

North Halton deserves better

If Halton Region is to succeed and overcome its parochial nature, better communication must be maintained between services, government, volunteer agencies and ratepayers in North Halton.

There are 35,000 people in North Halton. They were raised in rural and small town settings that are now feeling the effect of rapid urbanization. They deserve more than a passing nod that they exist.

Last week Oakville United Way officials held the first two meetings designed to explain its decision to canvass North Halton industry for funds in its 1976 campaign.

While, most people support the role of the United Way, it has not functioned in North Halton previously and there is concern over the ability of the community to support it and the eleven other agencies supported locally without United Way funds.

But the biggest concern by local organizations, including those with Oakville branches and provincial organizations funded in part by the Oakville United Way, is that, as chairman Terry O'Connor said, "Maybe we went about it wrongly by not consulting you first."

In recent weeks there have been several instances when regional government and the board of education have indicated an almost lethargic attitude toward North Halton. All decisions of benefit appear to be taken grudgingly.

A good example is the recent closing of the Acton water billing office. More than 1,000 people signed a petition opposing the closing, but the matter was left to town council to resolve.

Then there's the seemingly intent of some urban members of regional council to dump a garbage heap midst

prime agricultural land. And the board of education last week, in a minor matter, postponed action on a rather innocuous proposal to have lists of textbooks used in schools available to residents at the east, west and north education centres.

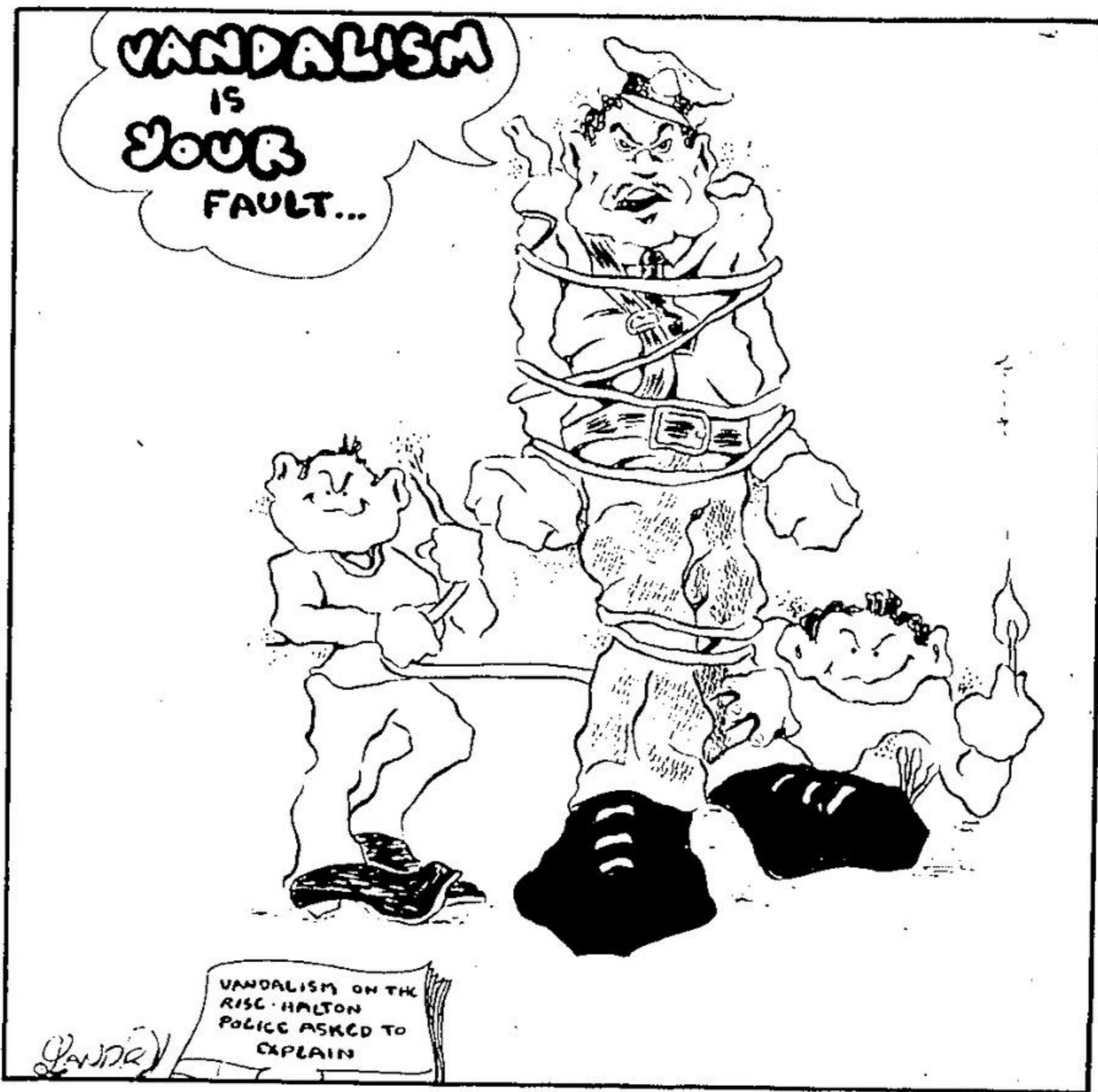
While it can be argued that there may be little if any public concern over textbook lists, the principle remains the same - a requirement for taxpayers to journey to Burlington to have access to the material.

