

Letters to the Editor

Miss Junior Halton Hills: the controversy continues

Contest organizer responds to criticism

An open letter to the readers of this newspaper: I would like to point out a few points of interest to you.

It appears that the letters of condemnation about my idea for the Georgetown Fall Fair — "Little Miss Halton Hills" — and about myself are from a lot of different individuals expressing their views as concerned parents. Let me point out this is not true. I have copies of all the letters printed in the paper, that were sent to my house

by these people. My address was never printed in the two papers published in Georgetown, nor can my address be found through Bell Telephone, since my number is unlisted. In fact, it's in another name.

I received one call from a lady who wanted my address so she could send me a negative letter. Instead, she passed my address out to about 12 of her friends. I didn't even get a letter from her. The contents of these letters are all the same with a few words changed here and there.

I would also like to say that information was passed onto me regarding one of the ladies who condemns my idea of "Little Miss Halton Hills" and also the baby contest. It seems she entered her child's picture in a contest sponsored by a local organization. Was it alright for her child to enter, but not for any other parent in our area to enter their child in similar contests?

To the person who said that winning will have a psychological effect on a child, let me say that my oldest daughter won a contest, but she doesn't go around town saying she won over someone else. I brought her up better than that.

'Our daughter not affected by winning Moncton title'

To the editor of The Herald: Someone advised me that an organization in your area was planning to hold a contest similar to the "Little Miss Railroad Days" held in Moncton for the past few

years. In this contest, little girls aged five to eight years compete for the right to be "queen" of the festival known as "Railroad Days" and attend various functions during the festival.

Our daughter, Cindy Smith, was five years old when she won the title in 1978 when she entered the contest, sponsored by her dance and majorette teacher's school. Each contestant had

to have a sponsor. It was not a difficult competition, since all she had to do was meet and talk with the judges, model a bathing suit (Cindy had a one-piece suit) and model a party dress. Cindy wore a beautiful blue party

dress with plenty of ruffles which was designed and made by Mrs. Balsler, her dance and majorette teacher.

'Moncton contest not difficult or degrading to young girls'

To the editor of The Herald: I have heard that it is planned to hold a pageant in your area to choose a little girl to represent a certain festival as "Little Miss". Apparently there has been some opposition to this suggesting that the little ones would be exploited in such a manner as to make them "sex symbols".

We have had such a pageant held in Moncton for the past few years for little girls aged five to eight years to choose a "Little Miss Railroad Days". The contest was run in a very

straight-forward manner and nothing was done or suggested to place the little girls in a degrading or embarrassing position.

In 1978, one of my dance and majorette pupils, sponsored by my school entered the "Little Miss Railroad Days" pageant. We were all very proud of her when she won the title and prizes including a bicycle, flowers and of course considerable publicity. Her name is Cindy Smith and she was five years old at the time.

Due to the fact that the children were called upon to only (1) chat with the judges (2) model a bathing suit and (3) model a party dress, it was not considered too difficult and in no way degrading for the children. Cindy wore a one-piece bathing suit and appeared in a very pretty party dress looking very beautiful. The modelling was done in a certain pattern. When Cindy competed for the majorette titles she also had to model a party dress in a "T" pattern as well as her solo and a fancy "T" strut. So she was prepared

'Critics of beauty pageant must be narrow-minded'

To the editor of The Herald: I have been visiting your town of 35,000 for "X" number of years and read your paper. I am certainly disappointed and disgusted at certain townspeople who in my opinion must be "Women's Libbers". I can't imagine grown, mature people in this day and age, even thinking of a three to five-year old being "exploited".

My pageants, such as Miss Canada, Miss Teenage America, Young Miss, Miss

Toronto, just to name a few, have been going for years. I'm sure Gloria Steinem would have had them stopped by now, if there were enough complaints of exploitation, emotional instability or physical problems.

As a professional person and mother of a daughter, I believe the narrow-minded persons should seek some sort of psychological or psychiatric counselling to check out their hangups regarding their views on three to five year olds entering a harmless contest that would bring a bit of happiness to the little ones for making mom and dad proud — win or lose.

Sincerely hope the contest is a smashing success, for I will be there to enjoy it, as I hope most of the townspeople will.

Yours sincerely
Mrs. Carol Henderson
Registered Nurse
Lakeshore Blvd. W.
Toronto, Ont.



DAYCARE MUNCHKIN

Terri Barber seems to be getting a good grip on her hamburger at the Maple Avenue Regional Day Care Centre barbecue last Wednesday evening. Parents and children gathered for a potluck supper of hot dogs, hamburgers and other goodies supplied by the parents. (Herald photo by Lori Taylor)

'Contest will encourage a narcissistic complex'

To the editor of The Herald: We read with astonishment in both The Herald and Independent, of the proposed plan of the Georgetown Fall Fair Committee to hold a preschool beauty contest.

Any activity involving children should be assessed to determine the values that it instills in the boys or girls, place an over-emphasis upon distorted values.

We hope that the Fair Committee does incorporate children's programmes in its plans, but let them be such programmes that inspire creativity and imaginative talents, rather than activities which encourage at an early age, a narcissistic complex.

Educationally constructive activities, endorsing positive social and moral values would be applauded by the citizens of this town. It would be a shame to see Georgetown's children involved in a contest which would stress the hollow standards that appear to be exemplified in a growing number of activities within our present society.

Yours sincerely,
Lyndsey and Doug Thom
15 Lucinda Place
Georgetown

More letters
Pages A6, A7 and B7

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