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EDITORIAL

Think about shopping here

A recent survey of retailers in Ontario showed that they are optimistic about the now-starting Christmas shopping season.

Over the last three years, retailers have taken a beating with below average sales and less than exciting Christmas rushes.

Locally we witness everyday just how hard this recession has been on our retailers. Drive down any commercial street in Acton or Georgetown and the number of empty stores is almost staggering.

For the most part, our retailers are small business women and men, running family businesses or small chains.

All of them deserve our support throughout the year and especially at Christmas when we are all a little more free with the cash.

When you go Christmas shopping this year, take a look locally before you travel to Guelph or Brampton or Oakville or Toronto.

Local retailers often have equal selection to larger centres, they always have knowledgeable staff and, for the most part, are well stocked.

The added advantage of shopping locally is that most local retailers are only too happy to help consumers who are having problems with purchases or purchasing.

Despite appearances, we are not trying to be pro-business with our praise of local business.

We have all had experiences where the local retailer simply could not get what we needed or get it fast enough, or get it in the right color.

While we are not trying to appear to be pro-business, we are however, pro-people. It is, after all, people - often our own neighbor - who are running shops or even employed by a local retailer.

So, why the push to "shop at home"? The same day that the optimistic retailers report came out, another report was published saying consumers have less to spend and are less willing to spend it.

We hope that is not the case here.



Heavy snows Monday and Tuesday turned most of Halton Hills into a winter wonderland, especially areas along the Credit River. Photo by Wendy Long

Readers' writes

Dear Editor,

After reading Mr. Reg Finlayson's letter expressing the concerns of Hurricane Hockey parents in the Nov. 4, 1992 issue of the "Halton Hills This Week", I had mixed feelings. Should I, as President of Georgetown Minor Hockey, lend credence to any of this gentleman's statements by responding, or should I remain silent. Not likely!

I too must speak on behalf of concerned parents - Georgetown Minor Hockey parents. Also, I must, and will speak, for the multitude of executive volunteers who are sick and tired of being ridiculed, and maligned by individuals who have no idea or concept, or for that matter, any interest in the tireless efforts put forth by past, present and yes - future G.M.H.A. executive boards.

I would like to make one thing perfectly clear, my response is not to be misconstrued as an attempt to defend the actions of the G.M.H.A. - not a chance! I will, however, address some of the statements by Mr. Finlayson in which he attempts to discredit the G.M.H.A. with his seemingly supportive information.

The twenty eight (28) Hurricane players, in actual fact, represents a mere 3.5% of all registrants (total being 763) in Georgetown Minor Hockey. And yes, Mr. Finlayson, despite the "cross Canada decline" (I'm sure you have supportive statistics) in enrollment, our registration has increased, and you or anyone else are more than welcome to view supportive records.

Obviously the G.M.H.A. must be doing something right. Actually, a simple drive down the Ninth Line will show anyone why our registration is up - it's called "increased residential development!" This increase will also affect schools, other sports activities, service clubs, churches and Parks and Recreation programs. Unfortunately, the facilities to handle these demands have not increased - time for an additional arena!

The G.M.H.A. is not the sole tenant of the arenas. We share with industrial and non-contact leagues, The Junior A Team and figure skating. We have no control over "out of town" industrial teams or any

This year, the G.M.H.A. has three additional representative teams and three House League teams. These teams add approximately 144 games to our ice time allotment. At the bare minimum, 144 hours of additional ice over the last year is required.

Add to this the formation of several House League select teams, increased development in the form of power skating and goalie clinics and the Initiation program, designed to develop young hockey players, and it's not hard to see why our own ice requirements have increased drastically. We also provide ice time to the Georgetown Referees Association which they utilize to train, develop, encourage and increase their membership. For the first time in years, the G.M.H.A. is providing practice ice to its House League teams. This time still only nets each team three additional ice times per year. Not a lot, considering House Leagues comprise the vast majority of registrants.

It should also be noted that due to a decline in registration, the Hurricanes have three teams less than last year and therefore, ice requirements have diminished accordingly.

Your reference to the original agreement between the Hurricanes and the G.M.H.A. is limited, at best. There are many "objectives" which have been since ignored by the Hurricanes, which you do not refer to.

While your suggestion that the "quality" objective has been accomplished, this objective encompasses only twenty-eight (28) players, out of a total of 763 registered. One of the "aims and objectives" as spelled out in the G.M.H.A. constitution states - "To foster, promote and teach amateur hockey within the town of Georgetown and to provide maximum opportunity for all eligible individuals to participate equally".

That, Mr. Finlayson, is our mandate and that is exactly what all our executive members are focused on. Our objectives are to provide a program for all participants and we try to make that program as equal as possible. We work hard and we work long. We don't profess to be professionals, but that doesn't mean that we are without direction.

Your question, "Is the G.M.H.A. executive really making decisions which benefit the kids?" is most offensive. Which kids are you referring to? The twenty-eight (28) with "hockey ability" mentioned in your letter? Obviously, the G.M.H.A. does not function to serve the demands of "elitists" requirements.

Surely, you also must remember the statements of your own Vice Chairman of Hockey when he reminded us in his Aug. 26 1992 remarks to the local newspapers - "that the majority of Hurricanes are from Milton only because many of the best players and coaches are from Milton". He went on to say that "the ice which was offered to the Hurricanes was at Memorial Arena, which is not suitable for 'AAA', was more than suitable for all hockey in Georgetown. The Vice Chairman's remarks "smack" of an elitist attitude.

And no - Mr. Finlayson, there is no "hidden agenda", whatever that is supposed to mean!

There are many additional points which I would like to make, but enough is enough. I have the unanimous backing of the G.M.H.A. executive and quite frankly, we are fed up with the constant ridicule of "concerned individuals".

If you're that concerned, get involved -- and you'll answer your own question "who is ultimately responsible for the actions of the G.M.H.A.?" You may think this is a "joke", Mr. Finlayson, but believe me, over 763 hockey players, their parents, their friends and a dedicated, hard working, unheralded executive board in Georgetown is not laughing.

Talk to these people and they'll give you the "logical" explanation which you seem to find so elusive. Don't forget, members of the G.M.H.A., as surprising as you may find it, are taxpayers also!

The vast majority would appear to be more than satisfied with the current program. No more "jokes", Mr. Finlayson. We also think it's sad.

Thank you for your "jaded" concerns and let me assure you that we will continue our efforts in the hopes of fulfilling our aims and objectives which encompass all hockey players in town.

Yours in hockey,
Hal Pells, President
Georgetown Minor Hockey

For Pete's Sake by Roe



Letters Welcomed

Halton Hills This Week welcomes your letters. Letters must be signed and include your full name and address. Names will be withheld on request.

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Send your letter to:
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