

## Words hurt

After yet another example of a senior official not thinking before he spoke, we wonder if it's time for some remedial sensitivity training at the Halton Catholic District School Board.

Last Tuesday, the board's Superintendent of Business Services and Treasurer Paul McMahon used the term "Indian giver" to describe the give-and-take funding practices of the Ministry of Education.

McMahon's turn of phrase is especially offensive in light of the board's current involvement in developing a voluntary aboriginal self-identification policy intended to support aboriginal student achievement in Ontario.

The board is also about to finalize details of a new equity and inclusivity policy. It's hard to take either of these efforts seriously when board officials aren't practising what they preach.

Sadly, no one spoke up Tuesday night to challenge McMahon's inappropriate word choice, to demand a retraction or to offer an immediate apology. Then again, given the board's recent track record, perhaps we shouldn't be surprised trustees and board staff sat in stunned silence.

Three months ago Halton Catholic board chair Alice Anne LeMay compared the board's ban on gay-straight alliance groups (GSAs) to banning Nazi groups at Halton schools. The remark sparked widespread outrage, leaving board officials scrambling with excuses that the words were quoted out of context.

LeMay offered an apology only after the story had already made headlines and steadfastly refused to resign, a decision unanimously supported by her colleagues.

The unwillingness of anyone at the board to stand up Tuesday night and state categorically that statements like these simply aren't acceptable in 2011 is disturbing.

It concerns us that McMahon's and LeMay's poor choice of words could happen in such a short period of time. Shouldn't a board-wide memo have been circulated after the first incident?

In an ironic twist, the school board issued a release on Wednesday congratulating student winners of regional public speaking contests.

Perhaps these children could teach the grown-ups that timeless lesson that goes— if you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all.

### Letters to the editor policy

Letters must include an address and daytime telephone number. Anonymous letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 150 words and may be edited for content and/or length. Publication is not guaranteed.

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### WEB POLL RESULTS

Have the local candidates' efforts, so far, increased your interest in the federal election campaign?

- Yes (14%)
- No (86%)

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## Letters to the editor

### Development doesn't have to be a negative

Dear editor,  
 I think David W. McNally's March 22 letter (Water problem is Town's main issue) demonstrates the right attitude toward development in Georgetown: we should be more proactive and involved with plans for our future growth, rather than just defensive of an increasing urban boundary while others set the agenda.

But, in addition, maybe it is worth exploring ways in which development can be seen as a positive thing rather than a bad thing by those who disagree with him.

I don't blame anyone for assuming that development will necessary be a bad thing— examples of it are everywhere in the GTA, and are especially evident in north Brampton.

But if development gave back to the people who lived where it is scheduled to go in ways other than financial ones— if it made the town more attractive, or made its inhabitants' lives more convenient or fulfilling— then perhaps there would not be so much opposition.

As it stands today, the default

assumption that new development will be a net loss to those who already live here— that it will give back only monotonous sprawl, traffic, and noise pollution, whose collective offensiveness is only somewhat offset by tax revenue and therefore lower taxes— is a reasonable one.

Georgetown's downtown area is attractive and functional, and the plans for the land surrounding the GO station in Georgetown seem to be good ones. I hope that we are capable of more of the same as this town expands.

*Matthew Buckley-Golder,  
 Georgetown*

### Reader eager to vote

Dear editor,  
 Re: *Federal budget likely to spark May election*, March 24.

Slick budget talk remains the opposite of the walk. The 40-year, two-party tradition of impoverishment to make the few ultra-rich, massively richer, continues.

The corporate/government takeover of Canada continues to regulate, legislate and profit from every facet of our lives, while "regulating" small businesses out of business, (not fair governance).

Election? Yes, immediately. Wellington-Halton Hills MP Michael Chong claims that the "budget reflects the input we received from Canadians right across the country" yet addresses only crumbs, no cookies, and certainly not the full jar.

By "input", does he mean the enormous public opposition to draconian Bill C36? (passed)...or perhaps the currently ignored huge opposition to GMO-alfalfa, Franken-pigs and salmon? What about CODEX and all the other pro-corporation international "obligations" we have been signed up for without our consent?

This is the budget "input from Canadians" the Conservatives heard:

- \$1B subsidy— tar sands & oil development
- \$1B CEO tax breaks
- \$2B MORE military
- \$4B/yr F35 fighter jets, increased jails, G8/G20 "security"
- \$11B corporate tax cuts
- "Respect" the last election? Not me. Walk the talk. I pray Canadians wake up and vote. The cookies need fair distribution among and for Canadians...you know, like in a real democracy.

*Rob Glassford, Acton*