

# Says Education Board "Robin Hood in Reverse"

18 Metcalfe Court,  
Georgetown, Ontario.  
  
The Halton County Board of Education,  
2050 Guelph Line,  
Burlington, Ontario.  
  
Attn: The Director  
  
Members of the Board:  
Subject: A couple of things

Allowing that groups and individuals within groups manifest idiosyncratic approaches to the problems with which they are from time to time confronted, I had not hitherto seen fit to comment on the peculiar approach to budgetary and aesthetic conundrums which apparently plague the local Board of Education.

It seems you have financial problems. We had of course been aware that the various symptoms of Dickensian frugality reflected the state of the coffers; we did not however, realize that remedial measures extended to the removal or continued absence of doors on the toilets in the High School, for example. An ugly rumour persists that when removed they were placed end to end to form one long board around which committees gather to ruminate over matters of great moment - hence the expression - "minutes of the board".

I can only speak for myself but even after an ill-spent youth, five years in the navy and an exposure to certain indignities upon which I shall not belabour, I still have mild aversions to being the focal point of attention when publicly seated upon the thunderbox. The privy, after all, is one of the few remaining places where one can find a few moments refuge and solace; is even that temporary respite to be denied your charges? Personally I object violently to sitting with my drawers around my ankles while talking to myself and pulling faces - to the amusement (or disgust) of whomsoever may have the privilege (or misfortune) to pass my way. The possibility of my morning ritual coinciding with the playing of our National Anthem conjures consequences too ghastly to contemplate!

Is it possible that there is something I am missing? That "no doors on the john" is some new enlightened educational concept and nothing at all to do with economics?

**CLEARING HOUSE**  
We speculated further that since superficially it has become more difficult to identify girls from boys, that perhaps this is a sort of clearing house facilitating the only positive means of identification; a few bars of O Canada and the secret is out. We learn however that few of your students recognize the tune anyway much less know the words and little is done to incur their interest in such trivia. Ruined that theory. Further, my wife assures me that the ones with ragged hatches are mostly boys and the ones flaunting a near naked derriere are the

female genus - generally speaking that is. Praise be to God that the subjects themselves are able to separate apples from oranges - apparently with only occasional error! Small wonder that some faculty members appear perpetually confused - except where some wonders come larger than others and the answer to the equation self corroborative!

Which brings me to my most recent dilemma, and a serious question. By what right and on whose authority - without discussion or any consultation (to my knowledge) - was the arbitrary decision made to terminate school bus service for high school students domiciled in this immediate area? Distances in some instances approximate 2-3 miles, not an unhealthy walk at present but in inclement weather in a town where snow removal is occasionally something less than expeditious and sidewalks are usually impassable, many can look forward to a long walk on snow covered and icy pavement presenting sporting targets for that fraction of society who appear not to be in control of their mental processes, much less the vehicles they drive - or rather, aim.

**ALTERNATIVE**  
I note that an alternative is benevolently offered; private transportation at twenty cents each way per student per diem. To take a case in point, a household wherein no less than five students are high school attendees, amounts to 5x40 cents per diem, or \$10. per week. Assuming say 30 weeks of school, you have in effect just levied a tax of \$300. per annum on one household. Regardless of semantics and whichever way you cut it, that is precisely what your manoeuvre amounts to, an unconstitutional piece of demagoguery which might be difficult to justify.

I believe you are out of order. It is my understanding that your Board received representations in the form of one or more petitions to which the courtesy of even a cursory acknowledgement has never been extended. We have speculated that this may be (a) an oversight or, (b) that you are preoccupied with the resolution of the mystery of the missing lavatory doors to the exclusion of all else. Whichever, your commentary is earnestly solicited.

Perhaps if the problem of providing basics such as facilities for dignified ablutions and safe transportation for students is the genuine consequence of an irreversible financial malady, it is beyond the scope of the board and warrants referral elsewhere. Lavatory doors and logistics are after all, a serious business. Arbitrary changes in the methodology of taxation and disposition of municipal funds is a moral and legalistic equation of monumental proportions from which I shrink in pallor. However, all I do know for sure is that I am in work; many are not or are currently in poor circumstances - and despite the

foregoing satire - I take damned serious exception to your Robin Hood in Reverse routine. If there is such a vital shortage of funds then why not drop the picayune penny collecting approach and do something meaningful?

**BAD IMAGE**  
Georgetown as an entity does not currently enjoy an enviable image nor for that matter does a large segment of its youthful population. One of the principal reasons is the almost total absence of adequate recreation facilities - most are forced to go elsewhere to find such facilities. What remains of the existing

swimming pool, for example, isn't worth the powder to blow it to hell, and aside from a couple of teeter-totters, there isn't much left to discuss, is there?

From where the kids sit their "superiors" appear as dynamic as a soggy noodle. Present day Georgetown was not planned, it was a happening. The kids are naive enough to suppose that those entrusted with directing their education and their future may become less parochial and take a broader view of their needs. Some, in their innocence, even suppose that the various un-coordinated regulatory parties

may one day come together and look at their needs in total, instead of doing half a job and abdicating responsibility to hard working "service clubs" who on a shoestring undertake voluntary to fill the vacuum created by disorganized, lethargic, or inept professionals - whichever the case may be, and I am not qualified or so disposed to judge.

