

Huisman wants Foxfire to be an election issue

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
Special to The Champion

The final chapter in the Jack Huisman vs. Foxfire battle has not yet been written.

And if things go his way during next month's municipal election, the vocal opponent of the Joyce Carol Oates novel could earn one more victory before it's all over.

Mr. Huisman — who succeeded in getting the book restricted to

optional reading material at Milton District High School — has switched his focus from banning the book in classrooms to confronting trustees who've supported it.

Representing PACT (Parents Against Corrupt Teaching), he has circulated a letter and two-page questionnaire to those trustees seeking re-election in order to "enable the voters to make a more educated and informed choice in November."

The handout includes many questions which if answered with a 'yes' could alienate current trustees from PACT voters.

A sampling of the questions read:

- I voted for Motion Ref - No 626894, which was seconded by Trustee (Flo) Belford, approving Foxfire into the curriculum, Nov. 24, 1994.

- I endorse Foxfire today as it encourages students to read in order to foster their abilities to think and to learn and their capacity to appreciate and enjoy Foxfire.

- I agree that Foxfire meets the highest possible standards of contents appropriate for the subject area and for the maturity and ability levels of 16 and 17 year olds.

"I do not wish to discuss our intentions (with regards to the questionnaire)," said an evasive Mr. Huisman.

However, his letter does state that "it is now time to hold all the trustees publicly accountable, especially now that they have no committees to hide behind. They stand naked, completely naked before a voting public this fall — a public which will be fully aware."

Ethel Gardiner — a north Halton trustee seeking re-election this fall — described the letter/questionnaire as "threatening."

"I haven't filled it out nor do I intend to," the Halton Hills trustee said. "It merits no comments."

"The reality is that the extent of Mr. Huisman's public opposition to Foxfire has probably resulted in more students deciding to read the book."

"It's a self-defeating pursuit."

Canada's "Civilized Majority" director Ken Campbell — who also opposes Foxfire — said PACT's aim is self-evident.

"We'll wait and see what the positions of the incumbents are," he explained.

He further charged that it is not unreasonable to support or oppose a trustee's re-election bid based solely on one issue.

"Foxfire may be taught at just one school (Milton District High School), but it was a board decision for all of Halton," he stressed.

"Often the particular reflects clearly on the general." Milton Trustee Flo Belford said Mr. Huisman's anti-Foxfire

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