What the southerly top-loaded regional council and board of education fails to realize is that it is 60 miles or more round trip from Georgetown to take advantage of the rights of the taxpayer. That may seem small to some members, but without public transportation available in Halton, it remains a long way and limits those that can make the journey.

As well, regional government makes available agendas for public perusal prior to council and committee meetings. But only if you go to Burlington to view them. That's a ludicrous position to maintain since each regional councillor has delivered to his door a package containing all agendas and associated material each Friday.

It certainly wouldn't add excessive cost or time to deliver some copies to local municipal offices for North Halton ratepayer perusal and even if no one takes advantage of the service, the opportunity of communication would exist.

The sooner those living below the demarcation line - Highway 401 - realize there's a North Halton, the sooner this region will become the community everyone says he's working toward.



A tongue-in-cheek look at coffin sleeping and going to your own funeral?

By GERRY LANDBOROUGH

It's time again for potpourri, a regular feature of this column. Here we take a sometimes serious but mostly not so serious tongue in cheek look at some of the happenings on this wonderful wacky world around us.

First let us travel to the outskirts of Chicago where a strange and eerie sight takes place in the dark of night in a local cemetery. A man wrapped up in a black cape and carrying a coffin enters in and after placing a silver helmet on his head lies down in the coffin closes his little eyes and goes nighty night.

According to Sgt. John Marker the chap is known only as the "Son of Satan" and the locals are quite used to him - but people driving by get nervous and call the police. Gee I wonder why - and how do you deal with your insomnia? It's the silver helmet that gets me - something tells me there must be an easier way.

Here's a tip from Gary Dahl. He's the chap who made millions with his invention of the "pet rock." His latest brain-child from his map-cap laboratory is - I hope you ready for this - "sand breeding."

Your kit comes complete with a test tube of male sand and a test tube of female sand. Mix them together and away you go. The kit contains a 42 page booklet suggests you can "make your own beach - raise kitty litter - make a private desert or you might want to continue breeding until you have your very own wasteland."

According to Dahl "this kit is for people who are bored with or incompetent at what they have been doing - those who are unable to master upholstery or accounting."

Guess what folks? People are buying them like crazy - but I maintain that if you were at all gutsy you could go out into the wilds - trap your sand - and breed them yourself thus eliminating the middleman.

Away to Burlington, Colorado, now where Jim Gerhart who will soon reach the grand old age of 100 had another funeral the other

day. Jim who could be described as rather an unusual chap had his first funeral way back in 1951.

"I didn't have anybody left in my family and I thought I would have my funeral so I would know how it went. It's better to have it before you die - you don't know anything about it after you are dead."

Well, I can sure go along with that Jim. The event takes place with Jim sitting in a Model T Ford beer truck next to his coffin. He drives through the main street of the town with the local high school band preceding the truck.

