

# THE HALTON COMPASS

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## Cartoons are new art form

### Local artist finds his voice on the Internet

BY ANN KORNUA

The hardest working cartoonist on the internet goes by the penname "Inkz" or to those who really know the man behind the character, Greg Aikenhead. Every night when he comes home at 12:30am he walks downstairs to his basement studio to put another panel together for his newest cartoon masterpiece "Echo Therapy." Loosely based on his own life and experiences as a cartoonist caught in dreams and conflicts, and striving to find his voice as an artist.

Greg started his passion for cartooning when attending high school, submitting his work for a local underground 'Zine' called Agent Orange. He enrolled and attended Sheridan's Illustration course from September 1999 to April 2001.

The website, (<http://macstudios.keenspace.com>) first constructed in 1998 was a comic dealing with the slacker culture of video games and geek lifestyle. "I was previously very anti computer before going into Sheridan and I knew nothing about building a website or Photoshop". Greg received help at the beginning from his friend Sean Carter with layout and design of the website and some of the original code that was made over 7 years ago is still being used. "This started out purely just for fun. Many of the early cartoons were under that theme: Just fun between friends was always the backbone of the original series." During the last year and a half he received a lot of fan mail, submissions from fans, and other artist's renditions of the characters. "Our characters would appear in other popular online comics and at that time web comics were starting to gain prominence."

Greg stopped working on M.A.C. Studios and put it on hiatus during his last year of college because M.A.C. Studios was a "free time project" and he was finding that his free time was in short supply. The website remained dormant until recently this year when his new project Echo Therapy debuted in July.

When people go to M.A.C studios now they get Echo Therapy where Michael D. Pearen, a character based on elements of Greg's life, who finds no one is telling him what to do anymore. Working the same job he had since High school, Michael deals with day-to-day life while trying to develop his passion for art more time and energy is required for Echo Therapy than the original M.A.C. strips. "The old comics would take me roughly 10 hours to write and draw every week. Now I spend almost three times as much time taking reference photos and traditionally inking each panel (instead of using the computer) and scanning into my computer where I can render segments, add my text and work with each image until I have achieved what I feel captures what direction and mood I am trying to portray to my readers."

So why do it? "It's something that has to be done. You just don't feel right unless you're doing it properly as they say about writers: 'a writer writes'. The same is true of all artists. The website is my outlet. Unfortunately the internet is an enormous place and there is a chance no one will notice what you're doing so in the end you can't do it for the money and you can't do it for the fan mail. You have to be doing it for yourself. You have to do it because it's what you love to do."



One of Greg Aikenhead's online cartoons.

The Regional Municipality of Halton  
*A Partnership That Works!*



Attention Halton Gardeners!

