

Councillors dislike corner store liquor legislation

Town councillors don't want to be making the decision on whether corner stores should be allowed to sell liquor and beer.

In a recent poll by The Herald, councillors were unanimous that such a decision should be a provincial one.

"I think the province should make the decision, not the municipalities," Coun. Joe Hewitt said. "Absolutely." "It's one way of passing the buck," Coun. Pam Johnston said.

Consumer and Commercial Relations Minister Monte Kwinter says he plans to introduce legislation permitting the sale of beer and wine in corner stores despite objections from municipal politicians.

Last week, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) held its annual conference, and had strong support for a resolution against corner store sales of alcoholic beverages.

The Herald polled local councillors on the issue and found their response mirrored that of AMO. "I disagree with it. First of all, I

don't think there is a good reason to do it," Coun. Marilyn Serjeantson said. "The method we have now is satisfactory."

Any changes to the current system should be for the betterment of the community, she said. It may increase hold-ups at local stores and decrease jobs at the Liquor Control Board.

Coun. Lillias Bowman said she couldn't think of anything positive in having the sale of beer and wine at grocery stores.

"I hope they don't do it. You can't control who's buying it, who's selling it or the quality of it," she said.

Coun. Pam Johnston said she also opposed the provincial proposal.

"I am against it in our own area because I don't think we need it, but I think up north, where they have to drive a substantial distance to get liquor it's a different matter," Coun. Johnston said.

Coun. Joe Hewitt thinks it's about time the current "antiquated" laws were changed about the sale of liquor.

"It seems to work well everywhere else. I think it should work well here, too," Coun. Hewitt said about liquor at corner stores. He noted Americans, Europeans, and even Quebecers can buy their liquor at the corner store.

Coun. Betty Fisher said it isn't a "burning issue" for her and that she supports having beer and wine in corner stores. However, young people's jobs must be protected, she said.

"I think if it's going to be done, it should be done by the provincial government and there should not be any local autonomy on this," Coun. Fisher said.

Coun. Gerald Rennie said he opposed the provincial proposal on the basis of his experience in the ministry.

"I've seen an awful lot of homes disrupted by alcohol, and I don't need to see more of it," Coun. Rennie said. "I think we have enough problems in this country because of the consumption of alcohol without increasing the access to it."

Coun. Norman Elliott said he didn't think it was necessary to have liquor at corner stores.

"I think it's an issue created by the provincial government that is a non-issue," he said. "I'd say no, I don't want to see it in the corner stores."

Americans have been selling beer and wine in grocery stores for generations and these stores seem to become a target for crime, Coun. Elliott said.

Coun. Pam Sheldon says she sees conflicting views being put forward by the provincial government when the attorney general is saying he wants to crack down on drinking and driving, and the Premier is saying let's make it more accessible.

"I don't think on the one side of your mouth you can be attempting to curb drinking and driving and on the other side making it more accessible," Coun. Sheldon says.

The town's anti-drinking and driving committee has passed a recommendation recently that beer and wine not be sold at corner stores and that if the government decides to go ahead with it, that it not be made a

local initiative. "I think the liquor store and beer store are open long enough hours for people to pick up what they re-

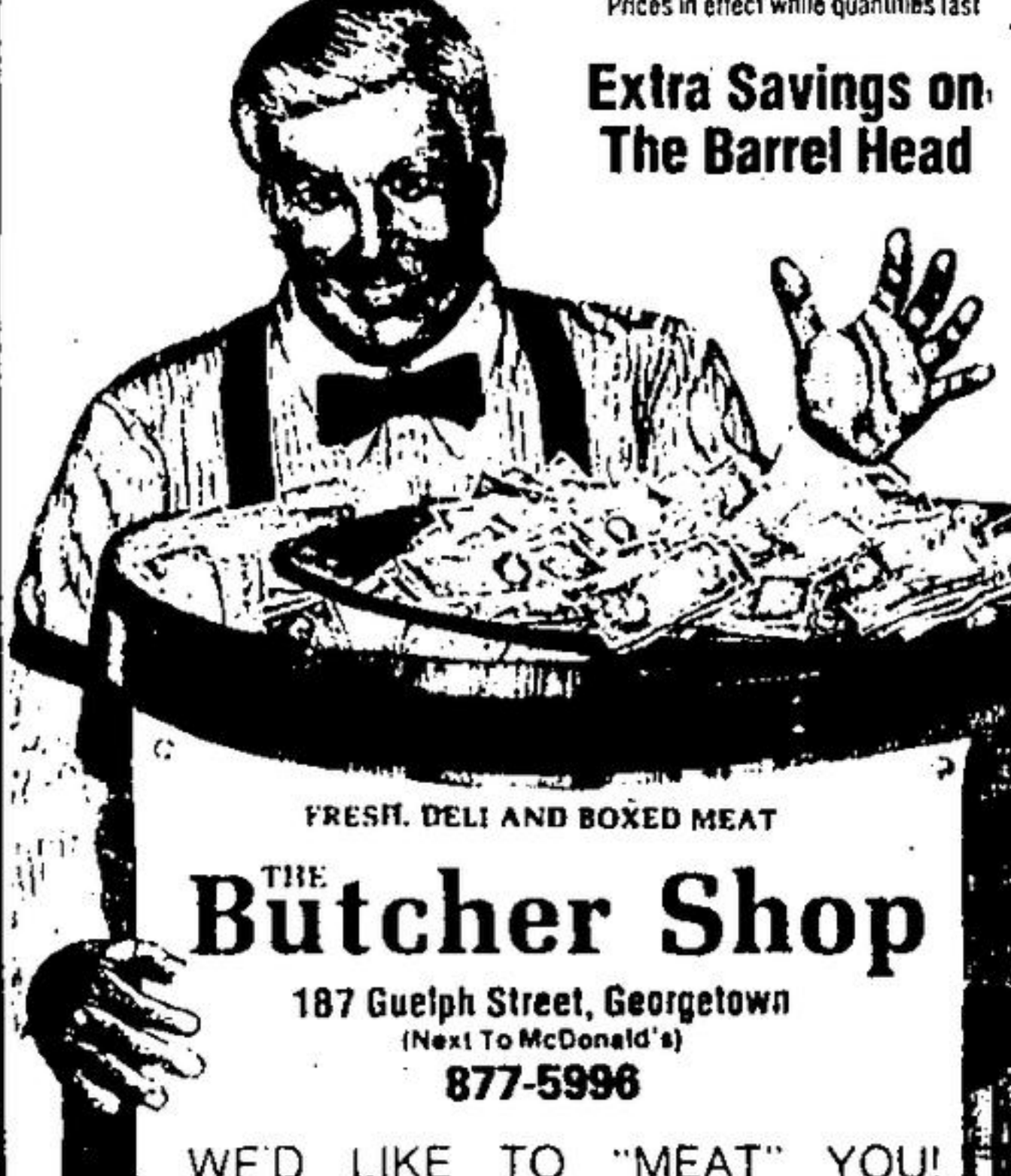
quire," Coun. Peter Norton said. "I just can't see it's going to be of benefit. It would hurt the restaurant business instead."

