

Established 1861
The Canadian Champion

Published by Dills Printing and Publishing Company Limited

Jim Dills, Publisher; Roy Downs, Editor; Bob Burtt, News Editor; Paul Belanger, Advertising Manager

Published every Wednesday at 191 Main St., Milton, Ontario. Member of the Canadian Community Newspaper Association and the Ontario Weekly Newspaper Association. Subscription rates payable in advance, \$7.50 in Canada; Carrier Delivery in Milton, 15 cents per week; \$25.00 in all countries other than Canada.

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Second class mail Registration Number 0913

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Equal opportunity?

Within in the next two weeks Halton Board of Education will deal with a recommendation concerning a new high school for Milton and the need for a vocational wing at that school or elsewhere in the northern part of the region.

The board's stated policy of equal education and equal opportunity for all commits the board to providing a vocational wing in north Halton.

The need for a new high school in Milton is clearly documented by population trends and overcrowding in Milton District High School.

But when the board deals with the need for a vocational wing in north Halton, it will be torn by its commitment to provide equal opportunity and its desire not to spend any money on bricks and mortar when existing pupil spaces exist in vocational schools in Oakville and Burlington.

There are approximately 400 people from north Halton travelling to those schools each day. Some of them spend three hours a day on school buses in order to avail themselves of the vocational training available only in the south.

According to Board Chairman Gary Morton and Milton Trustee Bill Lawson, many students who could benefit from the courses opt out because of the long bus rides.

Clearly the board is falling short

of its goal to provide equal opportunity and it will continue to do so until a facility is made available to students within a reasonable travelling time.

About half of the students now attending Wolfe in Oakville are from the north. There's no question that the school's enrollment would suffer if a new facility is established in the north.

We wonder how long parents and trustees in the southern part of the region would have stood for the situation if the circumstances were reversed—and it was their children who were spending three hours a day on school buses.

The fact is, they wouldn't stand for it. They would have balked and screamed long ago. They wouldn't accept it and there is no reason why students from the northern part of the region should accept something less, just because their homes are in the north.

The board cannot decide to deny students in the north the same opportunity as others enjoy, without first admitting that the commitment to equal opportunity is no more than lip service.

To retain any sense of equality the board must provide the facility in the north and then go about finding alternate uses for the excess space in General Wolfe. To use students in north Halton to justify the existence of two vocational schools in the lakeshore communities just doesn't wash.

Commenting briefly

Cutting time

Milton Council began budget deliberations early this year, and the last three Tuesday evenings in January have been set aside for debate on the 1978 operating budget. A quick glimpse of the figures gives you some idea of what the councillors face this year: expenditures (before cuts) total

\$5,300,000, up from \$4,450,000 budgeted in 1977. Departmental estimates are up from .6 to 55 per cent over last year. Councillors will have to sharpen their pencils and keep the '78 budget to a reasonable figure. If you want to see how it's done, drop into town hall some Tuesday evening. You may not enjoy the chopping process, but you'll at least see how it happens each year at budget time.

On the News Beat

There's reason for hope

By Bob Burtt



The first meeting of the group formed to refurbish the downtown business core in some ways was like literally hundreds of similar meetings that had preceded it.

Officers were elected, a few ideas are kicked around and a new meeting date is set. Needless to say past efforts to provide some unified force on behalf of downtown merchants hasn't produced anything to write home about.

This one may not either... but then, on the other hand, you couldn't leave the meeting without feeling that this time it would be different.

The group formed under the Downtown Improvement Area legislation has yet to choose a name. The group feels the choice of a name is a first crucial step to be taken—and rightly so.

There are a number of significant facts that provide cause for optimism. For starters, this is the first time a small group has had the right to set a budget and charge the cost of the work back to the participating businesses.

The group will enjoy support from the town and the province not experienced in the past. That's not to say the town hasn't been committed to the core area. It has, but for whatever reasons, there hasn't been the proper machinery to make the best of the expertise at town hall—or for that matter, the province.

Probably one of the best things going for the group is the choice as Bill Duignan as chairman. Duignan appears to have a rare knack of being able to move the group in a given direction, at the same time making sure that the direction the group goes is in concert with the wishes of the members.

The mandate for the group is clear. Turn the downtown area into a place more attractive to shoppers and more viable for merchants.

"With our lower overhead and personal service, I can't see why we shouldn't win," Duignan said after the meeting.

But let there be no mistake about it, the challenge before the group and the participating merchants is a very real one. It is going to be tough and if the formation of this group is to be the savior of the downtown core, it is none too soon coming.

There are more empty stores on Main St. now than there has been in the past 10 years at least. In the last year many have folded their businesses and walked away from them, and a lot of those still hanging in are finding it tough.

The fact that a small committee is empowered to implement changes is a real plus. Small committees are generally more effective and more manageable than larger ones.

