

# EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

## Amalgamation or stay the course?

Should Halton Hills merge with another municipality, probably Milton, so the new and larger Town (or city) could have a stronger voice in the Region, or possibly the Greater Toronto Area?

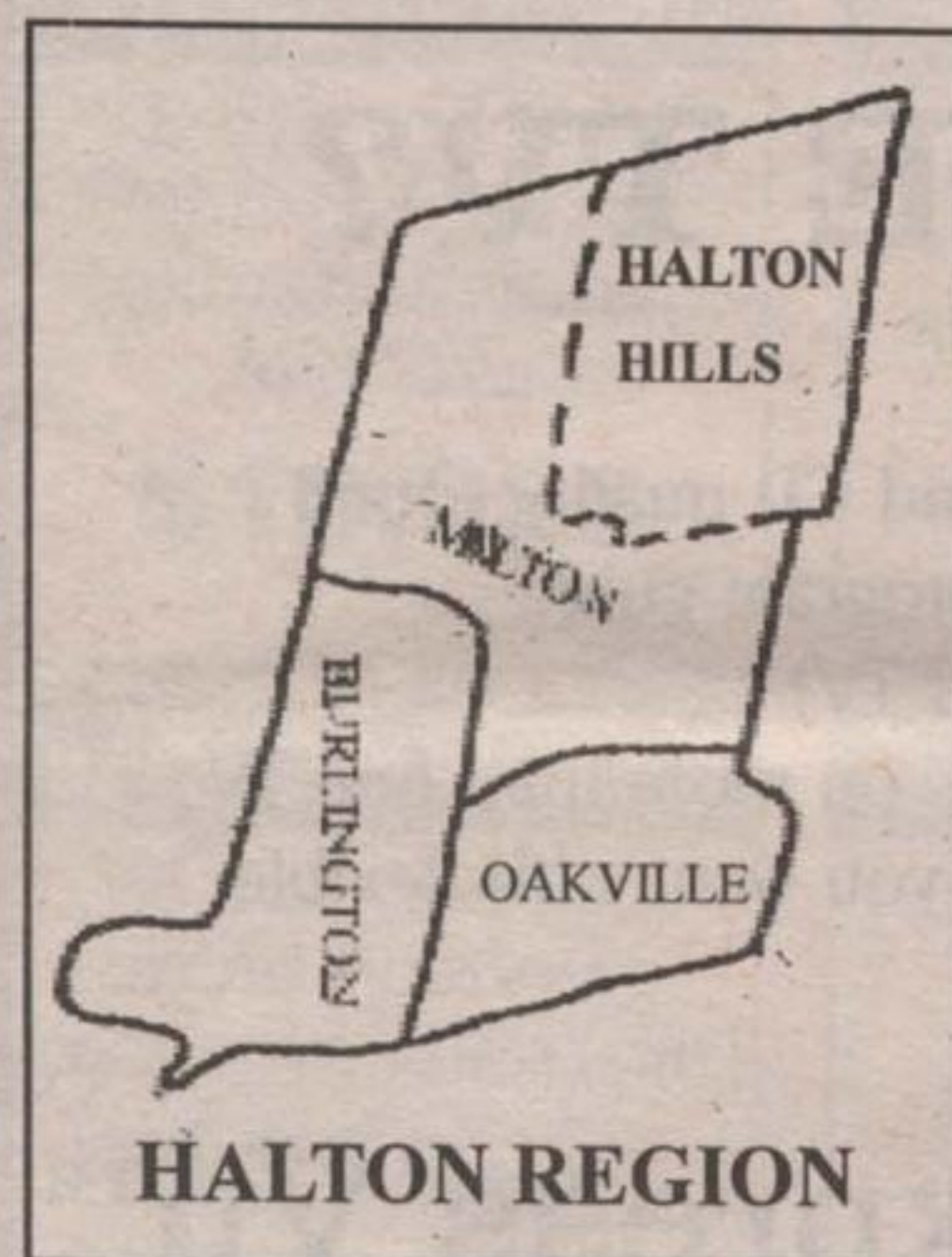
Halton Hills councillors, with the exception of two or three, don't think so, citing loss of identity as one of the principal reasons to oppose any move to amalgamate.

Ward 2 (Esquering) Councillor Kevin Kuiack, however, doesn't think it's such a bad idea. He noted Halton Hills already shares a school (Bishop Reding SS) and fire service with Milton, as well as many residents who feel more of a link with Milton than Halton Hills.

"If we decided to set up a partnership we possibly could have a stronger voice... and could get more funding directed up to the north," he is quoted as saying when the mayor introduced the subject at council on Monday, June 15. He argued that Acton and Georgetown did not lose their separate identities when they were amalgamated into Halton Hills in 1974. He might have also said Acton people have become even more protective of their identity since that date.

