

Marriage can complicate politics



Queen's Park

By Derek Nelson
Thompson News Service

Marriage is complicating the political lives of the powers-that-be around here. That's marriage as an institution, mind you, not their marriages to their mates. Marriages used to be simple. A man and woman were joined in matrimony by recognized Christian clergy, or hitched in a civil ceremony by a judge. But since we now live in the age of multiculturalism, where all standards are relative, that approach has been judged too narrow. What has yet to be decided, however, is how far standards should be broadened. Two cases in point: TURNED DOWN Deputy Registrar General Despina Georgas announced that an application by warlock Charles Arnold to perform weddings was turned down. And the Ontario Hospital Insurance Plan refused to expand its definition of spouse to include the live-in lesbian lover of librarian Karen Andrews. Arnold made headlines last

autumn when he won "paid religious leave" from his Humber College job to celebrate two Wiccan holy days. Wicca is a pagan religion originating with the pro-Roman Celta and is often identified as a form of witchcraft. (Although the historical record indicates human sacrifice and other nasty habits were part of early Celtic religion, Arnold says the records were written by the Celta enemies and, besides, Wicca has no bad habits.) Although willing to allow Arnold to miss work Nov. 1, the beginning of the Celta New Year, and May 1, the arrival of summer, the college said it should be without pay. But a provincial labor ministry arbitration board concluded Wicca

was "obviously a religion" and said Arnold must be paid. Arnold then decided to seek the right to perform marriages or "handfasting." But the government turned him down. In the other instance, Andrews and her union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, went to court to get OHIP's decision reversed. Under CUPE's collective agreement with Andrews' employer, the Toronto Library Board, common-law spouses are normally covered by OHIP. But the court upheld the definition of spouse as being one of the opposite sex. LIMITS SET In short, some limits have been set on what the word "marriage" means and who can make you "married." However, these restraints could prove temporary. Both Arnold and Andrews essentially lost their cases on technical grounds. It is noticeable that Arnold's rejection slip was given at the civil service level for civil service reasons. The issue of whether Wicca should be recognized as a religion was actually side-stepped. Then, too, in the case of OHIP, a simple change to the regulations could redefine common-law marriage to include two people of the same sex. A further step, sought by some, would be giving homosexual unions formal status as marriages - with all that implies in terms of taxes, inheritance, adoption and other relationships between people and government. Of the two, Arnold seems more likely to eventually win his case if he can marshal his arguments more coherently. Then he'll be entitled to all the tax savings and other goodies - such as status - that goes with government recognition. And maybe that's fine. If one examines the United Church, for instance, and its current Marxist humanist doctrines, Wicca seems the less inherently absurd religion. But homosexual marriages, common law or formal, are another matter. Approving them is to send the message that society accepts the abnormal as normal.

Who's the boss?

Who is the police department accountable to? Halton Regional Police Chief James Harding doesn't think it should be regional councillors. Or that's the impression one could surmise after listening to his comments about police department responsibility. The chief got into a sparked debate with Coun. John Graham about the police commission's proposed budget increase of 9.5 per cent. Coun. Graham says that's too much, twice the cost of living. He has suggested abolishing the police commission, consisting of two regional councillors and three civilian appointees from the province of Ontario. In its place a committee consisting of regional councillors, all elected members, would grapple over the police budget. That way, he argues, the police are entirely accountable to the Region. Now, the Region can only accept or reject the police budget. If it's rejected, the budget must be appealed to the Ontario Police Commission. But Chief Harding won't buy what Coun. Graham is selling. He's complaining bitterly about the problems of keeping up with the crime rate given the amount of money the force has to work with. The chief believes the police should be accountable, but that the Board of Commissioners, with some civilian input, is the best way. However, despite his testy remarks about politicians, Chief Harding needs the support of politicians. They are the people's representatives in Halton. We think he and the Halton Regional Police are accountable to the Region. The police are not an independent body and they should reflect the will of the people. If our politicians are trying to make some honest changes to make the police submit a more realistic budget, they deserve to be commended.

