



# OUR READERS WRITE

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

## Reader gets in on religion in public schools debate

Dear Editor:

I have been following with interest the letters concerning religion and the public school system written by several people. Some strong points are being expressed.

First it is necessary to summarize the debate. It started with a letter by Ken Campbell expressing his thankfulness for Bill 160. Rev. Campbell's letter makes no mention of religion or moral values. This didn't fool Richard Hodgins for a minute. He recognized that Bill 160 is a plot by right wing

Christian fundamentalists to take over the public school system. He wisely raised the alarm and invoked the separation of church and state as justification for excluding religious instruction from school.

This was followed by Joanna Tilstra's letter raising questions about Rev. Campbell's basic assertion.

Put simply, Rev. Campbell's basic assertion is that the public school system teaches atheism and immorality and that this is harming the students and society. Ms Tilstra has questioned whether this is really true. I would say that on the surface the facts may support Ms Tilstra.

As pointed out by Rev. Campbell, article 26 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, "Parents have a prior right to choose the schooling of their children." My choice is to choose schooling for my children which will affirm my religious beliefs. If such a choice is not possible can I at least choose schooling which will not attack the religious beliefs we are teaching our children? Or to bring it home, is it safe for us, as religious parents, to put our children in the public school system?

Right now, I believe the answer is no.

Richard Ganton  
Gowland Crescent

OPTOMETRIST

Dr. R.  
Strohan

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## Picketer disappointed over lack of media coverage in dispute

Dear Editor:

Perhaps some of your readers have seen me over the past several days, standing with a sign outside of a business at the east end of Main Street.

Perhaps, also, some of them have been among the many who have stopped to ask to hear my story, and to offer words of support, advice, and to share stories of their own.

Compounding the stress of the circumstances that led me to my spot, I was distressed to have been told by several people that the offices of Milton's only news publication had been contacted, both by telephone and in the office, to inform the paper of my situation and that the newspapers position is one of, "one woman, with one sign standing outside one small business is hardly newsworthy."

Do the editors of the newspaper feel the need to sugar-coat our news? I think this position is an insult to the intelligence of the readers of your newspaper. Is a cover photo of one woman tossing one baby in the air on one park bench in celebration of the changing seasons, supposed to be infinitely more interesting for our feeble little minds, or are we too fragile to handle anything that might be considered remotely controversial? Must we be spoonfed gentle, soft news, so as not to upset our delicate systems?

I do recall an article in the not-too-distant past, concerning a woman picketing a local restaurant that was covered in your paper. Perhaps there is a limit, or quota per subject matter, that your reporters must adhere to that your readers are not aware of?

I'd venture to suggest that, were there a second newspaper being published in town, the decision to follow up on several calls from local citizens would have been different.

There's nothing like a little healthy competition to motivate a person. Such is the comfort and beauty of a monopoly, I suppose.

The powers that be are certainly in a nice position to be able to decide for its readers of what they should or shouldn't be informed. (Not to mention to decide on price rates and increases for advertising, and especially classified announcements, but, that is another letter.)

However, I would again like to thank all of the honkers and wavers, and especially those who have taken the time to stop. Your words of encouragement have helped to make my days go faster, and my determination grow stronger, in spite of whatever the eventual outcome of my situation may be.

Lorraine Campbell  
Milton

**Editor's note:** First of all, anyone who reads this newspaper knows the news within is not sugar-coated, soft nor gentle. Second, you make it appear as if we opted not to cover your activities because we feel no need to extend ourselves. Not so. I'd put our work ethic up against any business, anytime.

You should be careful what you put in quotes. Neither editor here, the ones who make the final calls on coverage, said anything remotely similar to the quote you have with regard to covering this incident.

In most cases such as yours, in which I am given to understand, there is a dispute with a local merchant, I recommend small claims court as a forum for resolution.

We get calls from many angry people who want to use the paper as a tool to attack a local business because they feel wronged. Generally speaking, we have neither the time nor staff to investigate and follow up on these disputes.

