

*Editorial*

# A last resort?

Perception is reality, it has been said, but the Halton District School Board obviously believes that saying holds little value.

How else do you explain the board's defence—through education director Dusty Papke and board chair Ethel Gardiner—of sending its principals and vice-principals to a "team-building" conference at the Talisman Mountain ski resort.

This same board has been complaining loud and long that it has no money.

That it couldn't balance its budget without making drastic cuts to programs.

That schools are in disrepair and there is no money to fix them.

That there will be no money to pay teachers when they come knocking on the door for raises.

Yet there is money for a \$300-a-person "team-building" conference in a swanky resort?

That's a tough argument for the average voter to swallow, no matter how much board officials believe it.

Listen, we understand the need and benefit these conferences can hold and the \$778,000 a year the board spends on professional development may only be a drop in the board's fiscal bucket, but consider the perception, folks.

With other trustees admitting their boards are "dysfunctional" and the province taking control of school boards for their inability/refusal to balance their budgets, the timing couldn't be worse for news of this getaway to leak out.

Why couldn't this meeting have been held locally, perhaps in a school, as Burlington Trustee Peggy Russell suggested? Why a ski resort? And why now when the province is just waiting to point a finger at school boards and say, "See— that's why we have to take control."



## Letters to the editor....

### Banning dog breeds will control the owners

Dear editor,

In light of another vicious pit bull attack, this one ravaging the face of Rajinder Han in Toronto, I feel com-

pelled to weigh in on this issue as it pertains to the recent discussion at town council and on the pages of this newspaper.

I find it regrettable the town decided, for the time being, not to ban pit bull ownership.

In the July 5 article reporting the town's decision not to designate pit bulls as a restricted breed Caroline Swirsky, representing the Rottweiler Club of Canada is quoted as saying, "you need to deal with the owners, not the breed".

While I have no doubt pit bulls or rottweilers can be excellent pets when trained appropriately, there can be absolutely no guarantee they will be trained properly. The only way to ensure irresponsible people do not have an opportunity to own such a dog is, regrettably, to ban the breed.

Swirsky's argument bears uncanny similarity to the argument prominent in some U.S. quarters that "guns don't kill people, people kill people". Of course, where there are more guns, more people are shot.

This again because it is impossible to ensure all gun owners will use the guns in a responsible fashion.

Barry Simpson, a pit bull owner, is quoted in the same article as saying, "There is no such thing as a bad dog, only bad owners." This point of view actually supports my position. You can't control the owners, so control the one thing you can—the availability of the breed. This, of course, would be an infringement of rights, but our statues are full of laws that limit personal rights. They do so to protect the safety of the citizenry.

We should emphasize a proactive approach to dog attacks instead of a reactive one. Punishing an owner after an attack would be cold comfort for the victim.

A proactive approach would be the banning of the most potentially dangerous of dog breeds. This would still leave hundreds of breeds available for pet lovers.

A small price to pay to limit the horror of dog attacks.

Don Scallen, Georgetown

### Golf tournament proceeds will benefit Acton's youth centre

Dear editor,

Halton Hills Community Support and Information (HHCSI) thanks the Red Dog Café for holding a successful second annual golf tournament July 13. A personal big thank you to Dave and Lauri Parker, owners of the Red Dog for all their time and efforts.

We would also like to thank the 37 golfers whose dedicated play and energy raised \$1,000 for the Off The Wall youth centre, a program of HHCSI which addresses the needs of our youth in so many valuable ways.

A special thanks goes to the sponsors of this event, Pat Lumber, Acton Denture Clinic, PharmaPlus, Milnes Plumbing and McIntyre Fuels for all their dedication and support. Also another special group HHCSI would like to recognize is the many local businesses that donated prizes for the golfers and the silent auction.

Off The Wall youth centre is heavily dependent upon fund-raising activities. Clearly this local support to our youth in Acton makes Halton Hills a great place to live and raise a family.

Many thanks to all participants.

Joan Barham, executive director, HHCSI

### 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.

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