Councillor Kuiack wasn't the only voice who thought there might be some advantages to amalgamating with Milton whose boundaries extend into the whole of old Nassagaweya, and south, almost to Hwy 5. Councillor Ron Chatten felt there would be some definite advantages dealing with Milton in a partnership manner.

Acton councillors Rick Bonnette and Norm Elliott were definitely opposed, Bonnette because he felt no one was pushing and we should stay as Halton Hills so we don't lose any more of our identity. Ditto for Mr. Elliott who felt it was premature as well as the fact Milton and Halton Hills are "diverging" not growing closer.



The picture of a large town in central and northern Halton as envisioned by Mr. Kuiack, wielding a far bigger stick, is attractive in this world where "bigger is better". It would be huge geographically with about 75,000 people. However this writer doubts Milton would show any more interest in amalgamation than has been evinced by the majority of councillors in Halton Hills. They have grand plans of their own to grow using a large pipeline into Lake Ontario for a supply of water.

Of course, the problem probably dates back to 1973 when the decision was made to break Halton into four regional parts instead of the original nine municipalities. The government of the day, pressured by the Reeve of Nassagaweya, kept the old township of Nassagaweya intact into the Town of Milton. Halton Hills, on the other hand, as recompense, received access to highway 401's north side just east of Milton and urban area but with no services to offer industry.

Going further back, do you remember the North Halton Urban Board which was formed to foster a closer relationship between the then towns of Acton, Georgetown and Milton. Countless meetings never resolved anything but a decision to act like the proverbial dogs in the manger, acceding nothing and protecting all their assets. Times have changed as well as boundaries but we doubt people have.



ALL READY for the graduation dinner and ball Monday these Bishop Reding graduates and their dates enjoy the beautiful lawns and gardens of Mr. And Mrs. Max MacSween on Elmore Drive. Front are Julie Restivo, Elizabeth Coles, Lori McConomy and Melissa Wood. In back are Rueben Rivers, Stephen Orticello, Christopher Noronah and John Grisold. - Hartley Coles photo

## You get what you pay for

By MAGGIE PETRUSHEVSKY  
The New Tanner

I have a habit of biting my tongue when people complain about Canada Post.

Well, now I am about to join the ranks. We just got kicked again as rural customers. We are about to get service from Ottawa - literally.

I grew up on Rural Route 2, Acton. My parents and grandparents have been getting mail delivered at that address for more than 70 years.

Recently, when Mother's Alzheimer's got so bad we couldn't trust her not to lose the mail, our postie put government-type documents in my box instead of Dad's so he'd be sure to get them. When I moved in with Dad my address didn't change so there was no sense informing Canada Post. All it took was a word to our postie. My mail goes in his box. It's right next to my old one so it's no problem. Or it wasn't.

This month the government in its wisdom (?) decided to let the tender for rural mail delivery on R.R. 2 to the lowest bidder. That sounds good but "you get what you pay for" and if the pay for a local postie wasn't exorbitant before, what suddenly changed the picture? The wonderful notion that everything should be subject to "doing more with less".

Now, as of July 1 we will begin to "get less for the same." An Ottawa firm picked up the contract for Rural Routes 1 and 2 so we can expect someone from Ottawa to start making our deliveries. Obviously that person is not coming in daily just to deliver mail. Apparently she will train an assistant who is to train her assistants since he/she will have a territory to manage. In other words, we get service from a large private

firm with routes all over Ontario.

Now if this company plans to make a profit on a lower rate than a local person who already has the training and equipment, what training, equipment or dependability can we expect from the company? More sobering still, what sort of people can such a company hope to hire at the sort of wages it will offer?

Only those desperate enough to work for minimum wage. You can be sure they won't be getting any benefits so how often will they be out there, too sick to work but too broke to hire a replacement. Such people will be on the constant lookout for a better job and they'll be gone the moment they find one. And what about our mail? Oh well, when they find out in Ottawa they can send us another carrier.

Am I being pessimistic? Maybe. But having seen how newspapers arrange for contract drivers to make

