

Editorial

Surprise move

We are surprised to see the town take a stand against the Greater Toronto Area committee (GTA) at the request of the citizens group POWER, yet we share some councillors' concerns.

At the request of POWER (Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources) the town endorsed a letter to the ministry of environment calling the five-region committee "undemocratic" and "unaccountable" to the people.

The letter also says the landfill crisis across Ontario has been "orchestrated."

The GTA committee is seeking a solution to the landfill management problem in southern Ontario. Its membership consists of the chairmen of the five Regions. In Halton, at least, our chairman, Pete Pomeroy is not directly elected by people. We are sure Chairman Pomeroy is acting diligently in Halton's best interest, but, as Burlington proved earlier this year when their successful fight against the Regional landfill site came to an end, sometimes it's best to go into these things kicking and screaming all the way.

It's easy for someone to be brought along slowly in such a small group with members eager to get along, and Halton could easily be on the receiving end of a mound of Toronto's waste, if it doesn't watch its steps.

We disagree with POWER's assertion that the landfill crisis has been "orchestrated." Anytime we are burying our waste in huge pits that can end up 60 ft. high with the potential of poisoning the environment, it is indeed a crisis.

Now, some councillors will have some explaining to do at Halton Region. Will the town put teeth behind the letter and ask Halton to pull out of the GTA?

We doubt it.

In a surprising footnote to this story, some councillors said they feel ill-informed about the GTA.

Ill-informed? There has been enough media coverage of the GTA locally to keep politicians briefed on what's going on. But it's up to our local representatives to keep abreast of such crucial developments. Sitting back and waiting for a report from colleagues just isn't good enough.

Residents respond



Brian MacLeod
Editor's Notebook

Sometimes it just takes a little reminder but you - the residents of Halton Hills - always seem to respond.

A story by Herald reporter Ben Dummett on page 14 this week seems to indicate that volunteers are a dying breed in Halton Hills. Of course, there are still those who work tirelessly to make sure that the many organizations and service clubs are a vibrant part of the community, but volunteers as we used to know them seem to be fewer and farther between - in some cases.

But we saw what happened last

year when Georgetown Volunteer Ambulance President Doug McLeod asked for help. Acton's new ambulance service was in trouble. There weren't enough Acton volunteers to keep the service staffed. Doug McLeod asked for help and he got it.

Although there's still a need for ambulance volunteers in Acton, we're sure the service will survive, just as we're sure the Halton Hills Volunteer Centre will fill many of its positions eventually.

So, if you've got some spare time on your hands and you're looking for a hobby, or if you just want to help, volunteer work can be very rewarding.

If you're a photography buff you can take in the show and presentation of the Halton Hills Camera Club Photo Contest winners Oct. 18. This year the club will be offering prizes in black and white and color in People, Places and the always popular Other, categories.

You must be a member of the camera club to participate and entries must be submitted to the Halton Camera Exchange by Oct.

Liberal's trip over themselves

Derek Nelson

Queen's Park
Thomson News Service



In one of the more remarkable con jobs ever done on the media here, the Liberal government has managed to repudiate everything it has said about auto insurance without drawing any serious criticism.

They'll be giggling and laughing about this one in government communication departments for a long time.

To wit: Premier David Peterson had promised to "lower" rates. He promised an end to age and sex discrimination in rates. And he promised a rate-review board independent of government.

All three commitments are now in the trash can.

The Liberals set up the Ontario Automobile Insurance Board (OAIB) to establish auto-insurance rates in Ontario.

The OAIB, which the government boasted was free of its influence, went through a series of hearings to determine what the rates for 1989 should be.

In February, the OAIB announced its decision, which amounted to allowing the insurance companies rate increases of up to 17 per cent, a 7.6-per-cent basic increase and a

nine per cent "add-on."

At the same time - and consistent with the legislation under which the OAIB was established - the board said there would be a "one-time adjustment" in the rates to end discrimination on grounds of sex, age and marital status.

In practice, this meant male drivers under 25 would see cuts in their premiums, while women drivers and older people would be seeing horrendous increases of up to 80 per cent. Both women and oldsters - as groups - have much superior driving records to young males and benefit from the existing discriminatory method of calculating rates.

Worse, even young male drivers who have had accidents would see a reduction from current rates under the anti-discrimination approach.

The insurance companies didn't care, mind you, since it would simply shift the cost between classes rather than hold down the overall rates they'd charge.

The result, since as many as one million people were now suddenly threatened by a near-doubling of premiums, was a quick cooling of the Liberals' anti-egalitarian fever.

DEFERRED

This spring, they brought in legislation that effectively ended their board's "independence" and "deferred" any anti-discriminatory rating system. An interim 7.6-per-cent increase was allowed.

Hence, too, the charade last week, where one genuine change to the system (partial non-fault insurance) was packaged with the usual decade-old program of "get-

ting tough on drunk drivers" and similar stuff to cover up the government's full-scale retreat on all the promises. Masterful choreography, NDP critic Peter Kormos called it.

True, on discrimination, the Grits claim that the type of no-fault they've brought in will mean a gradual shift away from rates emphasizing sex and age to ones highlighting geography and use. But that will be over considerable time.

In the meantime, discrimination stays.

What doesn't survive is the OAIB, which cost \$10 million to cobble together and which is now abolished.

It will be replaced by another board, which will cost another \$10 million.

The new board (the Insurance Commission) will do the same job as the old board, except that it will individually approve rate increases sought by companies.

To keep the increases down in the first year - the government "expects" these to be an average eight per cent in urban areas and zero in rural areas - the Liberals have pumped in what amounts to \$143 million (plus) in subsidies through tax and payment changes for the insurance companies. The Liberals "expect" (their word) these to be passed on in premium savings.

Former MPP Eli Martel had a line he used to use a lot. It fits in this case. This truly is the most remarkable conversion since Saul hit the road to Damascus.



LETTERS

Mulroney's remarks are confusing smoke screen, teachers' chief says

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following letter by Jim Head, president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney was filed with the Herald for publication.

Dear Prime Minister,
Your recent condemnation of Canadian education, widely quoted in the media, both hurt and confused many of our members at a time of year when they would like to re-enter the classroom with a sense of purpose and renewed enthusiasm.

As the president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, which represents 40,000 members, I also found your remarks confusing.

1. Your government fervently supports increased immigration. Yet, by reducing transfer payments to the provinces, you make it more difficult to provide extra funding for badly needed

English-as-a-second-language resources and teachers.

2. You speak of the need to encourage technology in Canada. Yet is was an earlier Conservative government which axed the Avro-Arrow space program 30 years ago and made this country a bystander in electronics.

3. You speak of the need for more research in this country. Yet I note that Northern Telecom is moving to Texas because of your government's free trade policies.

4. You speak about the importance of education. Yet the proposed nine per cent national sales tax will have a significant negative effect upon education through extra hidden costs which parents and students will have to bear. Hardest hit will be single parents and their children.

5. A federal government which seriously believed in encouraging

the highest possible standards would help establish a Canadian equivalent of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in each province.

6. How often have you taken the time to visit schools like Marc Garneau Secondary School in Metropolitan Toronto (East York), which is named for our well-known Canadian astronaut and which encourages student interest in space technology? I could point to scores of similar examples of excellence throughout this entire province.

Your remarks, sir, sound like a smoke screen for a move to cut back on public funding for education while moving towards privatization of the education system, following Margaret Thatcher's lead.

Surely, students and parents across this country deserve better than that.