

# Opinion Page

## Halton's History from our files

### 30 years ago

Georgetown will have a fifth public school in operation in September, if things move as expected. After a request from school board chairman Ed Wilson at Monday's council meeting, the first step was taken for a 10-room school, estimated to cost some \$200,000 when council ordered a debenture bylaw prepared for borrowing the money. The school, located on Weber Drive, will eventually grow to an 18 or 20 room structure, Mr. Wilson explained, depending on how the town grows in future.

Improvements to the public library have been discussed at two recent council meetings. It is the hope of the library board to put the basement in useable condition, and chairman J.L. Lambert estimated this to cost \$6,500 when he interviewed council. In 1958, the library board's total budget of \$7,300 included \$5,300 from town taxes, or 82 cents per capita, Mr. Lambert said. If the per capita grant were raised to \$1.25, taxes would contribute \$10,250 and a provincial grant, \$4,100, allowing the cost of improvements to be met.

The February meeting of the Ballinacree Women's Institute took the form of a social evening last Wednesday in the spacious recreation room of Mr. and Mrs. Leo Jamieson. The members and their husbands enjoyed a bountiful pot luck supper.

### 15 years ago

The Georgetown Raiders are playing like a championship club, and with playoffs on tap in March in Intermediate "A" hockey, that's understandable. The Raiders capped a four-game winning streak Sunday by downing the Dundas Merchants 8-1 in Georgetown. On Friday, the Raiders dumped Dundas 9-6, and during the week, the home team walloped the Dunnville Mudcats 10-1. Prior to that, the Raiders scored a win in Georgetown over the Oakville Adanacs.

H.A. Eyres is no longer alone in his fight against the Canadian National Railway's abandonment of a track between Georgetown and Cheltenham Park. Recently, Jack Lennox, an employee of CN for eight years, wrote a letter to Art Even, MPP for Simcoe-York outlining the problems of closing the line. Mr. Lennox listed a few of the companies in Simcoe County

which could use the line to speed their shipments.

### 10 years ago

A meeting in St. Alban's Church Hall in Glen Williams did little to discuss the proposed hook-up of homes in the lower Glen to town water, or to outline official plan proposals for the village, and did little to resolve the confusion among the residents who attended. The main accomplishment of the evening was to decide which questions had to be answered about the water installation to seven streets in lower Glen Williams before the residents on those streets could make a fully-informed decision on whether or not they wanted the water. Costs were a main concern for residents.

A neighborhood property dispute in the Summit Lane, Mountainview Road area of Georgetown, has resulted in a recommendation to town council that would see a 10-foot-wide easement re-opened for public use as a walkway. Members of the town's general committee conceded Monday night that a previous council inadvertently made a mistake by leasing a 10-foot by 200-foot easement between Summit Lane and Mountainview Road to Summit Lane homeowner Klaus Hentschel and thus cutting off a much-used access walkway from several abutting neighbors.

Bert Hinton of Acton was a guest at last Wednesday's meeting of Halton Regional council where he presented a watercolor painting to Halton Hills Mayor Peter Pomeroy as a gift to the Region.

### 5 years ago

Proposed changes to provincial riding boundaries could see Halton Hills sharing a new constituency with Brampton and a small sliver of Mississauga. The riding would be called Halton-Peel, while Milton and the northern section of Burlington above Highway 5 - Halton Hills' current riding mates - would retain the name Halton-Burlington.

Crews of the Credit Valley Conservation Authority (CVCA) are keeping a close watch on the Credit River in Glen Williams, anticipating an ice break up some time this week if mild weather conditions continue. While the authority is "not expecting any serious problems at this moment," CVCA hydrologist Charlie Wort said crews have been touring the river, taking photographs and noting if the ice is breaking. As temperatures rose to nine degrees Celsius Monday, Mr. Wort told the Herald that the continued mild weather may prompt a 24-hour monitoring of conditions.

Monday evening the Halton Hills Christian Women's Fellowship will host a fashion show of new spring styles by Carlin Enterprises at St. George's Anglican Hall. Speaking that evening will be Mrs. Nancy Barwell, former chairwoman of the Fellowship.

## LETTERS

### Halton students deserve better

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is an open letter addressed to the Halton Board of Education, submitted to the Herald for publication.)

Dear Sir,  
It seems that the "elephant" (Halton Board of Education), after 18 months of gestation, has given birth to a "gnat." I am referring, of course, to the outcome of the hearings and recommendations for an outdoor education policy.

Every poll shows the public is very concerned about the condition of the environment. The causes and corrections of that condition are complex. First must come a basic understanding of the mechanisms of the natural world. Such understanding is unlikely to happen in a sterile classroom and a visiting van is little better. It appears that students in the Halton public system will continue to receive inconsistent learning opportunities with inferior facilities, planning, and priority to those provided in surrounding regions. Those boards have outdoor education centres, senior educators

dedicated to the program, and full curriculum development.

Halton is going to spend two person years looking at program. This seems like Ronald Reagan's prescription for acid rain - years of delay and study when the subject cries out for immediate action.

Why must Halton spend years developing a new curriculum when surrounding regions have them? Why rediscover the wheel?