From where the youngsters sit, one thing seems apparent to them, that "they" are as happy as clams - and approximately as cerebral and pedestrian as that insular little bi-valve, notable for its ability to shut-up in the

presence of anything alien or controversial, presumably on the premise that if ignored "it" might go away.

**SYMPTOMATIC**  
Doubtless you are aware that there exists, particularly in Georgetown, a sociological problem much more serious than the saga of the toilet doors and the issues of transportation. Those problems will not go away and are symptomatic of something wrong.

What likelihood is there of seeing a coordinated body comprising say, representatives from a School Board, The Munic-

ipality, the service clubs, the cornerstones of a society, the policeman and the doctor? Oh, yes, and I wouldn't leave out representation from the kids themselves.

Right now you appear to have the doubtful privilege of being one part of an uncoordinated octopus. Why not identify some of the problems and put the youngsters on the side of authority, mindful however that respect is not something to be demanded, only commanded - by example. Surely to God somebody in the cloisters read Machiavelli.

Thank you in anticipation of some sort of a reply. All but one are acceptable, i.e. "that's not my department". That is the one obscenity that unfailingly causes my stomach to reject its contents.

Yours very truly,  
P. H. Blakesley.

cc: Georgetown District High School, Georgetown  
cc: The Lion's Club,  
Mrs. Joan Smith, Councillor  
Georgetown Chamber of Commerce  
Georgetown Herald

## Students Told Year Ahead Of Bus Cutoffs

(Continued from Page 4)  
Education to determine policy on the transporting of school pupils; such responsibility is clearly laid out in the Acts and Regulations of the Department of Education.  
(5) The Halton County Board of Education has taken deliberate steps to co-operate with municipal recreation committees to ensure full and responsible use of school facilities in response to expressed community needs. Since January, 1971, for example, facilities of Georgetown District High School have been used 739 times free of charge by the Georgetown District Y.M.C.A., Georgetown Recreation Commission, Georgetown Concerned Citizens, Halton Health Unit, Georgetown Police Department, Georgetown Ministerial and Priests' Association, Association for Children with Learning Disabilities, Georgetown Venturers, Sheridan College, Georgetown District Naturalists.

Christian Alliance Youth Program, Men's Basketball League, Royal Canadian Air Cadets, Scouts and Cubs and so on.

Apart from these five major errors of fact, your letter is reasonably accurate. Thank you very much for your penetrating and thoughtful contribution.

Yours sincerely,  
E.S. Lavender,  
Assistant to the Director of Education.

c.c. Georgetown District High School  
The Lion's Club  
Mrs. Joan Smith, Councillor  
Georgetown Chamber of Commerce  
Georgetown Herald

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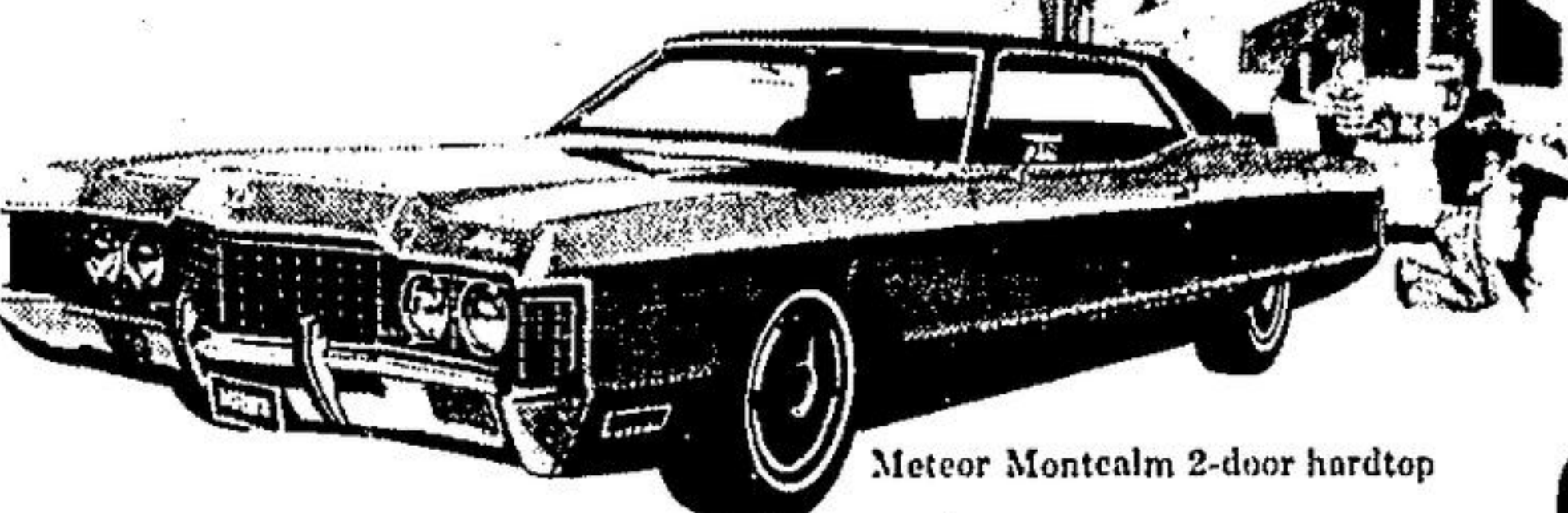
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