While the seven person committee will steer the ship, they'll have to involve other merchants and residents, tapping all of the available resources if they are to effectively revitalize the core area.

Merchants generally are notorious for agreeing to disagree on almost everything. Regardless of what the committee does or doesn't do, it is almost certain that they'll be in for some flak from their colleagues on the street.

A tickle and a dandy sense of humor will be mandatory standard equipment for committee members.

The situation on the street is serious. The trend over the past year has seen some key stores bow out one after another, leaving committee members feeling as if they're been appointed to captain the Titanic when all there is left to do is rearrange the deck chairs on the way down.

The road ahead is rough, but there are a

number of examples around the province where merchants faced with the same situation have banded together and bolstered sagging business communities and converted them to thriving commercial centres. It isn't impossible—just tough.

The regional works committee heard a convincing argument in favor of the town's proposed industrial development north of Highway 401 last week.

Milton Planning Director Bob Zsadanyi presented a report indicating the town can serve 656 net acres, out of a maximum of 1,045 acres.

The only possible stumbling block in Zsadanyi's approach is getting the region and the province to buy his formula. Zsadanyi calculates the sewage capacity required at 4.6 persons per net acre. The net acreage excludes 345 acres that will be required for roads, siting ponds, rights of way and other uses exclusive of actual industrial development.

Zsadanyi bases his figures on traditional experience in Milton, a seemingly logical way to go about it. But the provincial planners like to use a figure of 15 people per acre so that even the heaviest of uses can be accommodated.

In Milton's case that's bound to mean wasted sewage capacity because the town just doesn't attract heavy industry or big water users.

Zsadanyi says Ministry of the Environment officials have agreed to negotiate on that count, but the first step is getting regional support.

The report submitted by Zsadanyi goes along way to answer a lot of the questions that have begged answers in previous regional debates.



TRANQUILITY LANE sleeping under nature's blanket of powder stretches to infinity. Like a woman applying makeup, mother nature provides a base and highlight materials on the face of the earth, making the world all the more attractive. (Champion photo by Peter McCusker).

Sugar and Spice

Into a new year, gingerly

by bill smiley



It must be nice to be one of those people who sail into a new year with high hopes, great expectations, and firm resolves. I am more inclined to back into it gingerly, head ducked as though awaiting a cuff from fate.

I think, from experience, that you have to be young and naive, or old and religious, or just plain dumb, to expect the next year is going to be any better than the last.

For example: I know I'm going to be one year older and uglier; I know I'm going to have fewer teeth and less hair; I know I'm going to be utterly flabbergasted at the arant thievery of the government when I make out the cheque for income tax on the last day of April; I know that more and more of my friends, relatives and colleagues are going to be struck down by cancer, heart attacks, a broken marriage, or the crud.

I know that my daughter won't be able to get a job as a teacher, after a gruelling year of preparing for same and raising two kids on the side.

I am quite certain that my two grandboys are going to get steadily more difficult to handle. (One of them, not quite four years old, made a dreadful suggestion to a

lady in a store not long before Christmas, as my wife and I looked around wild-eyed, pretending we didn't know him or each other.)

I got a raise this year, but am perfectly aware that it doesn't allow me to keep up with inflation. I saved some money this year, for the first time in 30, by continuing to drive a 10-year-old car, but I know every dollar tucked away (and paid taxes on) will be worth 82 cents when it comes time to spend it.

I know full well that during the coming year I will have to undergo the ordeal of a federal election, in which a bunch of nincompoops try to convince me that they can run the country better than a bunch of turkeys.

I am fully cognizant of the fact that my wife is going to be on my back in 1978 for moral turpitude, physical lassitude, and mental ineptitude, not to mention a number of other things that can't be classified in a family journal.

Economically, the country is, depending on your point of view, either up the creek without a paddle or going over the falls with a motor stuck in high gear.

Next fall, my students will be the absolute worst I've ever had, there will be more of them, eight will be on drugs, six will be alcoholics, five will get pregnant, and I'll be taken off to the funny factory.

Why don't I just shoot myself then, instead of heading into 1978 with all these bogeymen riding my shoulders? You may well ask.

Because life is the life. As my daughter once remarked at the age of six, and which I have since considered one of the great philosophical gems of the 20th century.

Of course I'll be one year older. But I'll be one year smarter, at least in theory. It's not true that I'll have fewer teeth, I'll have more. I'm getting that euphemism called a "partial plate." Less hair, but I can always get a toupee of a fall. Uglier for certain, but there comes a point when ugly starts to become beautiful. "His face has a lot of character," they say, meaning that you look like something that just swam home from the Crimean War.

Sure my buddies will be stricken with everything from a slipped cervix to a swollen colon, but a couple of them were marked up for the big final registration last year, and came through with flying colors and a heightened love of life.

Maybe my kid won't get a job teaching. Maybe it's a good thing. How would you like to spend your working hours with a bunch of teachers, as I do?

