for you because of its widespread use.

"Everybody does it. They have these ads on TV with people dying and holes in their throats. I see people doing it all the time and they are fine. It can't be THAT bad for you."

A Sample of Health Canada's Health Warning Labels for Tobacco Products



[Source: Health Canada online]

Facts & Figures — Teens and Smoking



- According to the WHO, tobacco is the second major cause of death in the world — about 5 million death each year — and half the people that smoke today will eventually be killed by tobacco.
- Interviews conducted by Statcan for Health Canada in 2003 showed that about one-fifth of Canadian teenagers smoke at least on occasion. Slightly more teenage girls than boys smoke (23.4% vs. 20.6%).
- Teenagers in school are much less likely to smoke than those in the work force (17.9% vs. 41.5%). Highest rates among teens was highest in Quebec(32%) and the lowest in B.C.(14%).
- These same interviews revealed that of the 540,534 teenagers who are exposed to second hand smoke in the home every day, almost half become smokers themselves (44%), which is double the rate among teenagers in homes where no one smokes (22 %).
- Most students reported having been taught at school about the negative consequences of smoking, and listed various health problems that can occur after years of smoking.

[Source: Statistics Canada "Youth Smoking Survey" 2004]

News

[Smoke and minors — Some tobacco bans seem, well, ridiculous. That's because they're not well explained](#) — Kenneth Kidd, *The Toronto Star*, May 28, 2006

"There are, of course, myriad health reasons for trying to curtail a product that, when used as directed, can be lethal. If tobacco didn't already exist, and somebody needed to invent smoking, it's doubtful that any government would now move to legalize it."

[Message from the Minister of Health — World No Tobacco Day - May 31, 2006](#)

"As Minister of Health, I hope all Canadians will join me in recognizing World No Tobacco Day on May 31. Created by the World Health Organization, World No Tobacco Day aims to draw global attention to the negative health effects of tobacco use. This year's theme is entitled, *Tobacco: Deadly in any form or disguise*. I am proud to say that Canada has always been a world leader in tobacco control. Over the past 40 years, the percentage of Canadian smokers has been reduced to 20 per cent – its lowest point in 50 years."

[Criticism, applause on first day of smoking ban](#) — CANADIAN PRESS, *The Toronto Star*, May 31, 2006

There's both criticism and applause on the first day of new smoking bans in Ontario and Quebec that pro-

[Criticism, Applause on New Smoking Ban](#) — Peter Goodhand, *The Toronto Star*, May 31, 2006

There's both criticism and applause on the first day of new smoking bans in Ontario and Quebec that prohibit smoking in all enclosed workplaces and public places. Peter Goodhand, head of the Ontario division of the Canadian Cancer Society, says the province's law is one of the toughest in North America and will save lives. The society says 16,000 Ontarians die of tobacco-related illness and 3,000 die from the effects of second-hand smoke each year. The major difference between the two provincial laws is that Ontario does not allow smoking on roofed patios.

[Editorial: New smoking ban will help save lives](#) — *The Toronto Star*, May 31, 2006

Bar and pub owners may fulminate and a few frustrated tobacco addicts may mutter about civil disobedience. But Ontario's welcome ban on smoking in enclosed public places, including specially ventilated smoking rooms, is provincial law. The ban officially comes into force today, along with restrictions on tobacco displays and cigarette advertising in stores. And it is unlikely to ever be reversed. During the last election, Premier Dalton McGuinty pledged to ban workplace smoking within three years of taking office. Today he has delivered on that promise — in full and ahead of his deadline.

[English in a Multi-Lingual World](#) — Faye Mallett, *The Galt Global Review*, May 31, 2006

Two languages reached approximately one billion speakers by the end of the 20th century: Mandarin, the official language of China, and English, now the most widely used and studied language of the world. Yet one expert points out that the percentage of first-language English speakers is declining globally while the first languages used in rapidly growing regions of the world are increasing. British Language Scholar David Graddol predicts that English will probably "drop in dominance" by the middle of this century to rank, after Chinese, about equally with Arabic, Hindi/Urdu and Spanish. These next "four major languages" are likely to be equally ranked by 2050. Gone is the idea, as first suggested in the 19th century, that the entire world will one day speak English as a "world language."

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