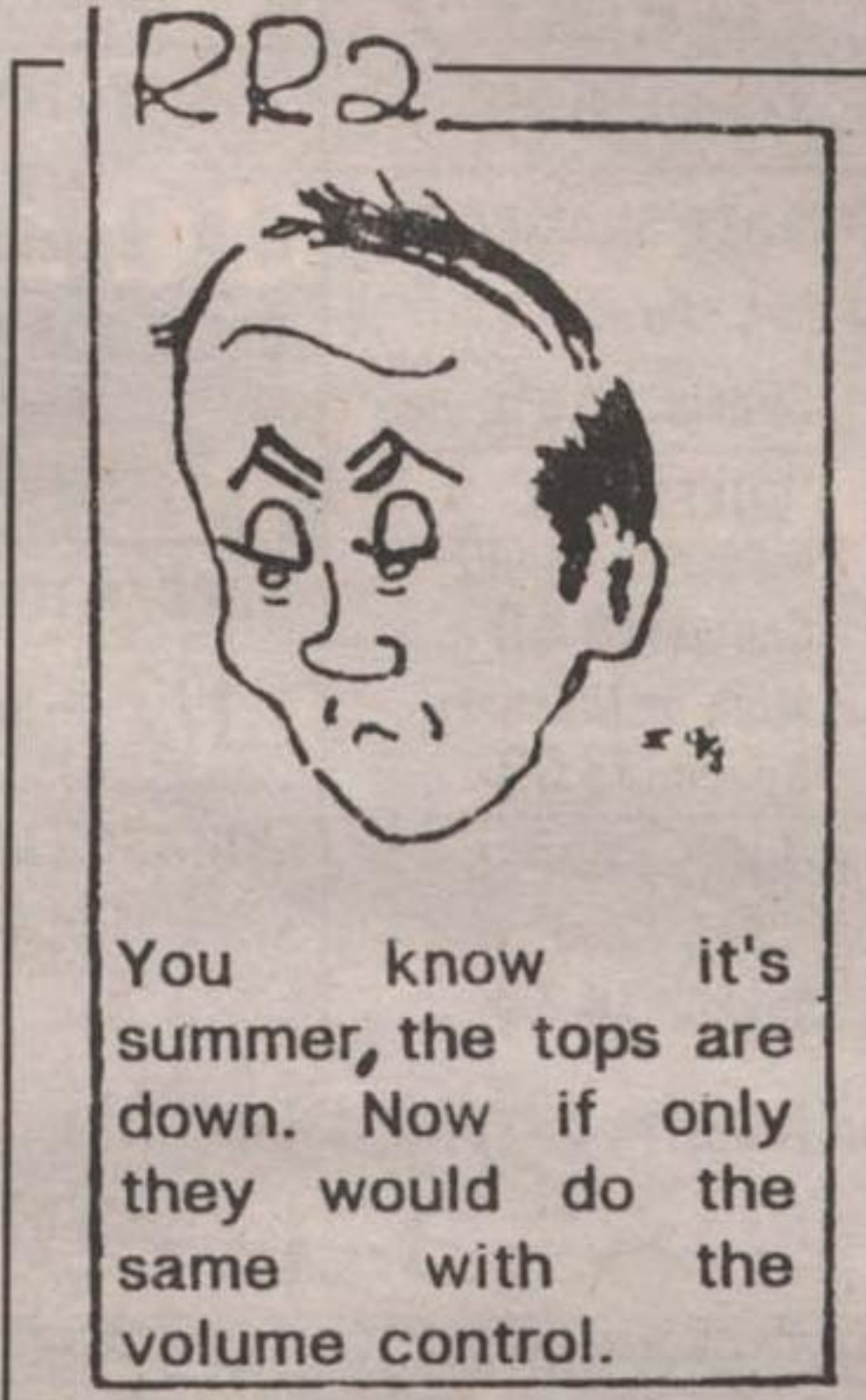
their deliveries - and these are local people - I'd bet I'm closer to the mark than I'd like to be.

The fact postal "service" describes right in its name what customers are supposed to get went out the door when Mulroney decided to revise "service" to mean "profit." The fact the Liberals have done nothing to repeal his "reforms" is what annoys the dickens out of me.

When mail delivery has to make a profit residents of Moose's Arm-pit, Northwest Territories can kiss good-bye to service of any sort - even the slow kind. And a lot of places in Northern Ontario will be right beside them. The demise of rural post offices like the one at Limehouse should have warned us locally. Most people ignored it. The community mailboxes in many new city subdivisions instead of door-to-door delivery is another symptom of that same reform mentality.

What the reformers really want is to alienate so many customers that government has evidence for privatizing it. You know the theme. If people don't seem to use the thing, why keep it? Right. Watch the costs skyrocket then since Canada Post is the main carrier for Puralator and assorted other private couriers. Don't tell us that, do they?

We pay extra to have the courier collect our letter or parcel and get it to our customer by next morning. Couriers don't pay premium rates to ship it across the country by plane over night. They let Canada Post do the work. Then they pick it up at the airport and make the delivery so the customers never know the difference. That way customers go right on singing the couriers' praises and condemning Canada Post. Sneaky, but it's working.



# Tanner

59 Willow Street North  
Acton, Ontario  
L7J 1Z8

(519) 853-0051 Fax: 853-0052

**Publisher** Ted Tyler

**Editorial** Hartley Coles

Frances Niblock Ellen Piehl  
Mike O'Leary Angela Tyler

**Advertising Sales** Maggie Petrushevsky  
Bob Rutter

**Circulation** Marie Shadbolt

**Composing** Christine O'Leary  
Karen Wetmore

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