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 reverseing their

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

letters are all the same with a few words changed here

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.

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, put not for any other parent in our

million dollar advertisement agencies that use children to market their products? I say don't stop at writing to me or the local papers; contact them, let them know, find out their response. This to me is the exploitation you're talking about.

To the people who have said I am parading children like livestock. Turn your TV on anytime and you can see children "parading around". For example C.H.C.H. (TV 11) has Hamilton's Tiny Talent Time or CKCO (TV 13) has Kitchener's Big Top Talent, the follow-up to "Big Al's Talent Time". These shows are geared for 500,000 to 1,000,000 people. million dollar advertisement

To those people who wrote saying I'm "exploiting". I ask whether you buy toys from companies whose whole financial well-being revolvés around children. Or how about the many multi-

To the people who said the children will be used as sex symbols, think of the above. too. It's alright to turn on TV and watch without thoughts of sexual stereotyping, exploitation, showing our children for the things they are themselves, but it's wrong in the minds of some people in this town to abve an innocent contest. I say to these few: Keep your thoughts to yourself; don't take an innocent event, twisting it around to your way of thinking, and try to present it to a community of 35,000 people as if you're

representing them. You're entitled to your thoughts and opinions.

I respect you for some thoughts you have written about in letters to the editors over the years, so I hasten to point out if you would expend half the energy for the community that you use in writing your thoughts on paper, the town would be a much better place to live in. There are so many things to be done here: A nursing home, a new wing for the hospital, a bus for the senior citizens, just to name a few.

To the people who say I'm a sexist, I would like to point out that this idea started with Mrs. Liz Malone (who was born not far from here) and her husband, Bob Malone, who at the time of the Moncton contest, was Canadian National President of the Jaycees Other towns and cities across Canada have the same type of contests, in-cluding Miss Toronto and "Little Miss Burlington", sponsored by the Jaycees.

Finally, to the few Service Clubs and merchants in town, who say the "Little Miss Halton Hills Pageant' is of no use or benefit for the community, let me point out that "Little Miss Railroad Days" in Moncton, N.B., attends many civic functions and cutting of ribbons to open new buildings, etc. on behalf of her city as a roving good will ambassador to neighboring towns, cities. and other provinces.

In closing, I don't have to go any farther to defend myself because of the many people who have called. written or stopped me to voice support for "Little Miss Halton Hills". I never thought that negative thoughts such as those prought up in letters would even enter anyone's mind from a innocent Pageant that has been going on for years and is still being held and will as long as our earth is populated.

Since one of the letterwriters used a poem for his thoughts, I'll close with a

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto

Yours sincerely James Barrett

As for Exploitation of children for a purpose, I wonder "whose"? I receive nothing out of it but the satisfaction of doing something for my community. There is no fee for the child to enter. Certainly not the service clubs sponsoring a child; instead, it may cost them money for their own contests leading up to the main one, for hot dogs, drinks, etc and not the Fall Fair Board. There is time, space and the juggling of events to make room for our contest.

dividuals '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, for any other parent in our as you see in life all around didn't even get a letter from area to enter their child in her. The contents of these that were sent to my house 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

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

years. In this contest, little girls aged five to eight years compele 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

children were called upon to

only (1) chat with the judges

(2) model a bathing sult 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 sult and appear-

'Moncton contest not difficult

or degrading to young girls'

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

to model in the "Little Miss

Obviously, there is nothing

there to suggest either exploit-

ation or making them "sex

symbols". If they had to pay a

high entry fee and appear in

very scanty outfits-then that

wore and in their general

In closing may I say that I do

hope the organizers of the

event in your area will go

Railroad Days" contest.

dress with plenty of rullles which was designed and made by Mrs. Balser, her dance and majorette

She was not overly ner-vous, as Mrs. Balser teaches her students that winning is not the most important thing, but that meeting girls from other places and enjoying the event is more important. As a result, her pupils are more relaxed and do extremely well in com-

We her father, her sister Lisa and me, were very proud of her when she won the title. We were equally proud of her when she won Little Miss Majorette of New Brunswick and also of the Maritimes for children up to six years advanced and several other trophies. She had to leave the competition for a time to meet her obligations as "Little Miss Railroad Days". (Inciden-tally her sister Lisa, 16, has won "Miss Majorette" titles

With regard to the "Little Miss Railroad Days" pageant, we did not feel that this would in any way degrade Cindy or put her in an unfavorable light, it did not affect her in any way other than that she was happy she won, as she received some very nice prizes and she liked participating in the various functions such as the official opening, closing, etc. If she was allowed to enter again (they are not if they win) and if she wished to do so, we would have no objections as there was nothing degrading at all in the whole

Perhaps some contests have been held for the little ones which were not run properly and this could be bad for them. However, that is not the case in Moncton. I thought I would write and let you know how we, as parents felt about all this. We were in complete accord with this event and how it was conduced. If your organization decides to hold their event, i wish them luck and success. also hope this letter will help to dispel any fears other parents may have about their little girl entering such an event.

Yours truly Mrs. Wendel (Marie) Smith, 302 Robinson St.



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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 potlack supper of hot dogs, hamburgers and other goodies supplied by the parents. (Herald photo by Lori Taylor)

'Contest will encourage a narcissistic complex'

More letters

Pages A6, A7 and B7

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 instils 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

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.

programmes that inspire

creativity and imaginative

talents, rather than ac-tivities which encourage at

an early age, a narcissistic

Yours sincerely, Lyndsey and Doug Thom 15 Lucinda Place Georgetown

my school entered the "Little to this suggesting that the little would change the nature of the ed in a very pretty party dress Miss Railroad Days" pageant. ones would be exploited in such looking very beautiful. The event and I would not We were all very proud of her a manner as to make them recommend anyone entering modelling was done in a when she won the title and "sex symbols" an event of that kind. Howcertain pattern. When Cindy prizes including a bicycle, We have had such a pageant ever, the "Little Miss Railroad competed for the majorette flowers and of course considerheld in Moncton for the past titles she also had to model a Days" children were very able publicity. Her name is few years for little girls aged ladylike in the things they party dress in a "T" pattern as Cindy Smith and she was five five to eight years to choose a well as her solo and a fancy "Little Miss Railroad Days". years old at the time. Due to the fact that the "T" strut. So she was prepared 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

In 1978, one of my dance and

majorette pupils, sponsored by

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".

Your pageants, such as Miss Canada, Miss Teenage

Toronto, just to name a few, have being 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

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 proud - won or lose.

speople will.

Lakeshore Blvd. W.

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

is a smashing success, for I will be there to enjoy it, as I hope most of the town-

Yours sincerely Mrs. Carol Henderson Registered Nurse

Sincerely hope the contest

ahead with their plans. As long as it is held in such a manner. as to put little girls in the spotlight wearing modest clothing and "little girl" clothing, then there should be nothing wrong with the staging of the event. The experience gives children an opportunity to come out of their shells and not be afraid to meet people (under proper circumstances) and to meet other children and get along with them. They also learn that it takes a great deal more to be a graceful loser than a happy winner. They can learn many valuable lessons from an event of this kind if it is staged decently and fairly. Good luck to the organizers

and to the contestants!

Sincerely, · Mrs. Idaella Balser, 323 Highfield St. Moncton, N.B.



