

# OPINION

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## 2007's worst decision

With its recent ban of *The Golden Compass*, the Halton Catholic District School Board is earning itself a reputation as a reactionary organization.

Its first move in this direction was pulling out of the Halton Campus plan because trustees didn't want to share the same facilities as other non-Catholic groups—The Halton District School Board, Halton Regional Police Service and Halton Region.

That move contradicted the wishes of many of the board's own school communities and put it in a difficult position where some of its administrative buildings are literally falling apart and there is no provincial funding available to replace them.

Next, trustees decided to pull Philip Pullman's *The Golden Compass* from elementary library book shelves following a complaint about the author's atheist viewpoints.

The book was initially removed pending a report from the board's own book review committee, but was permanently banned last week, despite the review committee's recommendation to keep it in school libraries.

The ban also went against the wishes of Milton Trustee Rev. David Wilhelm, who argued the controversy was actually drawing more attention to the book.

Indeed, *The Golden Compass* had been on the board's elementary library shelves for 12 years without controversy, before publicity over a new movie based on the book prompted its removal.

It's not far-fetched to imagine some youths are now reading the book out of curiosity or rebelliousness and may never have heard of it prior to the school board's ban. Ironically, by banning the book the board is actually behaving much like the protagonists Pullman writes about in *The Golden Compass*—they are repressing free speech and arguments opposed to their doctrine.

Pullman is not against the values of Christianity (or for that matter other religions), so much as he opposes the dogma and authoritarian control exercised by many organized religions.

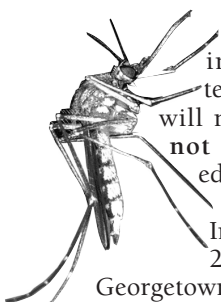
The Halton Catholic trustees should have considered this before they imposed a ban on *The Golden Compass* and the rest of the *His Dark Materials* trilogy.

While the Catholic board trustees feel they have acted in a responsible manner, their actions have probably attracted more attention to the book than existed before.

Ironically, trustees may eventually end up wishing they had exhibited a little more faith in the faith of their young students.

## Something bugging you?

Send us a letter!



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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Youngster to walk in memory of local boy

Dear editor,

The following is a letter from my 10-year-old daughter that she sent out. I was hoping you would put something in your paper so that she can get as many people as possible out to her event.

Hi everybody,

My name is Makayla Pereira and I'm 10 years old. Last month, a little boy who everyone loved very much

named Aidan Benoit (note— he was from Georgetown) died from cancer and I thought that was really sad. On Wednesday, I went to the hospital for Sick Kids in Toronto, and my good friend Michelle came with us, who was best friends with Aidan and it was really hard for her to go back. So, I decided to do my part and try to raise as much money as I can for neuroblastoma cancer research in

honour of Aidan Benoit.

I'm going to walk five kilometres on January 3, which would have been Aidan's fourth birthday in memory of Aidan. I'm calling it the Aidan Walk. All the money I raise will be donated to the Hospital for Sick Kids to help research neuroblastoma cancer.

I will be walking from the Canadian Cancer Society at 201 County Court Blvd to the Rose Theatre in Brampton. To make sure that I'm safe my mom and a few friends will be walking with me

I'm asking everyone I know to sponsor me because I want to raise as much money as I can. You can join the walk with me if you want.

If you want to sponsor me, please e-mail my mom at janettperreira@rogers.com she will help me to collect the money and bring it to Sick Kids.

Thanks everyone,

Love Makayla

P.S. If you know anyone else who would like to sponsor me please send them this letter too thanks.

(After the walk there is going to be an after walk celebration hosted by the Perfectly Pampered Princess. For a small fee kids can do crafts, get updo's, manicures, and pedicures with all proceeds going to Aidan's walk. All are welcome to attend. It will be hosted at the Rose Theatre.)

Janet Pereira, Brampton

### Disbanded group 'comes full circle'

Dear editor,

The following comments by John Sommer appeared in our local paper in 1993 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Georgetown Arts and Crafts: "Like a pebble thrown into a pond the group has made waves in the growing awareness of arts in Canada. Many have made a name for themselves far beyond Georgetown."

It is with great sadness that we wish to report the disbandment of the Arts and Crafts of Georgetown after 65 years. As it is with many guilds, clubs, associations and volunteer groups, the number of participants dwindle. The group has come full circle as it was started with five members and will close with a similar number.

We will, however, continue to meet socially as our friendships and common interests go back many years. We continue to share memories of the great artists and friends

who were members and fellow travelers on our road.

Thank you to the Georgetown community which participated in our sales at the former Riviera in Norval, the Oddfellows Hall, the North Halton Golf and Country Club, St. George's Anglican Church and Holy Cross Church.

We hope that other associations will constantly renew themselves by attracting people who have a love and commitment to the age-old crafts that are a source of our well-being and joy.

Many thanks to *Independent & Free Press* reporter Ted Brown for spending hours with us recently at our last group meeting. We were pleased to share our personal experiences and memories.

Audrey Brown, Jessie Milton,  
Siglinde Knoespel, Eva Middleton,  
Jean Rugg and Jennifer Barnett  
Georgetown Arts and Crafts

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