The newspaper is a powerful weapon to embarrass or harm a small business. It can take a long time to recover from bad publicity generated by one irate customer. It's a big stick to wield at a problem best treated in another forum.

There is, to my knowledge, no procession of disputes involving the business that has drawn the ire of the letter writer, nor any kind of third-party investigation going on, by say, the police or government. It's a civil dispute. Please resolve it that way.

R.K.

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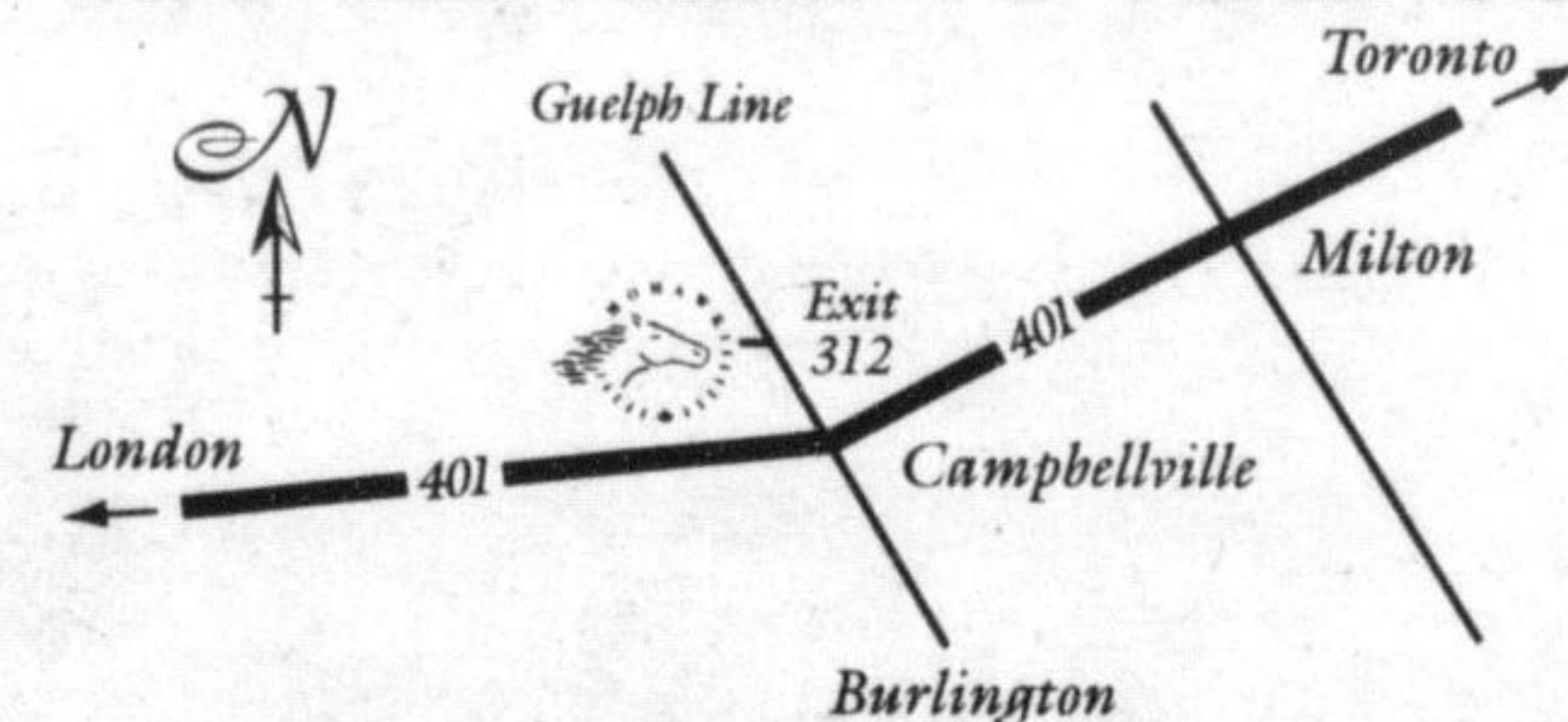
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