

Opinion

Halton Hills

THIS WEEK

Halton Hills This Week, Weekend edition is published every Saturday at 232 Guelph St., Georgetown, Ont. L7G 4B1, and is printed in Oakville at Q.E. Web Printing. Halton Hills This Week claims copyright on all original editorial and advertising material created by its employees and reproduced by this newspaper. Such material may only be reproduced on written consent of the publisher. In the event of typographical error advertising goods or services at wrong price, goods or services may not be sold. Advertising is merely an offer to sell which may be withdrawn at any time.

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Give small business a break

In days of olde, when knights were not, you at least had an unwritten code when it came to street fighting. You didn't kick the guy when he was down!

That code of the streets seems to have gone the way of good manners. But in a twisted bit of logic, small businesses and secondary industries in Canada - especially Ontario - could not be blamed for yearning for yester-years when at least they could expect a mini-bang for their investment bucks and the countless number of hours they toiled in the so-called free enterprise system of 'Eh Canada.' Similarly, they never expected to be kicked when they were down.

The Canadian economy was built on resource industries. But when it became clear the particular fruits of these industries - forestry, minerals and fisheries in particular - were either suffering depletion or a drop in market value, Canadian business courage - on a large scale - was notable for its absence.

The Fat cats (for the most part) closed their fat wallets to Canadian concerns and instead, invested either off-shore, in Europe, South America or in Asia.

Foreign interests, especially from the United States, were allowed to invest in Canada on a large scale, and this made-at-home laissez faire attitude meant that the huge companies and business conglomerates popping up in the mid-70s through the 80s owed allegiance not to the True North Strong and Free but to an absentee landlord who wouldn't know a moose from a muskrat - and cared even less.

All the while in the background, however, small 'C' capitalist entrepreneurial Canadians were working their butts off in communities like Halton Hills to make their small businesses and factories successful and possibly make a few dollars. Of more importance, though, they were providing much-needed employment in small to medium size communities ensuring continuity in the social fabric - in other words, playing a large part in building the sense of community and local pride which, basically, is why we Homo Sapiens decided to congregate in settlements in the first place. These same hard-working small business people also coughed up a fair chunk of coin of the realm in taxes allowing much-needed infrastructure to be put into place which, in turn, attracted more residents.

The world-wide recession, ill thought-out economic policies, the ill-timed Free Trade Act with the United States; all caused a majority of the aforementioned robber barons to pack up their booty in their old kit bags and wave a deceitful fond farewell as they skittered across the border, or similarly, took to the airways.

Good riddance, some of us thought! At least we still have our made in Canada small business people to carry the load until viable economic policies can be developed and the recession peaks - as it always does according to our brilliant economists.

So what happens? Just when they're needed most, small businesses find the tap has run out at our major banks! Their lines of credit are cut! Politicians - both federal and provincial who promised help - are nowhere to be found.

And in Ontario, Bobby - no Rae of sunshine here - and his confused NDP caucus, throw up even more roadblocks (employment equity legislation for a start) to a struggling but integral part of our eventual recovering economy.

As laid out by John Duncan, just to the right of this column, suggested reforms to workers compensation, just might sound the death knell for a number of small companies in Ontario, teetering precariously on the edge of the financial grave.

Colin Gibson

The People's Corner

WCB cost is crushing small business

Editor's note: The following letter was released to HHTW for publication.

The Honorable R. Rae
Premier
Province of Ontario

Dear Premier:

I am writing this letter to express my concerns regarding comments made before the Standing Committee of Government Agencies on September 13-16, 1993 by Mr. Odoardo Di Santo, Chairman of the Worker's Compensation Board.

As a member of the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce, I feel these proposed reforms will cripple the growth of small business in our community and throughout Ontario. Small businesses are beleaguered by the oppressive tax and regulatory environment in

Ontario and they badly need relief. They cannot afford the already heavily burdened WCB assessment rates, and there is no question that small business is where the recovery will start.

The Chairman, Mr. Odoardo Di Santo, supports a universal system of coverage, regardless of size or work performed. His support of the extension of entitlement to cover "chronic stress" opens a very large black hole of unrealized costs. The WCB and governments acknowledge the crisis facing the financial side of the WCB. I believe, as do many others, action needs to be taken immediately to force the WCB to cut spending and become financially responsible.

