

## EDITORIAL

With Hartley Coles



# Toronto plan would split Halton Hills

When Alex McKee, a candidate in the provincial election, suggested the break-up of Halton Hills into separate municipalities of Acton and Georgetown he probably didn't know at the time how prophetic his words were.

Within two months of the election a Metro Toronto staff report has recommended the same thing. Their vision of a new, greater Toronto regional government would include the south and most populous end of Halton Hills – Georgetown and district – merging with the Town of Milton.

The rural and less-populated parts of both Halton Hills and Milton, including Acton, would be excluded from the so-called Greater Toronto Area (GTA). That would include most land on a line which roughly follows the Niagara Escarpment in its giant step across the Region of Halton.

The north end of the old Township of Esquesing, as well as almost the entire old Township of Nassagaweya and the north end of the old Township of Nelson, would either be part of a new municipality or left to their own devices.

Naturally, despite claims, there is a lot of self-interest on the part of Metro in their land grab, which would reduce the present 30 municipalities in the GTA to 15 (and rub out 108 politicians by reducing their numbers to 26 from 134).

The report's author, Bob Richards, has said the move is following Metro through to its "logical conclusion." By this he means Metro would be able to tap into a larger tax base which in turn would make the GTA a stronger, more prosperous region with a solid downtown core.

Richards sees the regions outside Metro also benefitting by an increased level of service, especially in areas such as public transit. The downside is they would be expected to help fund cultural assets such as the O'Keefe Centre and Exhibition Place.

Richards is quoted as saying it is what the public wants ... it is not just a tax or assessment grab; it's the path to more efficient, low-cost government.

Before you dismiss the idea as unlikely, speak to Mayor Marilyn Serjeantson. She believes Premier Mike Harris is being influenced by ideas such as Richards'.

Probably the most disturbing element in all the hubbub is the fact that smaller communities such as Halton Hills are not being consulted. All the planning is being done in the large municipalities such as Brampton and Mississauga, which already are an extension of Canada's largest city. They have nothing to lose; their boundaries aren't likely to change unless it is by extension.

Meanwhile, out in the boonies where most of us live by preference, the alarm bells are starting to ring. Councillors Rick Bonnette and Norm Elliott have expressed their concern about Halton Hills being part of one huge megatropolis with little or no representation politically.

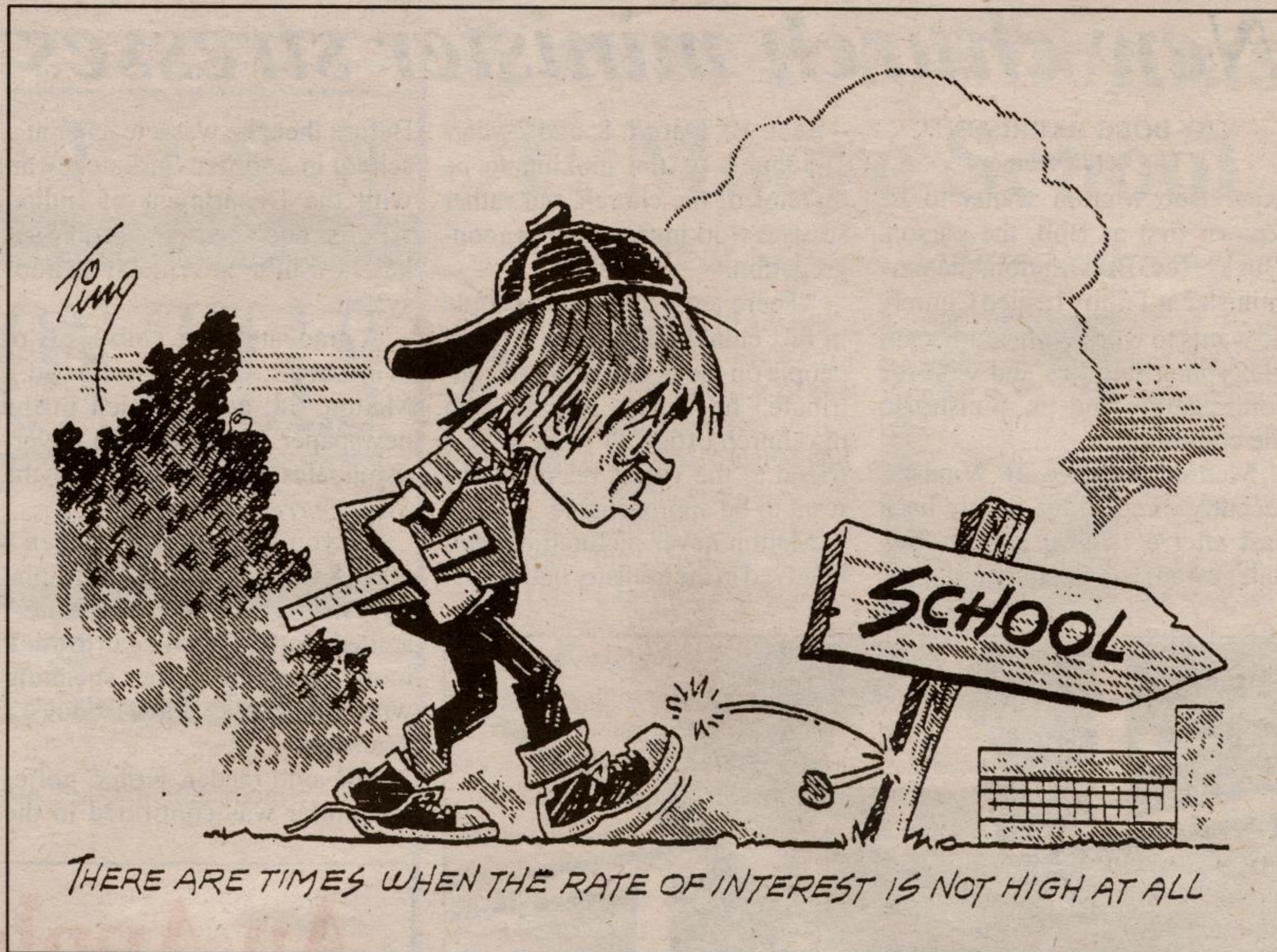
Bonnette says "It's like the mouse being in bed with the elephant. Well, the elephant is about to roll over; it's time for the mouse to get out of bed."

