

THE OAKVILLE BEAVER

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OPINION

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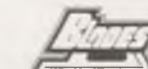
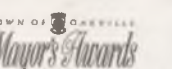
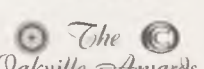
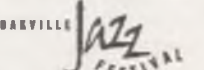
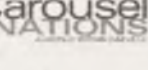
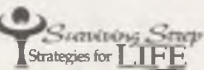
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Editorials

School funding debacle

Since when is the Ontario government in the business of catering to every special interest group that asks for a handout?

Residents of this province pay taxes on the basis that certain services will be provided in a one-tier fashion. But that all changed last week with the decision by the Province to kick in \$300 million to fund private schools.

When parents choose alternative schools they do so knowing they will have to pay for it themselves. That's the way it should be. What is the Province doing in helping subsidize religious, ethnic and elitist private schools while the public school system is in a shambles?

Public education is available to everyone. That's the Province's only mandate and to cater to about 100,000 private school students and their parents speaks volumes about the direction in which the Harris government is headed. It certainly bodes ill for the 2.1 million students in the public system.

Does anyone out there really believe parents who send their children to Appleby College, St. Mildred's Lightbourn School or similar schools are average middle class types? It takes huge after-tax money to send kids to these institutions and what amounts to a \$3,500. gift to them is nonsensical. We don't care that these institutions exist but we do care when our tax dollars go to help pay for this kind of education while our public system decays.

The same holds true for Christian, Jewish or other ethnic schools. If parents want their children to have this kind of education, more power to them. Just don't expect your neighbour to help pay for it. And what does this decision say to the parents of the approximately 32,000 children awaiting special needs assessment for public school placement? It means the waiting will continue needlessly.

Ontario's public education per capita spending now ranks 56th of 63 North American states and provinces which really puts the government's latest decision in perspective.

Lastly, what does this ghettoization of education say about Ontario as a society? Instead of being exposed to a wider and varied view of the world and its people, the state is encouraging its citizens to compartmentalize along religious, ethnic and socio-economic lines.

Our public education system deserves better from the Province.

Letters to the Editor

The Oakville Beaver welcomes your comments. All letters must be typed, signed and include the writer's address and phone number. Send to: Letters to the Editor, The Oakville Beaver 467 Speers Rd., Oakville, Ont. L6K 3S4

Sometimes children say it best

Re: Nuts to Nestle, May 4, 2001

Way to go Stephanie! This article was both sad and inspiring. Sad by the fact that a child so young has already found a need to battle a giant corporation to protect her brother. But inspiring by the fact that she has decided to take on the task.

My 7-year-old son, Jason, also has allergies to peanuts and eggs. My family was devastated by Nestlé's decision. Our entire family wrote letters to Nestlé, including Jason's 10 year-old brother, Jeff, who does not have any allergies. This is what Jeff had to say:

Dear Nestle,
My name is Jeff Mitchell and my brother is highly allergic to peanuts. I think what you're

doing is dumb, stupid and wrong. We eat your chocolate bars almost every single day. They are practically our favourite dessert and definitely they are our favourite chocolate bars. If you make this new chocolate bar in the same factory we will never be able to eat any of your chocolate bars again. My brother is struggling to find any special desserts when our family goes out for lunch and dinner.

If you make this new chocolate bar in the same factory, I do not know what special desserts he can have anymore. If you care about my brother and other kids you won't do what you're planning to do.

Jeff Mitchell, Age 10

My seven-year-old son had this to say to

Nestlé:

Dear Nestle
My name is Jason and I am seven. I am allergic to peanuts and eggs. That means that there are lots of foods that I can't eat. I can't go out and eat ice cream or donuts or cake or most kinds of treats. That was ok because my mom always brought Smarties or Kit Kat or Aero or Coffee Crisp for me. But now you are making it so that I can't eat them. That is mean to me. Don't you care about kids? So go back to normal please.

Jason Mitchell, Age 7

We can all learn a lot from our children.

Karen Mitchell

Case for lunchtime busing

I am writing as a follow-up to my earlier letter about all-day alternate-day JK/SK. I have been trying for weeks to get more information from the Halton District School Board and have finally succeeded.

Firstly, I've read that some schools are being designated as "walk-to" schools and therefore will have the right to choose between alternate day or half day JK and SK. I wondered how that would be implemented. Well, it will be a "majority rules" decision. The enrollees for the coming year will be asked for their preference, and the majority opinion will be implemented at that school for that year. And the same question will be asked each year for each new set of enrollees, revisiting the decision each year.

