



COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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One school board means fair system for everyone

As recently reported in The Champion, the new Halton Catholic District School Board is taking the position that self-preservation is among its highest priorities.

Board members justify this defense of the Catholic system by saying the emphasis in the new board has shifted from managing education to its philosophical underpinnings.

With that position it is evident that the new, smaller board has again missed the point.

The most important philosophical underpinning of education is its continuing viability to students, employers and those who foot the bill.

By concerning themselves with Catholic education above education itself the new board emphasizes the fundamental inequality of Canada's twin educational systems.

Standing on their soap box, Catholic educators -- unabashedly primarily concerned with preserving their system -- have invoked Canada's constitutional protection of their right to Catholic education.

There are two flaws in this argument. Firstly, constitutions can be amended or interpreted differently when sensibilities require. At one time the United States constitution sanctioned the ownership and trade of human beings.

Secondly, the constitution itself guarantees equal rights for all citizens, a position which is in direct conflict with special arrangements to fund Catholic schools.

Given that funding parallel educational systems for every minority group would be impossible, the only equitable solution is to remove the special dispensation and funding for the Catholic system.

However, Catholic education can be preserved by reinterpreting the constitution in a fashion to require schools to provide specific ethics education.

Students would be required to select and study a specific ethical system. Schools would be required to provide a general philosophy-ethics class for those with no strong attachment to any specific religious system.

In the end only one public system of education should be funded by public money. Period.

The current parallel system is morally wrong because there are legitimate religious groups, such as Jews, Muslims and Buddhists that are not funded.

Criticism that some groups have preferential treatment in the hands of the law is entirely valid and not likely to stand a constitutional challenge.

Catholic education, with the single difference of time each day for Catholic religious teaching, is virtually indistinguishable from its public counterpart. Philosophy-ethics education should be provided to all students as a required course.

This should be the future of education in Canada. It is morally just, ethically defensible and provides a higher standard of quality education to all for an affordable price.

Brad Reaume



OUR READERS WRITE

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

Reader tells off driver

Dear Editor:

This letter goes out to the insensitive lout in the small pick-up truck that blatantly and purposely ran over the dog behind my school bus in front of a caring friend on the morning of January 6 at 7:55 a.m.

Was it road rage or simply the thrill that caused you to race up behind the dog without as much as a brake light. I hope that you can justify in your mind why, as you left a family devastated and missing a beloved pet.

As for me, I have to deal with drivers like you throughout the school year making sure that it's not children that get run over. You had no business going that fast anyway, since I had just turned my warning lights off. My faith in humanity is a little less now. My only consolation is that the happy-go-lucky pointer that you hit didn't know what hit him.

I hope that you feel immense satisfaction.

Jody Jewett
Laidlaw Transit

Wrestling photos too violent

Dear Editor:

Your sports page is undoubtedly popular. However, your readers were exposed to photos of young Milton wrestlers on two occasions just before Christmas, which I found distasteful.

January 1998 begins a 64-day world-wide campaign of

media educational and community action events created by people who are choosing non-violence as a way of life. These events will be a commemoration of the 50th and 30th anniversaries of the assassinations of M. Ghandi and Martin Luther King Jr.

I am one who chooses non-violence as a way of life and there are many of us in Milton. Please spare us photos of our youth wrestling, such as you choose to show. Let's focus instead on the positive lives and legacies of Ghandi and Dr. King and the inspiration created.

Let's make 1998 a season for non-violence, leading up to the 23 Nobel Peace Prize candidates who are asking the United Nations General Assembly to declare the new millennium as 'The decade for a culture of non violence.'

We can begin to create and celebrate this culture night here in Milton now with your help.

E. Kiddle
Milton

Can't thank you enough

Dear editor:

Halton Adolescent Support Services would like to thank everyone who contributed to making the second annual Tomorrow's Gift Auction on November 13 a success.

Thanks to the caring community, over \$18,000 was raised. Your support helps build a brighter future and continues the investment in today's youth.

Lynda Cale, fundraising co-ordinator
Halton Adolescent Support Services

Pud

by Steve Nease