## Fall Compost Give Away

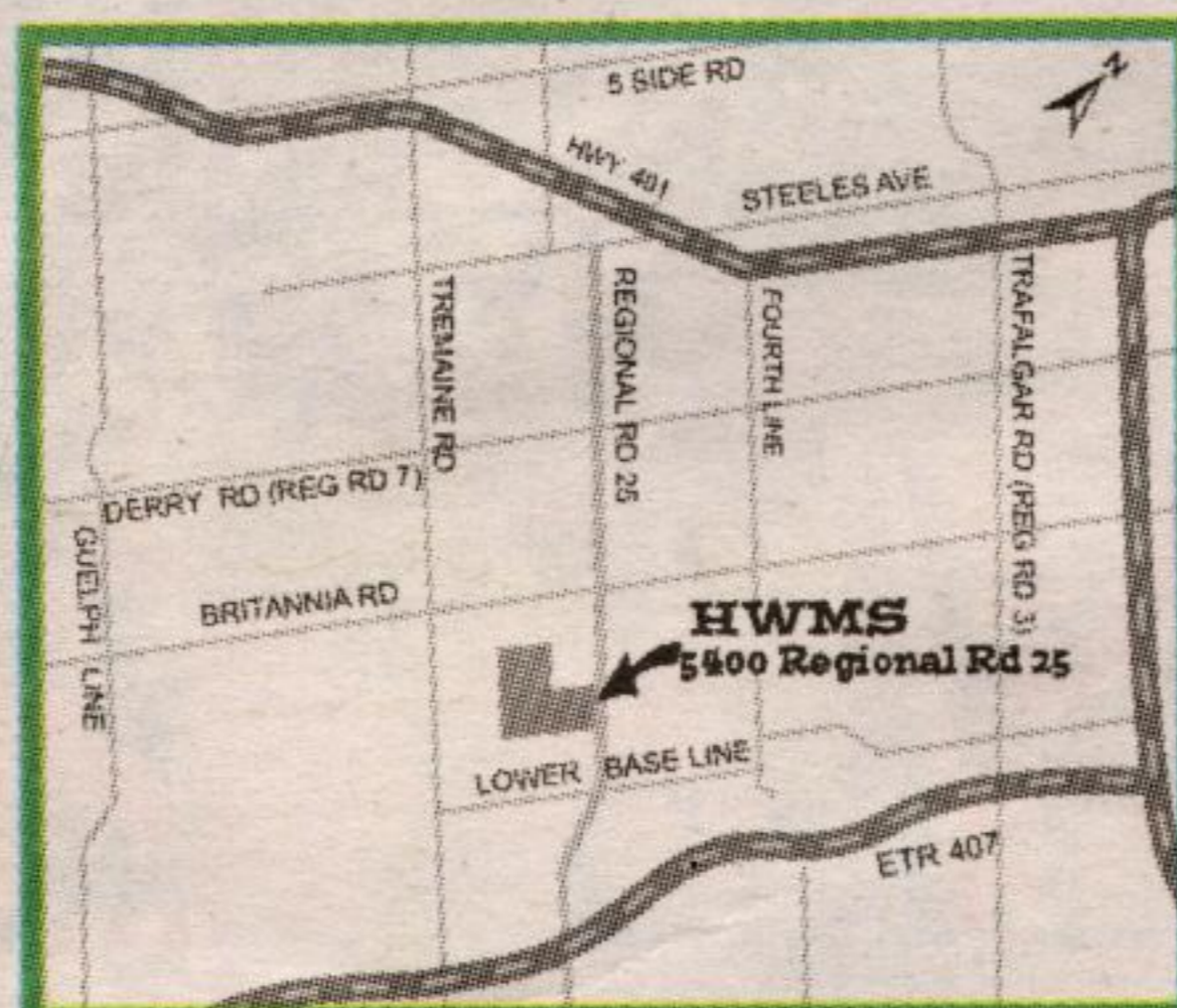
Monday, September 20th - Saturday, September 25th  
 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

While quantities last

Halton Residents are welcome to collect rich, garden friendly compost produced through Halton's centralized composting program.

- All Halton households can collect a maximum of seven bags of compost.
- Residents are responsible for shovelling and bagging their own compost.
- Please bring your own bags/containers and shovel.
- Donations of non-perishable food items or cash will also be gratefully accepted on behalf of Halton area food banks.

Halton Waste Management Site,  
 5400 Regional Rd. 25, Milton



House Cleaning? We Can Help!

Bring your reusable clothing and household items to the Salvation Army Depot at Halton's Waste Management Site.



A Community Partnership



1151 Bronte Road, Oakville, ON L6M 3L1  
 905-825-6000 Toll free: 1-866-4HALTON (1-866-442-5866) TTY 905-827-9833  
 or visit us at: [www.region.halton.on.ca](http://www.region.halton.on.ca)

## EDITORIAL

The 1960 US election campaign which brought JFK to the presidency, was notable for the depths to which the candidates sank. Surprisingly the lowest blow was dealt by JFK. His negative ad campaign featured a photograph of a shifty eyed Richard Nixon, replete with five o'clock shadow, framed by the question "would you buy a used car from this man?" The American public (at that time at least) would not.

Running a newspaper gives one at least a nodding relationship with the politicians and bureaucrats who run our fair region. I don't get misty eyed about them but then neither do I get that queasy feeling that the Americans felt in 1960. On balance, I feel pretty good about them and their abilities.

I'm obviously not alone. Standard and Poors must feel the same way in that they gave a AAA rating to Halton. If my years on Bay Street taught me anything, it's that only three things matter in assessing a corporation: management; management, and yes, management. The CAO (i.e. manager) of the Region, Brent Marshall, does not sport a five o'clock shadow or shifty eyes. And yes, I might even buy a used car from this man.