

Between the Willows



Hot stove league

By DON BYERS  
Champion Resident Columnist

Saturday Nov. 6, I stood at the foot of our driveway awaiting the arrival of neighbor Joe Anthony. He had graciously offered the use of himself, and his Caddy and trailer so we could fetch our new woodstove from a Milton hardware store.

Earlier I had arranged for son Dave and his friend Craig to meet and to provide the necessary muscle.

While I was standing at the edge of the road, with a large coil of yellow rope over my shoulder, a small car pulled to a stop before me.

The young woman on the passenger side rolled down her window.

"I'm going to a lynching," I said. There was a short pause.

"Do you know of any property for sale 'round here?" asked her bearded companion.

"Afraid not," I replied. "We would dearly love to separate an acre but the powers-that-be say nothing doing."

"It's so beautiful out here," said the young woman.

"Indeed it is," I replied. "Love yuh and leave yuh. Here's my friend Joe."

"I got into the Caddy and off we drove."

When we got to our destination, Joe carefully parked so as not to completely obliterate the parking lot.

The store owner had the stove and accessories ready to go. Enter Dave and Craig. They hoisted the stove onto the trailer, wrapped it in a protective blanket, and tied it off.

The drive home was uneventful. Our musclemen unloaded the stove and carried it into the family room. There we positioned it in front of the sealed fireplace, fitted the pipe, and layed in the fire.

To Joe went the honor of lighting the first match. As he did so, we all toasted the event with cold beer.

Since then the stove has been booming out the heat steadily and economically. A large fan, strategically placed at the bottom of the stairwell, moves the warmth upstairs.

I've fired off my application for a government COSP grant, the woodpile in the barn is growing, and I've made it to the Hot Stove League.

In reply to a couple of enquiries, "Charlie" is getting along fine.

He scooted off one day for a brief tour of the mountain but returned on his own.

The little guy has won the hearts of everyone he's met. Even Fred, the resident cockatiel, is unruffled when "Charlie" greets him through his cage.

Just one little family.

Our Readers Write

Trustee challenged

Dear Editor:

It is unfortunate, that when someone writes a letter to a newspaper in order to express a sincere opinion, there is always someone else anxious for the opportunity to ridicule them. How, except through freedom of expression in a public way, are ideas to be exchanged, and a common ground to be achieved.

G. Corrigan said, last week in the Champion, that D. Coates was uninformed, because she felt a teacher should not be a school trustee. I too then must be uninformed or worse.

Conflict of interest is a common and everyday occurrence, we don't always admit to it, or for that matter, even recognize it, but it is there. We may not intentionally be biased, but our opinions can be colored in one way or another. Sometimes, "what is perceived to be," is more important than, "what is." In other words, why fuel the fire of controversy by creating situations where conflict of interest can come into play.

The tone chosen for G. Corrigan's letter is unfortunate. It creates the impression that a teacher is coming to the defense of a teacher, when criticized by an "outsider." This is precisely one of the subconscious aspects of conflict of interest. How can parents feel that they they will be dealt with fairly when a complaint about a teacher is to be solved by a trustee who is also a teacher. It certainly would not give me any real comfort, and would always leave an element of doubt in my mind as to the outcome.

Corrigan brings up the subject of negotiating teachers salaries. In any labor management negotiation I have been aware of, labor sits on one side of the issue and management on the other. In this particular example, of teachers on School Boards, labor is unquestionably attempting to sit on both sides. It's an interesting idea, but won't work. I don't believe a trustee should be a member of the Teachers Federation Executive, so how does it make sense that a teacher should sit on the Board.

The taxpayer today feels that the cost of Education is too high. In Halton, 73 per cent of a budget of \$13 million is allocated to staff and teacher salaries and benefits. With this kind of money at stake, should the taxpayer accept the statement, "Trust me I'm impartial," I don't think so.

The taxpayer says the costs of education are too high. Teachers say budgets are too low. How does a teacher trustee reconcile his opinion?

Teachers across the province ran for School Board positions in the last election, some successfully.

To say for instance, as Bill Harrison said in the Champion, "I would refuse to serve on the Board's salary negotiating committee," only indicates that in order to side step conflict of interest charges, he will refuse, not request to be excused from, but refuse to carry out one of his most important obligations to the taxpayers, who elected him. Wouldn't it be great if all of governments problems could be solved by elected officials just refusing to get involved.

I would suggest to Mr. Harrison that he rescind his statement and since he is a teacher, prove to the taxpayer his claim to impartiality by serving on the negotiating committee, where he would be exposed to public scrutiny, instead of avoiding it by being absent.

Teachers in Halton, I understand are at present working without a contract and have been since August. What steps will Mr. Harrison take to protect our interests, if he won't get involved. Would he vote to settle a strike quickly, or take a hard line against teachers? Luckily, present legislation will relieve him of this kind of decision, this time. I would appreciate his comments, either personally or printed in the Champion. The choice, I leave to him.

