

# It's still 'needs' vs. 'wants'

Well, it's been quite a week.

Last weekend, representing the 'silent majority' I said I didn't support the Town of Halton Hills going \$29 million in debt for three new arena ice surfaces.

Apparently I'm not alone— the silent majority ain't so silent this past week.

To date, I have 24 'arena' emails, and with the exception of one, all were in agreement with me.

The managing editor has also received a number of emails and one letter on the same topic.

In addition, I've had several calls in support and numerous people on the street approached to say they were in total agreement with what I wrote last week.

Of those who agreed to have their emails/letters published as letters to the editor, 25 were against the Town going into debt for arenas, and only four in favour.

When I wrote last week's column, I wasn't sure how strongly the silent majority felt about higher taxes and staying out of debt. For a columnist, it's always a test to see if one's gut feeling is on track or not.

But when I see the response from readers this week, I know I'm on track.

The majority of Halton Hills' residents do not want to go into debt to fund arenas.

So where do we go from there?

As I've told several people, I'm not against hockey, just against unnecessary debt. I realize the hockey organizations in town do need more ice time, and more ice pads.

But common sense must enter into the equation. Going into debt is a longtime commitment— we don't want to paint ourselves into a corner and be burdened with debt that could compromise other projects five, 10 or even 15 years down the road.

Can we make do with one or two ice surfaces? Some hockey executive members told me two would probably be enough.

So it's still 'needs' versus 'wants' issue.

Neighbouring communities like Milton will have additional ice surfaces available next year— could they be utilized in the interim? After all, Milton is only 20 minutes away.

From all of this debate, I do hope Halton Hills council takes the voice of the silent majority seriously— council must realize the silent majority is comprised of those who are the most settled in our community, and less likely to relocate—translation, they are voters.

They won't soon forget, especially when

## Ted Brown



reminded by their tax bill every year.

On another note, as the 'yea' and 'nay' comments came in, I saw a pattern emerge.

Those opposing my opinion felt obliged to attack me personally— not debate the issues here. And some of the 'attacks' were almost comical.

One fellow wrote I obviously yearned for the 'old days, when Georgetown was a farming community and I could drive my tractor to town.'

Now for the life of me, I can't ever recall saying that in any column, or, worse still, recall ever driving my tractor to town.

Besides, how is that relevant?

Another said I obviously had no children, or at least, if I did, they never took part in local sports.

Oops, wrong again- for more than 20 years, my kids have all played local sports, competing all over Ontario. In addition, I was an assistant coach of a rep fastball team that won three major championships over a nine-year period.

Even now, as adults, my kids are all still playing local sports, on various teams.

Another critic told me 'Arenas are revenue generators. If managed properly, a majority of the money spent can be recovered through revenue generated by facility rentals, offsetting the costs of the monies borrowed to pay for them.'

Yeah, right— and how many entrepreneurs from the private sector are lining up to build arenas in Halton Hills, since they can make \$0000 much money from them? So far, none.

The wildest response came from a phone call to my editor. The caller took exception that I was 'allowed' to write about this issue. He felt I shouldn't voice my opinion— I might 'sway some people' with my comments.

For that one, I must respond.

In cemeteries all over Europe and Canada, veterans of both world wars lay at rest.

They fought for our freedom.

And, in case you didn't notice, that includes 'freedom of speech'.

**For responses to last week's column see pages 8 and 9**

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## ATHLETES of the week

Acton High School		Christ the King		G.D.H.S	
					
Julie Holms	Krista Evans	Anthony Pinto Da Costa	Ethan Spence	INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE	INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE

**Acton High School** Athletes of the Week are Julie Holms and Krista Evans. Both are members of the Bearcats' junior volleyball team, and were chosen for their game against Pearson. Holms, playing middle, was selected for her good hits and serves while Evans, playing power, was cited for her good serving and team leadership.

**Christ the King Catholic High School** Athletes of the Week are Anthony Pinto Da Costa and Ethan Spence. Spence, a forward on the Jaguars' senior hockey team, was chosen for his dedication and team leadership over the season. Pinto Da Costa, a point guard on the Jag's junior basketball team, was selected for scoring 12 points in a 47-42 win over Oakville-Trafalgar.

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