

## EDITORIAL

With Karen Wetmore



# Ads + safety = \$\$

In elementary school, I never had to take the bus. We lived within walking distance of the two schools I attended, as did every other student.

So every time we planned to go on a class trip, the excitement would build – we were going to get to ride a school bus! What's part of some students' every day routine was for us a thrill, an adventure.

We'd clamour aboard and fight over who got to sit in the back row (what we assumed was the coolest spot to sit) and over who would become our seat-mate.

Because it was so different for us, we were harder to manage. Sitting still and listening to the teacher or bus driver was an almost impossible task.

It wasn't until I left elementary school that I discovered exactly how mundane taking the bus could be. My five years of high school included riding a city bus to and from school *every day*. The bus I took was usually filled with other students, and there were many days when the ride was so silent and subdued we could hear every word coming over the driver's radio.

Based on my experiences, I think elementary school students who have to take a school bus in every day fall somewhere in the middle. In September, when everything is new for them, the ride is exciting and fun. But then habits start forming. Students start choosing the same seats, sit with the same friends, and so on.

The same thing will happen if the Halton Board of Education decides to start using advertising messages on and inside its school buses.

Ward 1 and 2 trustee Ethel Gardiner recently voted against this advertising in principle and was in the minority. Gardiner is worried children's safety may be affected if they get distracted by the ads. That being young and curious, they'll want to go up to the buses and touch the ads, forgetting the safety rules which have become part of their habit.

I don't think this will happen once the students are accustomed to seeing these advertisements on their buses. If the school board decides to use them, perhaps the ads could be brought into the classroom before going on the buses. That way, the children could have the chance to see them up close, while the interest is at its highest. At the same time, give them a refresher course on bus safety rules, including the rule to keep away from the ads outside of the bus.

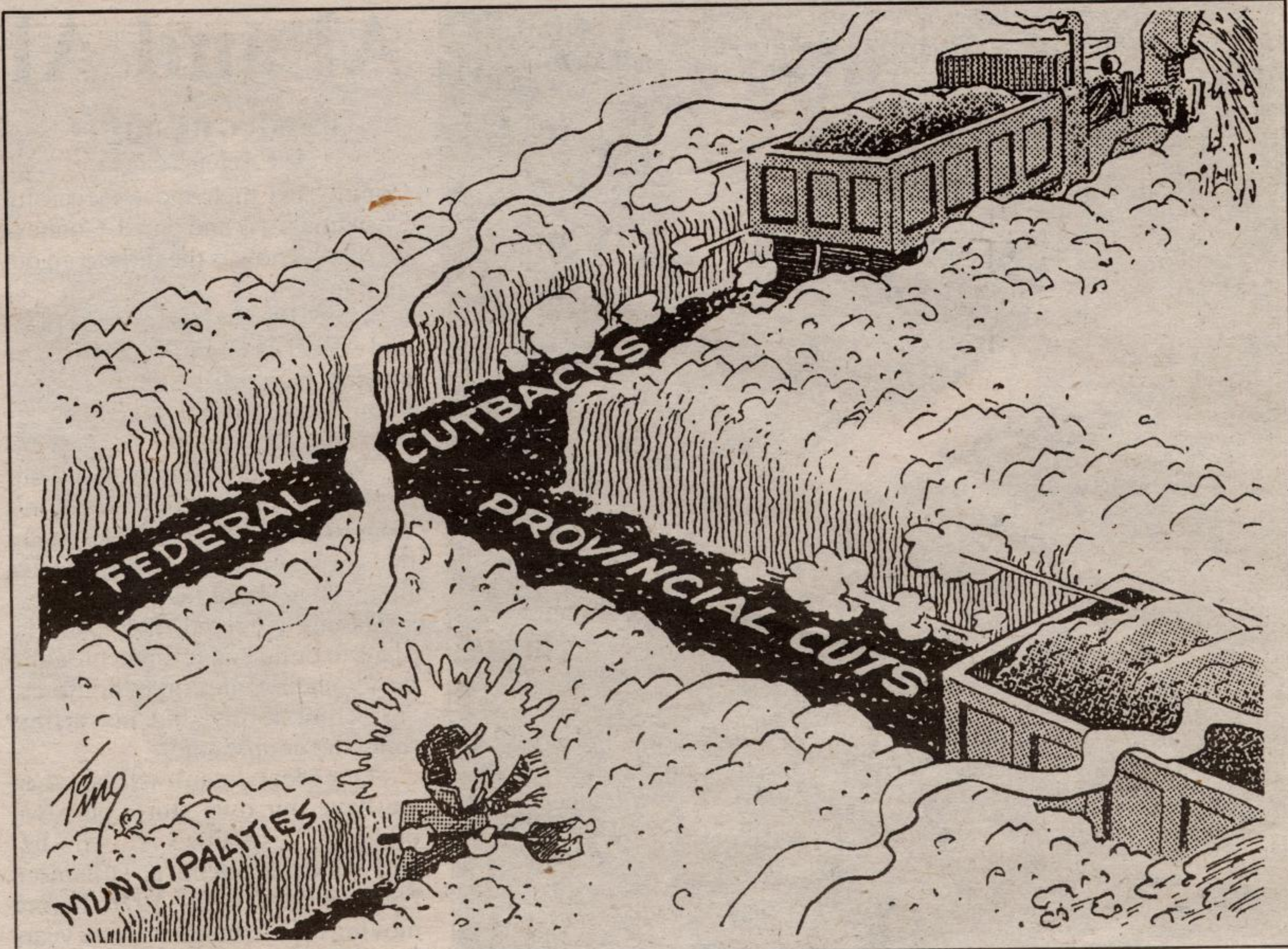
Gardiner's point on safety is well made. The exterior ads on buses should not have any potential to harm a child, no matter how many rules he or she is breaking by getting too close to them or otherwise not behaving.