Ordeal over

The ordeal of a well-known doctor ended last week. Unfortunately, the case of Dr. Jack Ford still lingers on infecting the community with doubt and bitterness. But through it all, thanks to a public appeals board hearing, the facts of the Georgetown doctor's revocation of privileges are out in the open. The community had to wait too long to know all the details of the clash between the popular obstetrician-gynecologist and the Georgetown hospital board. Resentment continued to build against the hospital administration after six months of waiting for a hearing. In the meantime, Dr. Ford was faced with the anguish of the long wait, stripped of his professional privileges. Ironically, it is just two weeks away from the April 7 anniversary when Dr. Ford was told his privileges were being revoked. Something is chronically wrong with a system that takes almost a year to complete a hearing affecting a man's livelihood. While hospital administrators still have little to cheer about, they admittedly won their case and thus are vindicated of mistreating one of their employees. While the outstanding relationship Dr. Ford fostered with his patients cannot be denied, the hearings provided ample evidence to support the hospital's decision. Still, Dr. Ford can appeal the decision and the process begins over again, only this time without testimony from witnesses. The Georgetown doctor has some choices to make. He can either appeal the decision or start the arduous task of upgrading and retraining to regain his privileges and his professional standing within the medical community. No one can take pleasure in hearing the results of the appeals board hearing because Dr. Ford has proven to be a gentleman, a caring individual and a respected doctor. But the process indicates that when it comes to health care, there is little leeway given to human error. There is just too much at stake.

What makes you happy?



Editor's notebook

By Dave Rowney

A very comprehensive and interesting series of articles featuring real-life situations begins in The Herald today. Five stories have been submitted by the Halton Social Planning Council about the housing crisis in Halton. Each week our newspaper will run one article documenting the problems some families have trying to find affordable housing in this area. When it's nearly impossible to find a one-bedroom flat in Georgetown for less than \$500, the housing situation can legitimately be called a "crisis". What makes you happy? I found it interesting to note that in a recent Toronto Star article a multi-millionaire lottery winner was depressed and unhappy. The young man in his twenties had already lost his licence from drinking and driving and given away a large portion of his winnings. He doesn't know what he wants to do with his money and spends his time hanging around a shopping mall with some of his old buddies. Not everyone, it seems, needs money to be happy. In fact many with money are very unhappy. A recent poll sent to us reveals that not all people are obsessed with money. In the United States 51.9 per cent said a loving relationship made them most happy while 33.1 per cent said it was good health. Third on the list was "children that you're proud of (8.1 per cent)" followed by finan-

cial security (3.4 per cent) and career success (2.8 per cent). You can munch your way to a creamy reward by purchasing a baseball sundae for Easter Seals. Starting in mid-April, Baskin-Robbins will be selling a baseball sundae and 31 cents from each sundae purchase goes to the Easter Seals Society. Customers get a choice of 31 flavors presented in a miniature baseball helmet of their choice representing major league teams. Parents with an aptitude for photography have a chance to win a \$25,000 college scholarship for their children by entering the adorable babies photo contest run by Johnson and Johnson. Entries are judged on the adorableness of the photo and charm and cleverness of the caption. Entry forms are in stores where the Johnson products are sold. Deadline is May 31. Peel Regional Chairman Frank Bean is angry about the lost revenue his region will lose after the O.M.B. decision to give taxpayers who live near superboxes a tax break. Mr. Bean doesn't want to have to spend money on lawyers to argue the case before any judicial level. He's looking for compensation from the federal government "so we can be re-imposed, either on a trickle down from the Feds through the Province or some other innovative plan of your own." The Federation of Canadian Municipalities wants to work in the issue of aid to cities for decaying road and sewer networks during the next federal election. The chairman, George Rideout, wants a federal commitment for a relief program.



