

Editorial

Find the cash

With a new premier now in place it is hoped the Tory government will be more willing to look at ways to free up cash for areas that previously may have been victims of too-hasty penny-pinching.

Take for instance the news coming out of the current Halton District School Board's budget deliberations.

At this moment, they are seriously considering cutting the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), Celebrating Literacy and Food for Thought school programs.

The three programs are aimed at preventing further problems down the road by catching at-risk kids at an early age, and, perhaps, giving them a nudge in the right direction. All three programs might just keep a few children from becoming permanent financial burdens on society.

Yet, the public school board is considering cutting them.

Why? The board claims that due to chronic underfunding from the province, it has no choice. Its claims do not appear hollow because the same scenario is being replayed in almost every school board across the province.

We hope the school board is not crying wolf by sending out alarmist signals.

We also hope the board is seriously looking into its own administrative budgets to find any fat to trim before putting worthy school programs on the chopping block.

Somehow, these three programs must be saved. Over the years, they have benefited the lives of thousands of Halton school children.

A valuable part of our children's education will be lost unless a solution can be found.



Letters to the editor...

Pesticide reduction a step forward

Dear editor,

I am writing to express my feelings of encouragement about the many letters and reports supporting reduction

Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor must be signed and include an address and daytime telephone number. Unsigned letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 200 words and may be edited.

Mail or drop off

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and even bans on pesticides for cosmetic lawn-care purposes.

Examples such as Loblaw's announcement that they will be pesticide-free by 2003, the Cancer Society's call for a ban on carcinogenic pesticides, and even our municipality getting off pesticides, combined with an alternative lawn care program on town-owned property, give me hope that we can, indeed, lessen our exposure to these deadly chemicals.

But our new federal government itself does need to do so much more in this area. The new Pest Control Products Act (PCPA) is now tabled in the House of Commons as Bill C-53. However, under this bill, we will continue to not know what's in a bottle of Roundup, or the stuff coming out of the end of the hose put there by lawn care companies. And having pesticide companies reporting the adverse effects of their own products is putting the fox in with the chickens. That rarely works.

Bill C-53 supports pesticide risk

reduction (not pesticide reduction) and ensures that only pesticides that make a useful contribution to pest management are registered. The federal government should have heeded its own Environmental Committee's report in May 2002 recommending pesticides used to treat lawns, golf courses and parks be phased out over five years.

We know so much more nowadays about how pesticides used in Canada can cause cancer, fertility problems, and abnormalities in newborns. Our world is being polluted with toxic pesticides that find their way into our food, our air, and our water.

The other aspect of this issue is that there are many safe alternatives to use on one's lawn.

I trust as more people become aware of the dangers of pesticide use and of the alternative ways to build healthy turf, that we will have a cleaner, safer environment in which all living species thrive.

Ruth Kuchinad, Georgetown

What's a teen to do?

Dear editor,

My daughter and I were shocked to hear that the only youth centres in Halton Hills may close.

What is wrong with this town? It pulls out all of the stops to accommodate the aged, but chooses to ignore the youth in Halton Hills. If the teens don't play hockey or ball what else is there? My son used the Open Door on a daily basis before he went to university. He talked more about that place than he ever talked about school. He could go there and relax between classes, play pool, cards or just have a drink and chat. His only gripe was that it wasn't open on weekends.

When I was a youth every community (in the United Kingdom) had a centre or church hall that the whole community used. It was bingo one night a week, Scouts another, Brownies and Guides etc. Saturday night was for the teens. We had a disco or a dance, run by the kids for the kids with minimal supervision by adults. It gave them responsibility, something we want our kids to have but never give them.

Instead of building a monument to the mayor in Cedarvale Park, which as soon as it's built will be covered with graffiti by the youths who are bored and have no place to go, put the money in a program and give kids a chance.

Janet and Jessica Horwood, Georgetown

The Independent & Free Press

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