



COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

Box 248, 191 Main St. E.,
Milton, Ont. L9T 4N9

(905) 878-2341

Fax: 878-4943

Classified: 875-3300

Ian Oliver *Publisher*

Neil Oliver *Associate Publisher*

David Bos *General Manager*

Rob Kelly *Editor*

Karen Huisman *Circulation Manager*

Teri Casas *Office Manager*

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Get on with it

Milton Councillor Rick Malboeuf has every right to be angry at the foot-dragging demonstrated by his political colleagues with regard to meaningful action on scaling back the number of local elected officials.

Last week Mr. Malboeuf went through an exercise in futility and frustration as he saw his motion to discuss the issue shot down.

This after councillors had paid lip service to the concept during the last municipal election.

It's not as if it hasn't been done elsewhere, indeed in places where the council workload is much heavier than in Milton.

Even David Hipgrave, Milton's top civil servant, noted that any new information on the topic would basically mirror the data councillors already had from previous reports. This in response to a call from Councillor Rick Day to get more input.

In this era of government cutbacks — most of which are entirely justifiable — Milton council must air out positions on the matter.

This is especially true, as Mr. Malboeuf suggests, in light of the tough financial decisions council must make in the near future to cope with provincially mandated government restructuring.

It is as plain as can be that the provincial government believes there is too much local bureaucracy and administration, at all levels.

It is time that Milton's politicians came to grips with that. Otherwise, they will simply be reacting, late, when the province makes its move in earnest.

Perhaps there is a rationale at play here among those supporting the deferral. Perhaps they know that they face a time of serious, substantial challenge and trial in deciding how to cut back.

But given that, wouldn't it be wise to stake out a strategy for local council representation, as Mr. Malboeuf suggested. This would at least give the justifiably nervous municipal government employees an inkling as to how their political leaders think, where their priorities are, and how serious the situation is.

Instead, council has opted to wait until late March.

Perhaps there is method in this. Perhaps more will be known at that time, about how to deal with a matter of weight, a serious issue.

Hopefully that is the case. But suspicions, unfortunately, come to the fore. Because local government at every level has been notorious for patting itself on the back, bragging about what a lean operation it has become, and going along on its merry way without willingness to confront the deep, tough financial choices.

That kind of thinking got this country and this province into the mess only now being shaken off. There is more work to do, and Milton's council will have to pitch in and do it, sooner or later. That is, unless they want someone else to do it for them, and Queen's Park has shown every willingness to do that.

Rob Kelly

Silly criticism

Where does that silly woman from Quebec get off in criticizing Canadian athletes, and their fans, for being too nationalistic at the Olympics in Japan?

These games were a solid success for the country, despite certain disappointments, and therein lies the rub for the separatists. A success for Canada is a disappointment for those whose agenda is dominated by attempts to leave it. Sour grapes, friends, or should we really be calling you friends at all?



OUR READERS WRITE

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

In giving, they got so very much more

Dear Editor:

I'd like to share with you what I consider to be an awesome experience and, in many ways, an unexpected outcome for the staff at the E.C. Drury School for the Deaf in Milton.

This experience centres around a co-worker in the residence program whose years of work have influenced the futures of many students.

The type of teamwork with colleagues necessary to enhance the students' lives fosters long-time friendships and shared family activities.

So it was a heavy burden for us all when we learned that an intruder had entered our co-workers' life — cancer. Early detection and a few surgeries led to the worst of realizations; the unforgiving, unrelenting disease was incurable.

Like millions of other people, we did not realize the depth of the ripple effect this disease had until it clipped the wings of someone close. Someone you're used to seeing every working day is gone. A particular laugh is missing. There's an empty chair at the meetings and a point of opinion has been deleted. The list goes on.

The feeling of helplessness is devastating. What are the right words for the family? What do we say when we visit him in the hospital during his solitary fight? It's a humbling experience, to say the least.

But in God's own way, He provided us with a means to lift our spirits and perk up the workplace.

The cost of a television rental in his hospital room

became a low priority for his family after a couple of months. Other things needed to be addressed.

A few co-workers thought it would be a nice gesture if some money could be gathered to rent a television for our friend to watch the Olympic games. In the immediate work area, enough money was collected for the two weeks covering the games. A phone caller encouraged me to spread the word to other residence staff, which further spurred a memo to other school departments, fuelled by the pent-up energy of feeling helpless to this point.

We had found a positive outlet. In a matter of days, the different departments sent their generous donations. The interaction between departments increased through a common cause. Employees began to stop in passing to discuss our friend's present condition with those who had managed to visit him.

In today's world of job insecurity and unsure futures for our families, little did we know that reaching out to a co-worker would return a gift of much greater proportion.

Our friend gave us a feeling of unity and a measure of pride. He gave us a diversion from focusing on things beyond our control in the workplace, to grab hold of something much more real; part of an act of human kindness. Hopefully we let him know that in some way through the years he has touched our lives. Hopefully he knows what he has given us in his time of need.

David Scott

E.C. Drury School for the Deaf
Milton

Pud

by Steve Nease