Citizens' forum

Doctor Ford still respected

Dear Sir, A few people fell from their pedestals last week. No Dr. Ford was not one of them. He is still high up there respected and loved by a lot of people. But a few of his colleagues tumbled down. The decline of the medical profession is here (my apologies to the good ones) and I am not referring to knowledge or skill. There is something in the Hippocratic Oath about being like brothers to one another. Brotherly love, however, has been sadly lacking. Congratulations to all you courageous men and women, who seem to have succeeded in destroying a fellow human being. I hope you all sleep well at night. But maybe you are a bit uneasy already. After all you are also human and can make mistakes. Having to look forward to the same treatment Dr. Ford received is not pleasant. So maybe you are the losers because Dr. Ford has the inner strength and integrity to come out as a better man in the end. Yours sincerely, Mrs. Gerda Camman, Georgetown

Upset about sports story

Dear Sir, I was very disappointed and upset to read the story featured in the Herald March 23, 1983 - Sports Section - Byline "M and M runs out of steam." My heart ached for the two boys - one my son Wade! These two young teenagers were blamed for their team's loss at the Bantam Tournament - this information was written in the above mentioned article - now the whole town knows. Pretty heavy stuff for two 15-year-olds. These young teenagers made a decision. In Wade's case, this deci-

sion was made two months before the tournament and his coaches knew about it. He chose to take a five day ski trip with his family. My two older sons' high school commitments and Ed's teaching career limit our vacation times. We changed our plans at Christmas to accommodate hockey. This time we felt very strongly about the commitment we had made for a family spring break vacation. I feel very fortunate to have a talented, intelligent good son such as Wade. I am delighted to know that he looks forward to spending spring break skiing with his father, three brothers and myself. We had a terrific time - we had a super family holiday. No teenager deserves to be publicly criticized and blamed for a tournament loss because he spent five days with his family. Being a teenager in the 80s is exciting and challenging. Some experts maintain that there are greater pressures now for young people than ever before - possibly Wade's and Mark's experience is an example of the added insensitive pressures that help to mold our future adult citizens. Marilyn Serjeantson

Tomb it may concern

Dear Sir, What is black and white and 'used' to be read all over? It has been 15 years since Halton has been trying to fight off the proposals to keep Metro's garbage out of Industrious (Reclamations Systems Ltd.) quarries. And - even with our recycling programs, we have an incredibly low rate of co-operation. Beneath our "dignity" perhaps? A false sense of security? Well, what seems eccentric today, just may be essential tomorrow! But - we will wait until it is too late and we are beneath our "dignified" necks in wastes, then have the unmitigated gall to blame the Government. You know? They who firmly believe that no good deed goes unpunished? Aren't 'we' the Government? "Nothing is rich but the inex-

haustible wealth of nature. She shows us only surfaces, but she is a million fathoms deep." Ralph Waldo Emerson. There is no guarantee that this planet will survive our predispositions. TOMB it may concern: To 'heir' is human. Lois Richardson, Georgetown

Decision was upsetting

Dear Sir, The decision to allow Dr. Henry Morgentaler's abortion clinic to operate without any regulation is upsetting. Some women, I know, want desperately and will do anything to have an abortion. Most women are pressured into having abortions by their boyfriends, peers or parents. This latter group of women are the ones who will be hurt by this decision. If abortions are to be legal, some counselling, I suggest Christian oriented, must be a mandatory process before any woman can be admitted for an abortion. A process such as this will allow many pregnant young women to maintain their pride and integrity, which is often the price paid, when confused, they rush through with an abortion. Prejudiced abortion clinic staff should not be allowed to influence people on a decision for abortion, these clinics must be a service only. Society with all its choices, makes it easy for people to run away from their problems and avoid complications. With legal abortions some people in society will actually think that an abortion is the correct reaction to the news of pregnancy. A confidential, no pressure, I suggest Christian, counselling process would help confused pregnant women to make the correct decision for themselves. In conclusion I am saying that there must be some regulation on abortion clinics, such as a professional, unprejudiced counselling process so that people are made aware they are considering a life or death decision. Yours sincerely, Mark J. Euteneier, Faludon Dr., Georgetown