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Customer boost if beer: owners

What do local corner store owners think of being able to sell wine and beer in their stores?

Mary Engleby, manager of Mac's Convenience Stores Ltd. at 360 Guelph St. in Georgetown says she wouldn't want to be open 24 hours a day if it was allowed. Mac's is currently open 24 hours daily.

"You get enough fools in here now, and you're going to have them coming in at night too?" she said.

Mrs. Engleby noted most of her staff isn't drinking age, 19 or older. However, she also noted it would help to bring in more business if beer and wine were available.

Myungsook Ahn, store manager at Quick-Pik Variety Store in Georgetown doesn't think he'll change his store hours if he is allowed to sell beer and wine.

"I think it will be good," Mr. Ahn said. "I don't think it's that bad because at my store I have so many customers who are young (between 25 and 35) and I think it will increase my business."

Sukin Lee, manager of the Acton Variety and Grocery Store at 122 Mill St. E. said he anticipates it will increase the number of customers coming to his store also.

"I think it will be a good thing. Everybody isn't close to the beer store. Some people live out-of-town," Mr. Lee said.

Jim Bryan, assistant manager of the Beckers Milk Company Ltd. store at 352 Queen St. in Acton, said most of the store staff are of drink-

ing age so the proposed legislation wouldn't put any of them out of a job.

He said selling beer and wine would increase business at Beckers.

"Actually, it is a good idea because you don't really see that many young kids around here. They're way over 20 most of them," Mr. Bryan said. "Also it would give us a lot more money for wages."

He said he didn't think it would cause more problems for the store to have alcoholic beverages on its shelves.

"We've got goat's beer with 0.4 per cent alcohol on the shelves and that SaraSoda which also contains alcohol. We're always running out of that," Mr. Bryan said.

He said having beer and wine at his store would be good for Sundays and holidays, and after-hours when the beer and liquor stores are closed.

Mayor Russ Miller thinks the current system is a good one and doesn't want to see beer and wine sold in corner stores.

"If it gets into the corner stores, it'll eliminate a lot of jobs for high school kids, and I'm afraid it will make it more accessible," Mayor Miller said.

He said there will be far greater delivery charges if liquor is being delivered to more outlets and it will make sales more costly.

WLU courses for residents

A few years ago Dr. Fred Little (Director of Part-time Studies and Continuing Education at Wilfrid Laurier University), Mr. John Ollivier (Halton Cable) and myself (Tom Ramautarsingh), met to explore the feasibility of making available to residents in the area (Acton, Georgetown, Milton, Rockwood), university credit courses. Unfortunately, regulations at the time and the cost factor prevented any action in this direction.

Now, Wilfrid Laurier University and Halton Cable are able to offer university degree courses this September. The schedule is as follows:

- I. Sept. 10 - Introduction to Business (1/2 credit) 9-9:30 p.m. Cost \$183 (Tuition and Text books).
- II. Sept. 11 - Introduction to Social Welfare (1 credit) 9:30 - 10:30 p.m. Cost \$332.
- III. Jan. 7 - Inside Business Today (1/2 credit) 9-9:30 p.m. Cost \$154.
- IV. Jan. 8 - Abnormal Psychology (1 credit) 9:30 - 10:30 p.m. Cost \$350 (Tuition and Text).

Admission is open to Grade 12 graduates with two years work experience, or to all persons 21 years and over. Anyone 60 years or over does not have to pay tuition.

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