If the students of today, most of

whom are urban dwellers, are to deal more responsibly and effectively with the threats to the environment, they will need a better understanding than this program can offer. I am profoundly disappointed by the board's meagre commitment. The most charitable comment is that "it's a start."

I believe that Halton students need and deserve better.

L.R.L. Symmes

### College grad reunion

Dear Sir,

Conestoga College of Applied Arts and Technology is now establishing its first formal Alumni Association, to welcome back to the Conestoga College community all of our graduates of the past 20 years.

We are seeking information on any and all graduates. Graduates are asked to contact the Alumni Office to update their address. If you

know the whereabouts of other graduates, please pass the word along to them.

Please write to Alumni Officer, Conestoga College, 299 Doon Valley Drive, Kitchener, Ontario, N2G 4M4, or you may telephone (519) 748-5220, ext. 463.

Sincerely,  
Mary Wright,  
Alumni Officer,  
Conestoga College

### Parents are child's first teacher

By GERALDINE BARNES

Herald Special

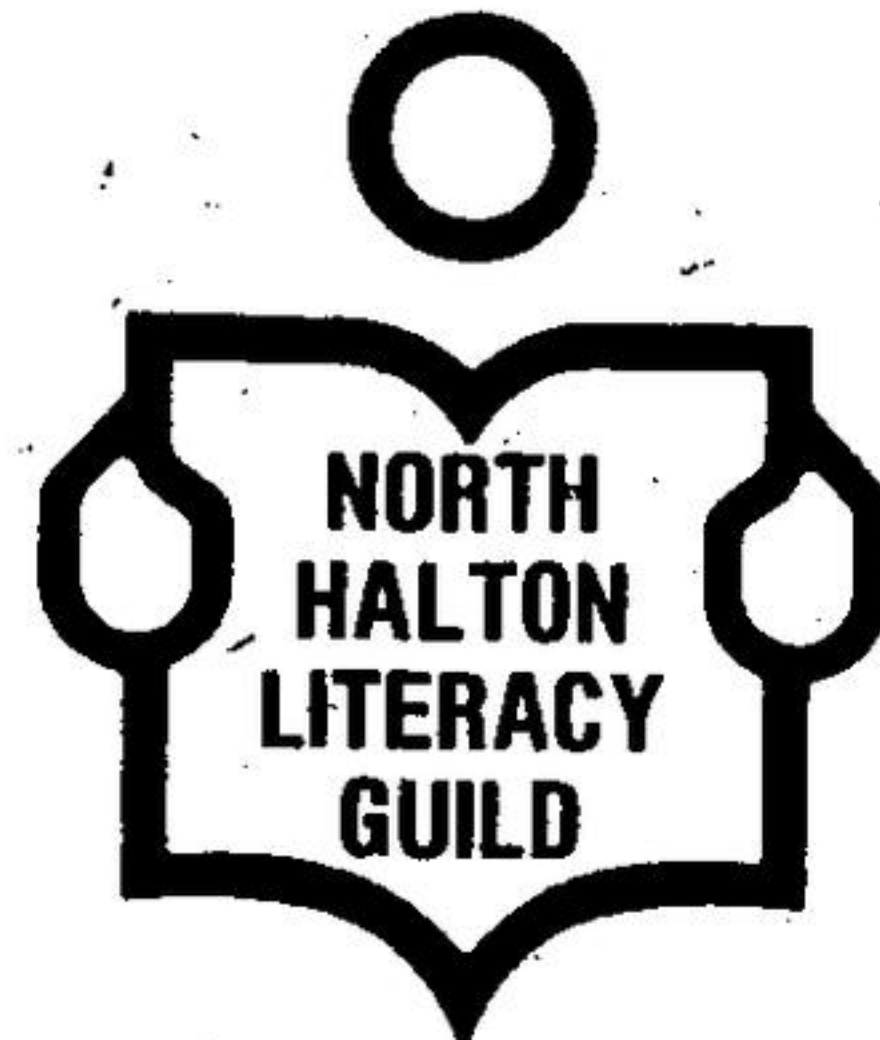
The concept of Intergenerational or Family Literacy is becoming an interest and concern in Canada in recent years. Both the U.S. and Britain have programs in place on this topic and the Canadian perspective was presented at a conference I attended in Kingston in January, 1989. It was sponsored by the Ministry of Skills Development, and the Literacy Link of Eastern Ontario.

A parent is the child's first teacher - the physical and emotional bonding that ideally takes place in the youngster's early years can be enhanced when parent and child curl up together with a good book.

Reading aloud to children promotes listening, speaking, writing and imaginative skills, as well as the awareness of the flow or rhythm of words. The commentary and discussion that follows the reading, stimulates comprehension and intellectual curiosity in the young listener, and enforces the idea that the printed page is a source of information and enjoyment.

The repetition of a favorite story or rhyme by the child as he/she "reads" the text, is a good rehearsal for formalized reading in school later. The joy of recognition of environmental signs and labels makes the learning process fun, and encourages the young reader to look for other messages conveyed by the printed word from sources like TV, or a toy catalogue or a newspaper. All these discoveries help develop a child's positive response to school and learning generally.

