

What's in a name?

Next fall young hockey players in Georgetown and Acton will play under one umbrella—the Halton Hills Minor Hockey Association.

Frankly, we think this move is long overdue. After all, the two communities have officially been known as Halton Hills for close to 40 years so it's about time the local minor hockey groups fell under one roof.

However, in rebranding itself, the HHMHA has opted to adopt the team nickname "Hitmen".

Bad choice, folks.

According to Georgetown Minor Hockey Association president Carson Mininch, the Hitmen, Raiders and roughly half a dozen other names (among them Heat, Ice Hogs and Hazard) were put on a ballot and left to a players-only vote.

Surely someone (i.e. a clear-thinking adult) in local minor hockey circles could have foreseen the name "Hitmen" as being problematic.

Yes, it trips off the tongue nicely but a "hitman" is defined by Merriam-Webster's dictionary as "a professional assassin who works for a crime syndicate."

Nice name for a little kids' hockey team, right? And in a month when three teens in the GTA have been killed by guns!

Mininch himself says he's "not so sure I like the name for a minor hockey association but I don't think there's a lot I can do about it."

Hogwash! He can convene an executive meeting, bring the matter forward and urge the HHMHA executive to withdraw the name on the basis it has a negative connotation, is offensive, inflammatory and inappropriate.

Mininch even points out that only 150 of the 2,000 kids in local minor hockey play at a level that even allows bodychecking. So the Hitmen moniker is not entirely indicative of the association as whole.

Times have changed and there are still some offensive team names out there (Washington Redskins, Atlanta Braves, etc.) while others (Acton High Bearcats formerly Redmen and Washington Wizards nee Bullets), saw the error of their ways.

We suggest the Halton Hills Hitmen get "whacked" before they become a reality.

WEB POLL RESULTS

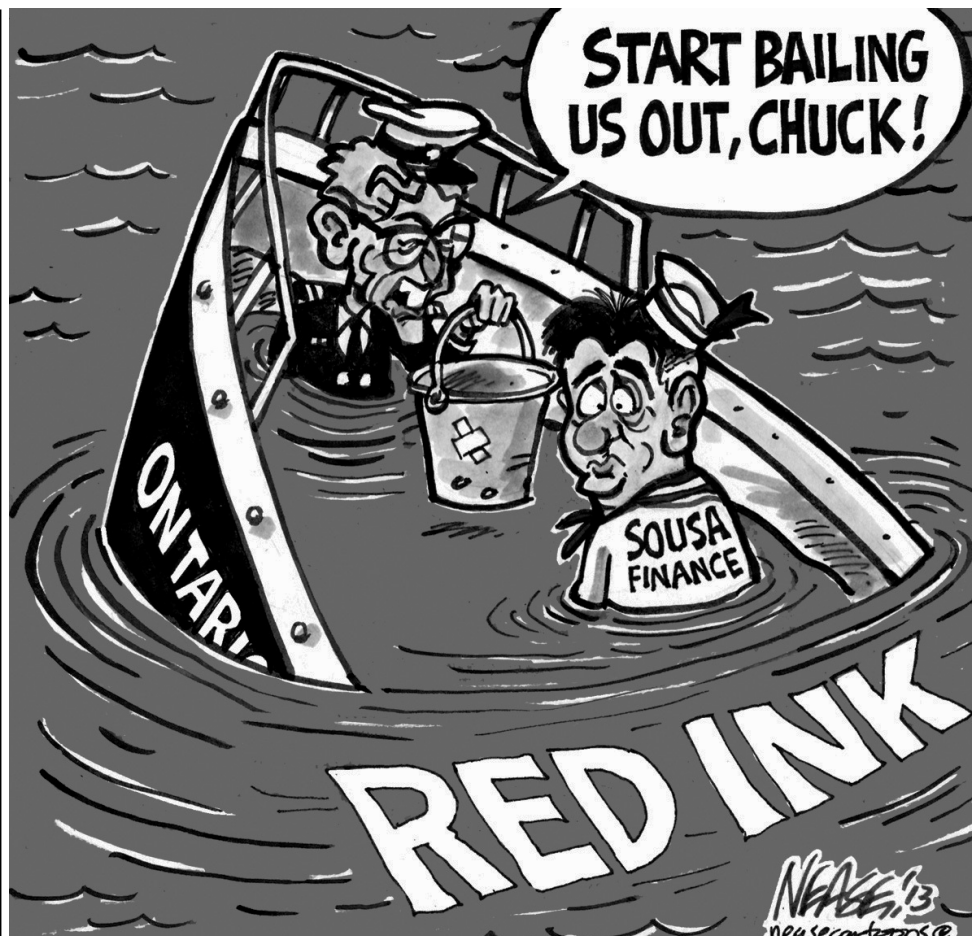
(Go to www.theifp.ca)

Beginning next fall Halton Hills rep hockey teams will be known as the Hitmen instead of the Raiders or Tanners. Do you think this name is appropriate?

- No (92%)
- Yes (8%)

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Letters to the editor

Hitmen moniker is inappropriate

(This letter was originally sent to Georgetown Minor Hockey Association president Carson Mininch and a copy was made available for publication).

Dear Carson,

I read your comments in *The Independent* today with growing disbelief. I cannot believe that you so completely misunderstood people's concerns with the name, and that you appear to be tone-deaf to the effect that this will have on the reputation of our organization.

For you to say that you were bound by the choice made by the players, when the option should never have been put in front of them in the first place, is quite frankly a cop-out, and does not adequately address the concerns of the parents who you answer to. I can only hope that the choice of this name was made without consideration for what it might mean, and that you as president of the organization will take responsibility for your mistake and act to correct it.

"Hitmen" has nothing to do with body contact, and everything to do with someone who kills other people for money. As the parent of a young child who plays for one of the current Georgetown Raiders rep teams I am appalled that the GMHA would choose a name for the new organization with that meaning.

At a time when gun violence and other crimes against our children are receiving more and more attention, this name, glorifying casual murder, has no place in their lives.

I, along with every parent I have spoken to, find this name offensive, sexist and entirely inappropriate for a children's sports organization. I strongly urge that you reconsider this decision, and quickly choose one of the many acceptable names available to you. Your parents, players and sponsors will thank you.

Should you not do so, I urge the OMHA to reject their approval of the amalgamation until another, more appropriate, name is chosen. I cannot imagine that they wish to be associated with this name any more than I do.

Colin Montgomery,
Georgetown

A showplace for work

(This letter was originally sent to Terry Alyman, Director of Recreation and Parks and artist Carolyn Martin. A copy was made available for publication).

Dear Carolyn,

I wanted to thank you and Jamie Smith for hanging my painting at the Cultural Centre. Because of this simple act, several wonderful things have been set in motion.

I was at the Cultural Roundtable Symposium where I met Laura Rees, who is the executive director of Williams Mill. I dragged her over to show her my painting, and she was very impressed. She invited me to do a show with a handful of other artists at the Mill since a slot had come up in March. I pulled some of my artist friends together (Monica Burnside, Antonina Gladkova and Amanda Gonçalves) and we are, in fact, doing the show. This will be a first for me.

This for me is a life-altering event. And it all started with the opportunity to show my work so prominently in such a beautiful setting at our new Cultural Centre. I, for one, feel tremendous gratitude and appreciation for that.

Thank you again!

Shelley Newman, Georgetown