This musical extravaganza has taken place a few times over the years but this year the town outdid themselves in honor of Jim's up and coming 100th birthday.

On Nov. 20, he'll reach his 100th year and he believes this was probably the last dress rehearsal before the real thing. That's a biggie in Burlington.

Off to Teeth, England, now where the regular patrons of the Punch Bowl Inn sure don't shoot the bull. No siree - the bull in question came crashing through the roof landing in a space between the refrigerator and the back wall - they didn't shoot it. They just sent for the local farmer who owned the bull and he removed it with the bull only suffering from the odd scrape and bruise from its unscheduled trip.

How so you ask? Well, the Inn backs on to a local hillside where the bull had climbed and was nibbling away at some tender leaves. Unfortunately the roof of the Punch Bowl Inn isn't built proof.

Flash! Flash!... and now from Sheffield England, comes potpourri's nominee for the wedding-of-the-year award.

Roy Butler stepped over to help his bride to prepare for their up and coming nuptials. He did, however, stop off at a stag first.

On his way to his future bride's house he dropped the wedding cake in the front garden. This was much to the upset of his future mother-in-law.

A shouting match followed with one thing leading to another and before you knew what was happening Roy up and socked his mother-in-law-to-be in the jaw.

From here and there

Tax reform: Is it fair?

Local farmers, criticising proposed tax reforms regarding farm land, would appear to be looking a gift horse in the mouth. The protest has been mounting since it was learned that the province plans to tax farms on their market value, pick up the tab and to demand 10 years' back taxes if the land is taken out of production.

The province hopes to thereby control farm land use because it pays the shot. The revenue to pay the farmer's taxes will come from income and sales taxes. And with our graduated system of income taxes (ie. the more you earn the more you pay) farmer's taxes will.

Just suppose urbanites were able to persuade the province to wage war against the disappearance of the single-family detached dwelling. Each one of us owning a typically overpriced bungalow on city turf would have our land taxes paid for by the province. As for our house, we would only pay 50 per cent of the taxbill. Anyone who sold his land to a developer for high-rise or commercial use would have to repay 10 years' back taxes. We certainly would not object to such a deal.

Farmers say they prefer the present system of taxation by productivity. They

argue that repayment of 10 years taxes places and "cumbrance" on their farms. But the system they have now stipulates repayment if the farm is pulled out of agriculture.

The difference between the present and proposed schemes is the amount of repayment which will become payable if and when the farm is sold for development.

It was disclosed recently that on 50 acres in Brimpton, with a market value of \$250,000 and present assessed value of \$30,500, the farmer would have to repay \$1,500.

Proposals would demand a repayment of \$25,000. It would seem unfair to ask the rest of the taxpayers in Ontario to allow farm land owners to escape paying taxes on an asset worth \$250,000, or to pay land tax amounting to only \$150 per year on it.

Urbanites have not been complaining about the proposals on farm land taxes. That may be because they agree with provincial attempts to control the development of farmland.

We agree with most people and good farm land must be protected because there is only so much of it left. (BRAMPTON TIMES)

On The Home Front

Some problems can't be solved

SUSAN DeFACENDIS

Have you ever heard a silence quite so profound? - A silence so intense that you can actually hear the whiskers twitch on a neighbour's cat?

Well, here I sit in the early stages of another school year, listening to the sounds of nothing and still puzzled as to how I accomplished so much housework in such a short time.

The telephone hasn't once shrilled out an urgent call for Louisa; Flintstones aren't 'Yabba Dabba Do-ing' up from the bowels of the basement; 'Kiss' isn't deafening me with it's cacophony from the stereo and there is a definite lack of little six year old noses pressed against my screen door.

The bathrooms and refrigerator are having a well-earned rest and my battle-weary constitution is in shock. Let's face it, without sandwich fixings permanently in evidence on the kitchen table and cheeases or potato chips scattered in front of the television, it just does not look like home.

Yes, September finally arrived in all its glory and so begins another school season of professional days, hopefully interrupted by illuminating moments of education and the pursuit of knowledge.