Unfortunately the delight of



reading to their children is denied to some parents because of their inadequate reading skills. Recently a link has been established between low literacy achievement and poor parenting. Parents - especially solo mothers, who left school early - feel agony and frustration when they are unable to assist their children with home work, read report cards or other school communication or write a note to a teacher. A sense of alienation from educational and other "authority figures" may then develop and this inhibits learning on the part of both parent and child. As the parent is the primary and most influential teacher, the child may grow up in an environment where intellectually and emotionally there is very little stimulation, neither is the parent able to access written material which helps one develop nurturing parenting skills in health and safety. Consequently the family and ultimately society suffers.

Fortunately this scenario need no longer occur. A low literacy level is neither hereditary nor per-

manent. Family literacy programs like ours can help adult learners become familiar with the printed word, so that they can read their children a story. Sometimes the parents' own reading level is only slightly ahead of the child's, but the confidence and motivation which results from such victories impels the mother to work harder at her own literacy classes. Reading classes for adults are geared to their needs and hopes, as well as alerting them to their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Parenting skills are also stressed in vocabulary that is meaningful to the student.

Promotion of adequate child day care is being advocated by the Ministry of Skills Development so that the parent is free to receive upgrading both in her parenting and employee roles, knowing her child is being cared for in a safe environment.

The Ministry would like to get a sustained commitment from society to help encourage literacy among those who up to now have been isolated from reading. With the good will of community services, educational establishments from day care to colleges, health, business, labour, libraries and volunteer groups, we can all try to reach the goal to make Canada "a nation of readers."

The year 1990 is International Literacy Year. Let's celebrate our democracy by enjoying our own right to read and sharing that right with someone who needs help with literacy. Tutor workshops are conducted by the North Halton Literacy Guild. Maureen or Ave will be delighted to hear from you. Phone North Halton Literacy Guild at 873-2200.

## Taking the phrase 'shoot the messenger' literally

Tell me: does the Ayatollah Khomeini sometimes strike you as a man who doesn't have much of a sense of humor?

The thought occurred the other day, upon reading of the ayatollah's displeasure with a news story that had aired on Iranian radio.

Apparently, Khomeini felt the story insulted women and the Islamic religion. So he promptly wrote a letter calling for the reporter's execution.

Well. Perhaps I speak from the limited perspective of one who is (after all) a journalist himself. Still, there do appear to be one or two disturbing implications here.

Let me hasten to say that no journalist would deny someone the right to object to something he had written or broadcast. Like any columnist, I can live with the thought that I might write something that would inspire someone to fire off a letter beginning, "Dear Editor:

Please cancel my subscription."

All the same, I'd prefer to draw the line at letters beginning, "Dear Editor: Shoot Weir."

Naturally, it's a fact of life that journalists and public officials have an adversarial relationship. Most journalists are quite aware that there are politicians out there who would like, from time to time, to shoot them.

Still, there's a difference between wanting to shoot someone, and actually doing it. It may be a fine line, but it means a great deal to the person who's being shot.

Now granted, we should be careful not to overreact, here. Perhaps there's no reason for a Canadian print journalist to feel overly threatened by the ayatollah's desire to execute a radio reporter.

To begin with, this is something that's happening over in Iran. And besides, it's a radio reporter.

Print journalists (as a breed) are a pretty level-headed bunch,



Weir's View

By Ian Weir

Thomson News Service

and are unlikely to get too upset if the authorities decided to pop off the odd radio reporter, a TV anchorman, or two - and perhaps Geraldo, just for good measure.

Still, the danger with these things is that they can so easily catch on, and become a trend.

Let's face it - governments are only too susceptible to being swayed by foreign examples, and to following the lead of other countries.

The US elected Ronald Reagan in 1980, and the Canadian political

spectrum promptly shifted to the right. Maggie Thatcher started privatizing British industries, and suddenly everyone decided this was an excellent idea.

And now, Iran has come up with a highly effective reaction to unfavorable press - and one which doesn't even require censorship.

"Ready... aim... go ahead, Bucko - write whatever you like."

Naturally, you don't want to jump too hastily to paranoid conclusions. Still, it's hard to avoid imagining what would happen should the ayatollah's new media relations philosophy gain widespread popularity...

"News item: Officials in the Prime Minister's Office said today they are hopeful they will soon be able to give their formal response to the reporter who broke the news last weekend that the government has plunged to a new low in the latest Gallup Poll.

"A PMO spokesman confirmed

the reporter is still barricaded in his basement, but added that he can't stay in there forever."

Or perhaps...

"A spokesman for the prime minister reacted angrily today to media accusations that the government reacted unfairly to a columnist who had insinuated that several Cabinet ministers have imperfections.

"What was unfair about it?" the spokesman demanded. "Didn't we give him a head start?"

Or perhaps...

"An aide to President Bush today rebuked other nations for adopting a policy of shooting reporters who write insulting stories.

"America under George Bush is a kinder, gentler nation," the aide said. "Here in America, we do not shoot reporters.

"We just kinda wing 'em, a little. You'd be amazed how quick they get the point."