O.K. my grandboys are really rotten. But they aren't any more rotten than their mother was 20 years ago. She's just now

beginning to admit to us what she was doing when we thought she was at Sunday School.

I'm slipping behind financially, but who isn't? My prisoner-of-war pension soared by 7.5 per cent on Jan. 1, so I'm on the glory trail. It is now almost 60 bucks a month.

No question, we'll have a federal election. But what's to worry when our Grand Guru, Pierre Himself, says that if we all think positively, the economy will pick up? Who can argue with something as solid as that? Certainly not the poor dope who has been out of work for two years. He's probably not thinking positively.

No doubt, no doubt at all, that my wife will be on my back through 1978 for all the things mentioned, and some new ones she'll think up. But what the hell? I'm used to it; and we're still man and wife, although she might quibble about that designation, or parts of it.

As for my students next fall, they will undoubtedly be the same mixed bag of mixed-up adolescents they have always been, and we'll get along fine once they realize Mr. Smiley is a bit senile and must be humored.

Last year was pretty bad, and this year will be worse, but life is the life, and it sure beats lying there in the graveyard with your hands on your tummy.

Turning the Pages of the Past

From the files of The Canadian Champion

One year ago

Taken from the Jan. 19, 1977 Issue
Halton Regional Council elected a dark horse candidate as regional chairman at the inaugural meeting in Burlington Wednesday. Ric Morrow, a 36-year-old pilot from Halton Hills and an eight-year old veteran of Municipal politics, won the five-man election, but only after councillors had cast six ballots.

The citizen of the year award given annually by the Milton Chamber of Commerce, was this year presented to Rev. Rod Lewis. A member of the community for six years, Mr. Lewis has involved himself in the community in a variety of ways and has made a contribution that will be hard to equal.

Anyone wishing input into the location and construction of the town's second ice surface is being urged to make their comments to council in writing prior to Monday, Jan. 31. That is when Milton Council plans to have all of the costs and related information needed to make a decision concerning the location of the second rink.

Two Milton taxi firms, Blue Cab Co. and Crowe Taxi Service have asked Milton Council to permit a 25 to 33 per cent increase in taxi rates, but the councillors want to compare the proposal with rates in surrounding towns before giving final approval.

Frankel Steel announced plans several weeks ago to move its Toronto operation to Milton and expand the Milton plant.

20 years ago

From the Jan. 16, 1958 issue
John Hall of Milton was named chairman of the North Halton High School District Board this week. Average daily attendance in the three high schools (Milton, Acton, Georgetown) during 1957 was 722.

The hospital board of directors hopes to call tenders on construction of the new 50-bed hospital by Feb. 1, chairman Dr. C.A. Martin reports.

District Commissioner Mrs. S.E. Wood reports 499 women and girls are currently active in Guide and Brownie work in the North Halton District, an increase of nearly 100 over 1953 figures. Plans are being made to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Guiding in Milton later this year.

A tanning and wool processing company from Uxbridge applied to Milton Council this week for permission to use the former Milton Plywood Co. for a wool scouring and hide dressing plant. The firm would require 50,000 gallons of water a day, and would employ about 15. Council is studying the request.

Milton and District Association for the Mentally Retarded held the first meeting of 1958 at Sunshine School last week. Gerry Addison is president, Fred Cross first vice, Mrs. George Elliot second vice and Mrs. Kingdon secretary. There are nine pupils enrolled.

Area residents have flooded an outdoor skating rink in the court area of Kingsleigh Court and Brian Best appeared at the council meeting this week, on behalf of the North Milton Ratepayers to ask that a light be installed to allow evening skating.

75 years ago

From the Thursday, Jan. 15, 1903 Issue

About 2 a.m. on Tuesday, a G.T.R. engine, running light, overtook a freight train about a quarter of a mile south of the station here and dashed into it. Its driver and fireman were severely shaken up, but escaped without serious injury.

On account of the fuel famine, making it impossible to heat Grace Church, both morning and evening services were held in the Sunday School last Sunday, and all except communion services will be held there during the cold weather unless fuel becomes plentiful.

The citizens of Guelph and Puslinch gave Sergt. Wilkinson and Corpl. Minchin, two Har's River heroes a reception and banquet last week and presented each with a purse of \$125. They were two of the gallant men who fought under command of Lieut. Bruce Carruthers and both were badly wounded. Corpl. Minchin's wound in his leg was still so painful that he was unable to stand while replying to the address.

One day last week, Charles McGregor, Sr., of Omagh went into the stall of one of his horses, which is inclined to bite. The animal nipped a piece off the top of one of his ears and dropped it into the straw on the floor. Mr. McGregor found it, brought it to his physical and had it sewed on, but it was too dead and had to be removed after a couple of days.

Smallpox has broken out at Galt and other places not very far away. Every precaution should be taken to keep infection out of Milton and those who have neglected vaccination should do so no longer.