

Editorial All fired up

When is a firing, not a firing? Apparently, when a multi-headed bureaucratic monster, such as the Halton District School Board is involved.

Eight women, who have a combined 100 years experience of handling the cafeteria duties at Georgetown District High School (one has worked there for 26 years), were told they were out of work when they went to set their schedules shortly before the start of the school year Sept. 7.

GDHS principal Ron Maruya informed one of the women—via e-mail—the day before school started that her “services were no longer required for this school year”.

Maruya has refused comment, referring questions to the board.

Board executive officer of human resources, Dawn Beckett-Morton had a typical bureaucratic response, “We don’t view it as a firing. We view it as a non-renewal of contract.”

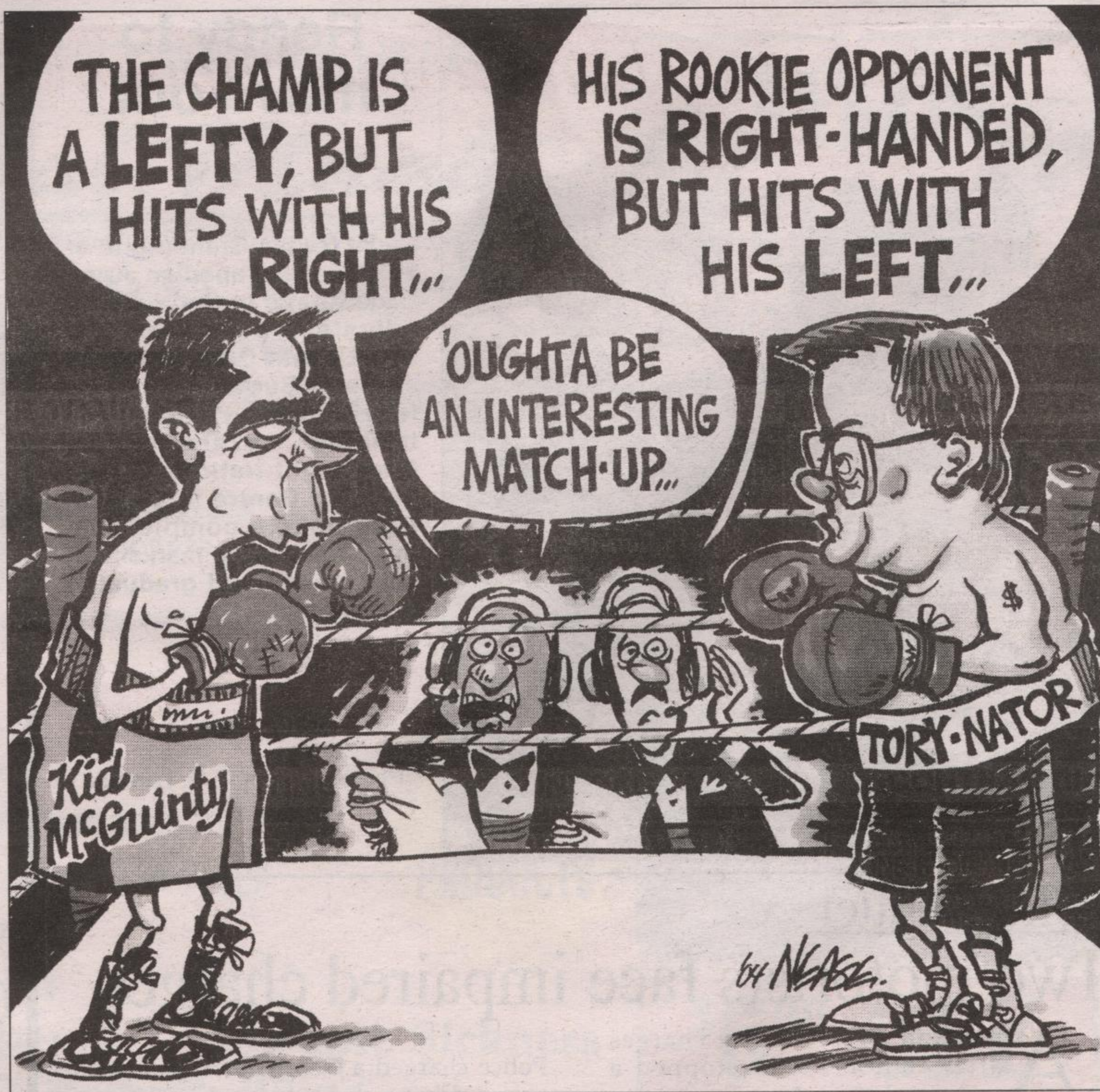
That’s fine except for the fact the women contend they never had contracts. They say, for the past several years they were simply laid off at the end of each school year, and hired back before school started.