G. Corrigan also suggest that, "the issues facing our education system in the 80's are indeed complex. It is a time for trustees and teacher alike to work together." I am in total agreement, but do not believe that if all our trustees were teachers the solutions would be totally to the benefit of the student and or the taxpayer.

I hope, this will not be the last comment in this newspaper as I and many others consider it to be a most important issue that must be resolved in the only possible way—teachers should not serve on Boards of Education.

The Teachers union represents their concerns, and trustees should represent the electorate who place their faith in them. I await a reply, if one is forthcoming.

Yours Sincerely  
Lyndon Smith  
Meadowbrook Dr.

Thank you Santa

Dear Santa;

Thank-you! Mom read us your letter last week in the paper and true to your word you were in the parade on Saturday. Mom and Dad said it was the best parade Milton ever put on and we both agreed.

Congratulations to all involved for an excellent job.

Thank you  
Robert & Kristen  
Haringa  
Ages 4½ and 2½

Editorial attacked

Dear Editor:

L'Association des Parents et Instituteurs of Ecole Sacre Coeur of Georgetown noted an editorial which appeared in the Independent of September 8th, entitled "BASIC NEEDS FIRST", which took exception to the request by francophones to elect trustees directly to the Board of Education. The API discussed your editorial at a recent meeting and asked me to reply on their behalf.

We particularly want to object to the view expressed in the editorial that French Canadians are a "special interest group" in Canada. This country is officially bilingual (i.e. both French and English have equal status in the country's Parliament and in the laws of the land). This was recently reconfirmed in the passage of the new constitution.

While French is often remote from the daily lives of most English speaking Canadians, it is the principal and often only means of expression of millions of Canadians, including some 910,000 in Ontario. For us, an education in French for our children is very much central to preparing for the life they will face when they leave school. Defending these rights in the normal democratic fashion through key institutions such as School Boards seems to us to be perfectly proper procedures.

Canadians of French descent were among the first to settle and open up the country, through efforts dating back to the early 1600's and the very existence of Canada rests on an entente between the French and the English founding peoples.

Even today, it is a continuing struggle to maintain the existence of this great nation, and this challenge is certainly not helped by the view expressed in your editorial that because they are fighting for their cultural survival, the French community is a "fringe element" that is "hindering Canadian development". To be equated with "special interest groups" and the "handicapped" in the disdainful manner of the editorial is an indignity that is painful indeed to swallow.

Far from "hindering Canadian development" French Canadians have roots as deep as anyone else in this country, and they want to continue the rich contribution that they have made for over three hundred and fifty years. All we want is the opportunity to do it in our own language.

Sincerely,  
Rose Marie Baskin, President  
Association des Parents et Instituteurs,  
Ecole Sacre Coeur  
Georgetown, Ontario.