Our company in 1994 will

be faced with a WCB rate increase (approximate increase of \$4,000 per year). From 1990 to present, our company has only had one claim with loss of time. This type of unnecessary increase will only have one conclusion - cut back in budgets, salaries, and no increase in job planning.

The Effective Tax Rate for small business is now 56 per cent and the UIC rate will in all probability increase by another 8 per cent in 1994. The Government of Ontario is

spending money for training and job creation, but if something isn't done immediately there will not be any small business.

Your help on this critical issue to stop the WCB 1994 rate decision and focus on sensible reform will ensure the growth of small business in Ontario.

Yours truly,

John Duncan, President
D.D.H. Distribution Service
Georgetown

Day Care Centre successful fundraiser

To the Editor:

Please accept this letter for publication, to thank the parents, staff and many local businesses for their donations towards the second annual fund-raiser for Moore Place Day Care.

A special thanks goes to Mrs. Thelma Hearn who made the lovely porcelain doll that was our first prize and to local artist, Shirley Deaville who donated a collectors plate that was our second prize.

As you may be aware, Moore Place Day Care is a non-profit organization and has to rely on outside contri-

butions such as volunteer work and donations.

We are proud to say, with the support of this community, we managed to collect \$1,291.25, which makes us very happy.

With the funds, we are planning to buy an industrial dishwasher for the day care.

Thanks again, sincerely,

Lucy Quaglia
Administrator
for Judy Deamude, the
Board of Directors
Staff and the Children
and Moore Place Day
Care
Georgetown

Shadbolt re-confirmed

To the Editor:

My leadership of the Ontario Libertarian Party was confirmed at the Ontario Leadership Convention held at the end of November in Mississauga.

I feel this is quite an accomplishment, since all of our members can vote by attending the convention, or send in a proxy to vote. The Libertarians are the only party that allows all members to vote. I think one would have to admit this makes us the only truly democratic party in Canada.

I helped Hill Cox, Leader of the Libertarian Party of Canada in his campaign to run for the MP's job in Halton. As leader of the OLP I was interested in learning what lies the Liberals, PC's and NDP had to tell the voters.

I was interested to see Mr. Duignan at most, if not all, the all-candidates meetings, supporting Norma Peterson, his executive secretary. Obviously he was interested in the stories put out by the parties to get votes, as was I. The difference was that Norma Peterson is on the government pay roll, as is Noel. It's comforting to know that our MPP can spare the time to run around at the Federal election.

I do wonder how much our two NDP government people charged the poor old taxpayers for their services. I wonder if they refused pay and expenses for doing personal business from the Ontario government?

It is lonely running for the Libertarian Party - people do not want to hear the truth. It is much more comforting to be told fairy stories by the old line parties. They never lied to your prior to this election, so why would they lie now?

In my files I have a bulletin put out by the Libertarians in 1984. I quote some of the things said in this publication.

Page 16 - De-Nationalizing the debt. The public debt itself has grown like a cancer in recent years, from \$19 billion in 1973 to \$34 billion in 1977 and \$95 billion in 1982, and during the 1983/84 fiscal year, shot past \$150 billion. A vicious cycle has been established, etc., etc.

This is only one issue in this publication. Did anyone list? Certainly Liberals, PC's and NDP clearly did not give a damn. Did anyone listen to the Libertarians - obviously not many.

Because people do not want to listen, does this make us wrong? No! We know that common sense will one day prevail, as will we.

John Shadbolt, Leader
Ontario Libertarian
Acton



While reflecting last Monday at St. George's Anglican Church in Georgetown during a service of Remembrance and Commitment to Change and Transformation, hosted by the Women's Ecumenical Circle, Tara Robinson (centre) hoped her 2-year-old daughter Amber would experience a kinder gentler society in the future. The candlelight vigil was in honor of the 4th Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre of 14 women at l'Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal on Dec. 6, 1989.

photo by Simon Wilson/HHTW

Common sense lauded

To the Editor:

Common sense prevailed! I was pleased to read in your paper that the Halton Board of Education and the Canadian Federation of Teachers reached an agreement on how to handle social contract days. They managed to comply with Ontario's

legislation without our children missing any instructional days. As a taxpayer and as a parent, I appreciate their ability to compromise without impacting our children's important classroom time. Well done!

Lois Fraser
Limehouse