However, this year Maruya told them in June they would have to reapply for their jobs, and interviews would be held in July. All eight applied, but none were called for interviews.

How is it that eight employees, with decades of experience and seemingly no indication from their employer they were incapable of performing their duties, are told to hit the road? By e-mail no less? The day before they were expecting to return to work!

The women have filed a complaint with the Ontario Labour Relations Board against the school and school board. As one of the workers said, “We deserve answers.”

We’d have to agree.



Letters to the editor....

Taxpayers should revolt at latest talk of tax hike

Dear editor,

Re: Staff told to limit base tax hike to 6.7 per cent, (*The Independent & Free Press*, Aug. 20).

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 Unsigned letters will not be published.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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Why is there no taxpayers' revolt?

Why is staff instructed to limit the 2005 tax hike to 335 per cent times the rate of inflation? This follows the 2004 tax hike of 264 per cent times the then-rate of inflation. Why is nobody screaming at our councilors?

As taxpayers we should not be lulled into complacency with the statement, “Taxpayers with houses assessed at \$250,000, would pay \$55 more with a 6.7 per cent increase and \$61 for a 7.7 per cent increase.” The town’s portion of your tax bill is only 31 per cent of the total. The increases for the region and the school boards come on top of that. At the same rate the total increase for that house would be \$198. In my own case the increase would be \$366. It’s a good idea to check your latest tax bill and calculate what your increase would be at 7.7 per cent.

In the past, when we had municipal elections every two years, we at

least could count on council holding the line with tax increases every second year, during the election year. Now, with elections being three years apart, we get hit with two huge increases before accountability surfaces again, driven by re-election considerations.

In industry, when cost increases outstrip revenue increases, companies cut costs to get them back in line. In several large, successful companies, employees are performance-rated annually by their superiors and by their peers, and the bottom 10 per cent are let go. Why can’t our municipal government act responsibly and do the same, instead of intending to hire even more people?

The measure might not have to be as drastic as in industry, but in my view, keeping tax increases in line with the current cost of living increase of 2.3 per cent should be the basis of the 2005 budget discussions and the guidelines given to staff.

Peter Scholz,
Limehouse

Give jobs to most qualified

Dear editor,

Re: Jobs should go to those with ‘seniority’ (August 25 *Independent & Free Press* letter).

I think Matt Penny missed the point of the article, Hire more immigrants: region. Region Chair Joyce Savoline was not advocating that immigrants should be hired over a qualified Canadian. Instead, she pointed out that immigrants should not be dismissed because they don’t have Canadian experience. Many immigrants are as qualified as their Canadian counterparts and they should be given an equal shot at a job a Canadian would get. After all, they have come to Canada to become Canadians and give back to Canada with their skills and expertise.

The entire Canadian labour force is not in a union, so seniority should not be the deciding factor on who gets what job. If that means an immigrant who is more qualified than a Canadian, who has 16 years experience, gets the job, that’s the way it should be.

Why wouldn’t we want the most qualified person doing the job? It would be unfair to give the job to an immigrant who isn’t qualified to do the job over a Canadian who is qualified.

Mike Pacholok,
Georgetown

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