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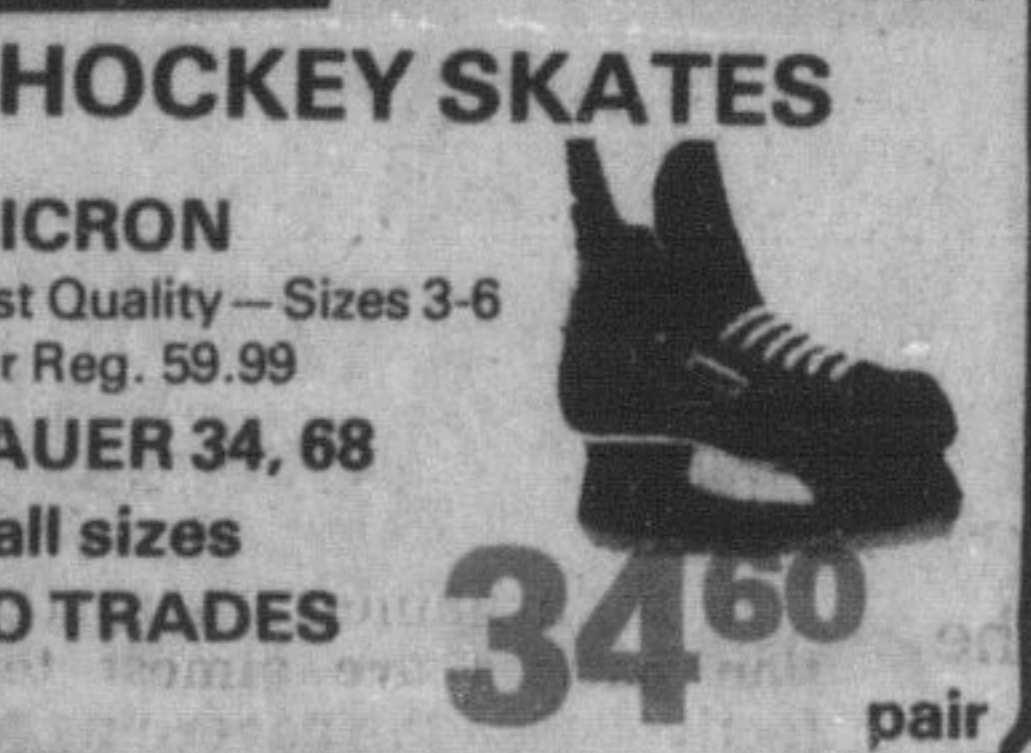
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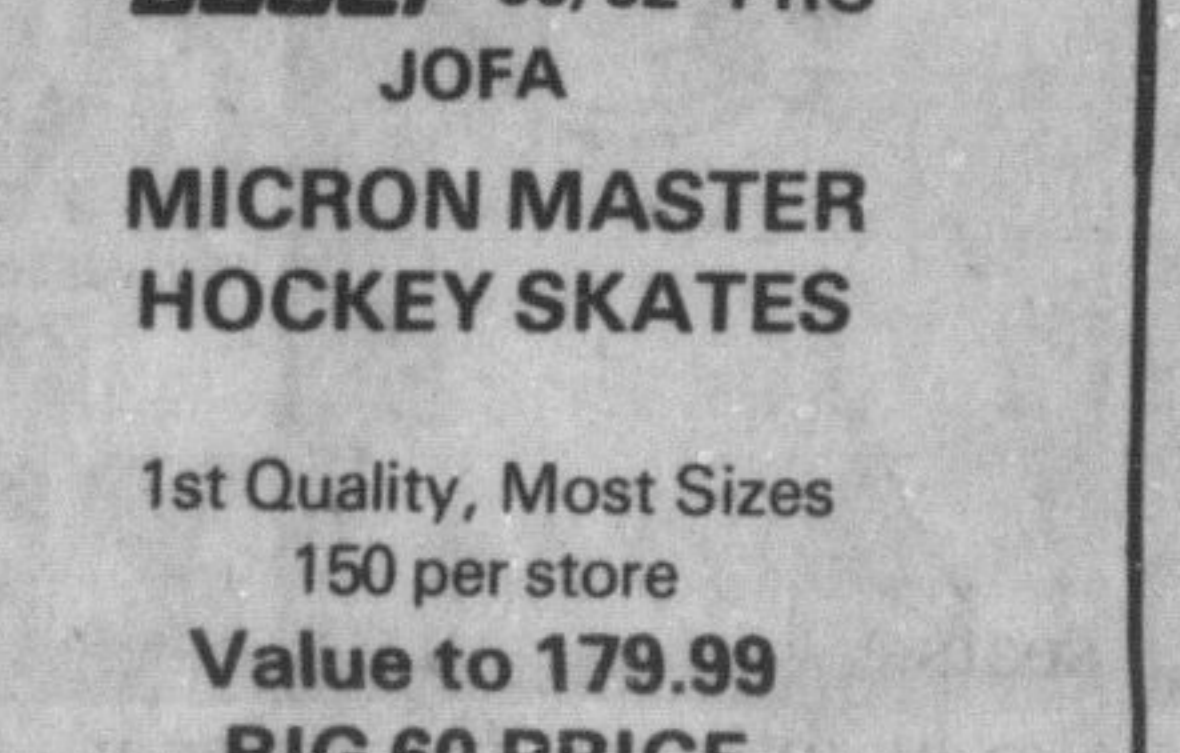
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HRH starts money drive

A massive fund-raising campaign is being launched to finance the purchase of a permanent facility for Halton Recovery House.

Helen Fineran, executive director of the home for the rehabilitation of alcoholics, said that although there is no immediate concern that the current facility may be sold, "reality dictates one day they will find a buyer."

She admits the large rented house in rural Milton provides a "therapeutic setting" but it is "not convenient to transport residents to and from employment."

The aim of the fundraising campaign is to raise \$50,000 for a down payment on a house, large enough to facilitate 12 residents. The existing home, in operation for six years, has a capacity of nine residents.

A lengthy waiting list indicates to Mrs. Fineran the need for increased accommodations for Halton Recovery House. She contends that 12 residents should be the maximum for concern that the home could become more like an institution.

The home could be located anywhere in Halton but ideally, she would like to see it remain in Milton as the facility is established here and is identified with this community.

The underlying concern that the home will be sold, has prompted Halton Recovery House executive to form a committee to devise a format for fundraising.

A part-time employee has already been hired to compile a list of contacts in the area of service clubs. These community organizations will be approached personally, following initial introductory correspondence, and asked to contribute to the campaign's financial goal.

In an interview a year ago, Mrs. Fineran suggested a permanent facility could help improve the role of the home. A garden could be established and tended to by residents and work shops would be a possibility.

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