But to deny the school board the opportunity to bring in, according to one advertising firm's estimate, \$216,828 annually, is a step in the wrong direction. Recent government cutbacks have hit school boards from all directions.

Picking up revenue through advertising seems to be working for the Wellington County Board of Education, which started putting ads on its buses in April 1995. This board is actively promoting the concept to other school boards in Ontario.

The Halton Board will be voting on this issue once more information is available on the project and it is presented to the trustees.

Let's hope the trustees, as taxpayers, realize the financial burden they could be lifting if they vote to use advertising on their school buses.



## LETTERS

### Centre's success due to public support

To the Editor,

Last Thursday, McKenzie-Smith Bennett Public School's Drop-In Centre was another great success, with over 100 students in attendance!

On this night, the Rising Sun Karate Club in Georgetown, taught karate techniques to a large group of interested kids, which gave them

an evening filled with fun and exercise. The Rising Sun was represented by Sensei Debbie Crispin and several of her karate students, who volunteered their time to help with the demonstrations and organization of the evening.

On behalf of McKenzie-Smith Bennett School, the Drop-In Centre's organizing parents and teachers, and the students, we would like to thank the Rising Sun Karate Club, Sensei Crispin, and her team for their time and effort. It is because of people like you that our Drop-In Centre has been such a success.

Thank you Rising Sun Karate Club!

*The Drop-In Centre staff  
McKenzie-Smith Bennett*

### Region to change?

To the Editor,

It is not yet official, but it appears that redistribution is upon us. It looks as if the riding of Halton-Peel will no longer exist as such, but will become the riding of Halton. The Peel portion will incorporate into parts of Wellington and Dufferin.

As soon as the official map comes down, it will be made public. It looks as if your member will be contesting what was essentially the old provincial riding of Halton Burlington. The one caution is that it is not yet official.

And now for a personal concern. The federal member has no

influence over what happens with the future of the GTA, but I would urge every citizen in these coming weeks and months to write, fax and phone all of those who will have something to say in the negotiations not to further dilute the budgets for police services.

Policing in Halton has remained of the highest quality, while our officers are being stretched to the limit. If the GTA ends up reforming, let's give our police a break.

I guess I've over-stepped my jurisdiction. Just accept it as the concern of one more citizen who cares about safe homes and safe streets.

*Julian Reed, MP  
Halton-Peel*



*Write a Letter to the Editor!*

## THE ACTON Tanner

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PHONE:  
**519-853-5100**  
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**519-853-5040**