Cynics among us, no doubt, point out that local politicians are maybe being self-serving, too, since they stand to lose their influence and possibly their jobs. Possibly, but the two local councillors probably reflect majority opinion in this town, which is only just on the threshold of celebrating (or mourning) the formation of the Town of Halton Hills a scant 22 years ago.

If Richards' plan were adopted, then Acton and most of the surrounding rural areas would be flying on their own again. I can hear some of you saying "Good, let's get out of this 'bigger and better' boondoggle."

If only it were that simple. If only we could get control of our own destiny again and plan our own future. But geographically and historically we are tied in with the rest of Halton Region. If Richards' plan was adopted there would be some tough fiscal issues to face in this beautiful part of Ontario.

Keep watching.



## LETTERS

### Vote for 'Dawkins'

To the Editor,

When the Board of Education trustees make a decision about the re-naming of the two Acton schools, they should not forget the contributions made by Gary Dawkins to education not only in Acton, but in the outlying areas.

Two of my children attended Speyside Public School when Mr. Dawkins was its principal. We, and other parents, were always very impressed with him as an effective administrator, a caring educator and a responsible member of the community.

Gary Dawkins's early death was a great loss. Since Speyside School no longer exists, naming the Acton complex after him would honour not only Mr. Dawkins but the

Speyside community as well.

For practical purposes, the two Acton schools should retain their existing names – M.Z. Bennett and McKenzie-Smith. Since they are two distinct schools, they should have two distinct names.

There is no reason why former educators should have their names removed from the schools. Present residents and former students are used to the names. Therefore, retaining the present names is less confusing.

However, since the schools are to be linked, a single title could be given to the complex.

Acton Public School makes it sound as if there is only one elementary school in Acton. McKenzie-Smith-Bennett would be redundant if the two buildings retain their names.

My suggestion (like that of Brian Smith and Hartley Coles) would be to call the entire complex The Gary Dawkins Education Centre.

Janet Armstrong  
R.R. 1, Acton

### La Leche invite

To the Editor,

Mothers who wish to breastfeed their babies will find encouragement and information at the Acton and Georgetown La Leche League.

The next meeting is next Wednesday, Sept. 13, at 7:30 pm. Nursing babies are welcome.

The League offers mother-to-

mother help. The meeting discussions include the latest medical research as well as personal experience.

The topic of discussion for this meeting is: "Research Proves Superiority of Mother's Milk."

For more information call 877-0496 or 876-1932.

Donna Tensuda  
La Leche League

### Meeting tomorrow

To the Editor,

The Halton Regional Catholic Parent Teacher Association is alive and prospering in Halton. The newly elected executive have made a commitment to bring in speakers to improve the understanding of education in Ontario.

The first of these speakers will be making his presentation tomorrow (Thursday).

Mr. Clyde Glasgow of the London Board of Education will discuss the formation of school councils. Mr. Glasgow will focus on the formation of councils and parental involvement.

Mr. Glasgow has served with the Ministry of Education and Training and is currently a direc-

tor of the Federation of Catholic Parents Teachers Association of Ontario (FCPTAO).

The information meeting will take place at Notre Dame High School, 2333 Headon Forest Drive, Burlington at 7:30 pm.

You are welcome to contact Virginia Hardy, president of the Halton Catholic Parent Teacher Association at 905-335-8369 for more information on the evening or the association.

Bob Maki  
Halton Catholic CPTA

## SPEAK UP!

Write a Letter to the Editor

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