Secondly, the current cost of lunchtime busing is \$320,000 (for SK) and to add JK, it would only be \$28,000 more next year. Those were the numbers that the Board's JK committee was working with. I know that \$28,000 was NOT the number that was presented at the public meetings. The Board presented worst case scenario costs, in an effort to mislead the public and make a stronger case for their impending decision.

I'm calling for the Halton District School Board to revisit the decision to cancel lunchtime busing. After seeing the strong public reaction against this decision, the Catholic Board chose to not even go down that road.

It will take a trustee who voted to implement all-day alternate-day JK to reopen the issue. I hope someone will be courageous enough to do that.

Peter D. Pellier

Lisa Seiler

Letter of the Week

A trashy tale that really stinks

Friday May 4 was our garbage pick-up day but there was no pick up. My wife complains by telephone and is told to check and see if the bags have been labelled with an orange sticker. Told to leave out for pick-up.

No pick-up all week - original garbage left sitting by-roadside.

May 11, 2001, garbage and Blue Box day. Now there are six bags at roadside, some containing cedar clippings. With massive cedar - *Thuja (Arbor-Vitae)* - hedges surrounding our property we generate considerable cedar clippings once or twice a year. In past years these cedar clippings have been bagged (in regular garbage bags with other household waste) and collected as garbage without any problems. Our understanding was that cedar is not compostable - I am sure your readers would put me right if I am wrong. On page 12 of By-law No 30-96 specifies tree and shrub trimmings, cedar hedge clipping are not specifically noted.

May 11, 2001, 3 p.m., still no pick up when, obviously, garbage from our side of the road had been collected. No orange sticker either. Back on the telephone, they ask, again, if tagged with orange label - the answer is NO! Six garbage bags sitting by the roadside, the weather is hot. It doesn't take long before the bacteria to start to work and create real problems.

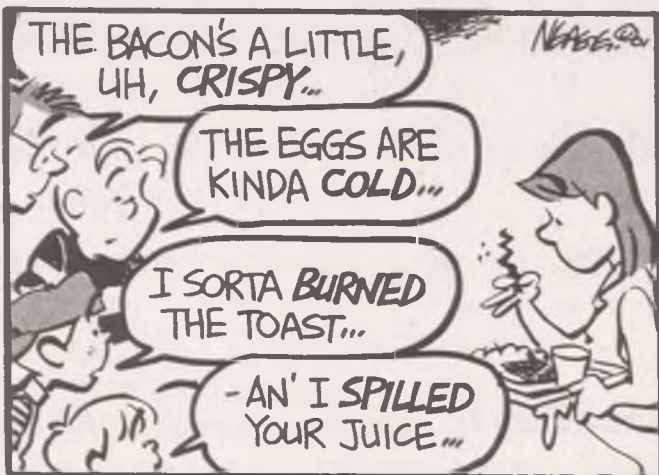
It now becomes a 'WATCH' for the garbage truck along the other side of the road to ask WHY no pick-up? The truck arrives, simultaneously a supervisor arrives. The truck driver tells us the bags are *yard waste* and illustrates by ripping open a bag of cedar clippings, although he did very kindly pick up four of the six bags. The supervisor, an arrogant and clearly insouciant person, informs us it is *yard waste*. When we ask about orange stickers so that at least we know, and understand, the error of our ways, he calmly reached across his truck and produces a roll of orange stickers. Never having seen one, we reached (grabbed) for this sticker to see just what it said. It was kept out of our reach and, later, one orange sticker appears on one bag od the two cedar hedge trimmings. A tick against "yard waste not in clear bags" is spelled out.

As we all know garbage disposal is a problem. The Region of Halton has contracted out all or part of garbage services. Canadian Waste Services, Halton Recycling Ltd., and Halton Region Waste Management Services are all part of our Region's attempt to address garbage disposal. One would imagine that stringent rules are laid down when contracting out any of these essential services. One wonders how these rules are enforced, when we are left high and dry on our garbage collection by a private contractor who doesn't have the courtesy (or an apparent awareness of the dangers of leaving garbage by the roadside), to leave an orange sticker (provided and paid for by the taxpayers of Halton) to inform us that we are breaking the rules.

As we survey the littered roadsides in Oakville at this time, we either have a major problem or somebody at Halton Regions isn't doing their job! Either way, somebody at Halton Region should give our contracted garbage people a right royal rocker for what we have been through.

Ivor Davies

Pud



by Steve Nease