30 years ago Lac Harold Stoddart, airframe technician, was named Airman of the Month, at No. 4 Transport Operational Unit in Trenton. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Carman Stoddart of Georgetown. Led by the scoring prowess of Ross Cunningham and Bill Richardson the RB Norval Jr. Farmers equalized their 3 out of 5 Halton Jr. Farmer hockey final with Palermo at the Milton arena by shading the league champions 3 to 6. Esqueusing Liberals entertained their candidate Ken Dick at an exclusive party at which 35 tables were in play. Winners included Mrs. William Nielsen of Hornby, Bob Dredge of Milton, Mrs. Irene Hunter of Acton and Mr. Ron Papillon of Acton. A St. Patrick's tea and bake sale was held by the Norval local association of Guides and Brownies in the Norval parish hall.

15 years ago A jubilant Peterboro Rehill team let off steam after capturing the Georgetown International Bantam Hockey Tournament grand championship. In a candlelight ceremony in St. John's United Church Marion Elizabeth Richardson became the bride of George Douglas Sheppard. Rev. Harold Martin officiated. At a dinner meeting of Jaycees and Jaycettes, at King Wah Restaurant 10 members who had completed a nine week course in Effective Speaking had a chance to show their progress. The graduates of the course spoke for five minutes on a subject of their choice. Ted Fordage, vice-principal at Centennial Senior Public School, will become principal of Lakeshore Public School, while Hazel Allen, principal of George Kennedy Junior Public School, became principal of Robert Little School in Acton.

10 years ago Volunteers from the Cancer Society of Halton Hills were presented with certificates for outstanding and inspired service. Bill O'Connor gave certificates to drivers John Hale and Fred Kitchener and to Margaret Hillier, who had been area chairman for four years. Fire chief Mick Holmes and the volunteer firefighters of Acton were named Acton's Citizens of the Year after an enormous response of ballots from Acton residents in favor of the firefighters. Eight area residents were awarded the Queen's Silver Jubilee medal recognizing their contribution to the community. They include Thompson Ramautarsingh of Georgetown, Hon. James Snow of Georgetown, Janet Tonetti of Georgetown, Douglas Burrows of Terra Cotta, Gordon Laws of Georgetown, John F. Farrugia of Terra Cotta, Arthur Porter of Belfontain and John Jackson of Cheltenham. Edna Plumtree of Milton was one of the winners of a 1978 Toyota in a draw sponsored by Hunt's and Women's Bakeries.

5 years ago Tom Ollivier, 5, and David Boere, 6, gazed the counter with hungry eyes at Tim Horton Donuts. The 4th Georgetown 'A' Colony Beavers from St. Andrews were on a field trip to see how donuts were made. The new executive for the North Halton Hospice were elected at an annual meeting. Karen Ferguson was named the volunteer coordinator, Marguarite Knechtel, president, Diane Little, secretary, and Arlene Dere, treasurer. A service of confirmation was held at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Norval, with Bishop C. Hitchell of Hamilton officiating assisted by rector R. Ruggie. Confirmands were Susan Perrin, Colleen and Byron Cannon and Gord Downey. John Fraser's wild growls and roars shook the Acton Public Library's foundation as the seven-year-old played the role of a circus lion in a Travelling Trunk Players production called "The Unicorn Who Lost Her Horn".

In Your Opinion

A minority government?



JERRY McHALE: "Yes, I think there will be. I think the free trade issue will be a big issue in the next election. I think the unions and the NDP will fight that and (the) Meech Lake (Accord) is a thorny issue."

MARGARET VINT: "I think if the Conservatives do go in again, it will be in a minority. I think people are a bit disillusioned with Mulroney at this point."

JULIE BARR: "I'd like to see the Conservatives get in again, but I have a feeling it's going to be Liberal and in a minority."

ELIZABETH McNEILL: "No, I don't think so. Intuition tells me no."

JESSIE JACOBS: "I certainly hope not. I think people look at it from a point of view that you want something accomplished. With a minority government it's a waste of time."

Question: Do you think there will be a minority government after the next federal election?