Three eager, shining faces burst forth from my house, all scattering to three different schools, meaning, even with my limited grasp of mathematics, three 'meet the teacher' nights, three talent nights and a whole new group of teachers names to be memorized.

Of course, the rivers of life can never run completely smoothly and young Teresa poised on the threshold of grade one, decided once again to drop out of the school system. I have the distinct impression that this is going to be an annual challenge - a 'choose your weapons' situation at dawn, between mother and daughter on the first day of each new school year.

To me, the situation is perfectly clear - daughter goes to school, or mother goes to jail. However, when we reached a point somewhere between fastening dress buttons and doing up pony-tails, a surprisingly concise list of insurmountable problems emerged.

To begin with, Teresa was quite sure she would never find the right classroom. She would finish up in a grade six homeroom, never be able to do the work and, (horrors), wind up in the principal's office. Secondly, assuming she was lucky enough to find the right class she was quite convinced that she would never, ever, learn her new teacher's name.

Finally, she was worried about the possibility of her class having to perform a play, because she knew beyond all doubt that she would forget her lines in front of an audience. - And you thought you had problems?

Well, we managed to resolve some of those first day misgivings and, a little less apprehensively, away she went. She returned home at lunchtime with enough paperwork to cover the refrigerator door and bubbling with excitement.

"Guess what?" she exclaimed. "I got the very teacher I wanted and I didn't even cross my fingers for luck - but - I can't remember her name!"

Oh well, I suppose some problems are unsolvable.

On Parliament Hill

Just a little drawer cleaning

By STEWART MacLEOD
Ottawa Bureau
Of The Herald

Please bear with me as I clean out the top right-hand desk drawer, that catch-all corner where old letters and little bits of paper continue to congregate. Most of it isn't worth saving.

Why for instance, should I keep a copy of a letter written last June 10 by Urban Affairs Minister Barney Danson and addressed to Ontario Housing Minister John Rhodes? The only reason I threw it in the drawer was because it began, "I wrote to you last October to suggest the establishment of a joint committee..." and it ended with "I would very much appreciate hearing from you on this proposal at an early date..."

Since Mr. Danson referred to the "urgency of the subject" I remember thinking at the time that eight months seemed like a long time to await a reply from another cabinet minister.

Surely Mr. Rhodes has answered by now. Anyway, I am throwing that June letter in the wastebasket.

Now here's one I had forgotten about. It's a government announcement of a \$19,900 contract to Carleton University in Ottawa for a study on "interpersonal communication in an emergency environment."

That should make great reading. The price isn't bad either. By comparison, the government is spending \$32,000 for a study on the "effect of pulping aged chips on the toxicity of draft mill effluents" and \$35,185 is being spent on the "inspection and up-dating of the national gravity net in Northern Ontario and southern Quebec."

MONEY MATTERS
Oddly enough, most of the papers in that top right-hand drawer deal with money in one form or another. Perhaps it's because we are in the midst of the government's restraint program and there happens to be more correspondence on that subject.

And speaking about restraints, here is an interesting letter. It is from the Department of Supply and Services and it is addressed to a

deputy minister, it's all about travel. For years, the government has operated its own "Central Travel Service" to make reservations and other travel arrangements for public servants. And with more than 400,000 federal public servants, it's probably a sensible arrangement.

But the letter announces a new exclusive service. It's a section within the Central Travel Service to "provide a more personalized service to assist deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers and equivalents in making their travel plans."

"There now will be two unlisted VIP lines, 3-6080 and 3-6081 linked directly to CP Air operations and 3-3695 linked directly to Air Canada operations."

The letter says "this service, by its nature, is restricted in order to preserve the level of service required."

FIRST-CLASS CALLS
I know why I kept this letter I have been trying to figure out what type of travel service is required by an assistant deputy minister that's not required by any other public servant.

So I phoned the deputy who received the letter. "I guess it's because they cut out first-class plane tickets for us," he said, "They are substituting first-class phone calls."

He didn't sound impressed.

Here is another interesting little one on the Public Service Commission. It's aimed at "those senior executives who have prime responsibilities in the information area as well as those senior executives who are faced today with greater direct media contact."