



# 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 Cross** *Circulation Manager*

**Teri Casas** *Office Manager*

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## Will a casino really help?

Hopefully, Milton council has not been out-manoeuvred before negotiating begins in earnest over the proposed casino at Campbellville's Mohawk Raceway.

Council's current position appears to be an endorsement in principle of a casino. Elected officials are hedging their bets by indicating that they do not necessarily have to support any specific plan put forward by casino backers.

This is a somewhat compromised stance from the outset.

If a government body endorses a concept, as council has done with the casino idea, it is only realistic to expect that sooner or later a casino will be in place at Mohawk.

If council wants to reject a specific proposal, or even two, fine. But they cannot stand against the idea indefinitely because then casino backers will accuse them of bargaining in bad faith, and the legal skirmishing could begin.

In essence then, Milton's municipal government is committed to a casino at Mohawk Raceway. This in spite of the fact that only 15 other municipalities in Ontario have taken the same line, while 200 have rejected the idea.

Granted, there are exceptional circumstances in Milton. First of all, a horse racing industry has taken root, especially in the Nassagaweya area, forming spokes in the wheel that is Mohawk Raceway.

Second, one must be sensitive to the ongoing plight of horse racing, an employer of consequence in the area not just through Mohawk Raceway, but also the aforementioned spinoff businesses. Horse racing has fallen on harder times thanks to the rise and prevalence of other forms of gambling across Ontario.

Still, there is much that needs clarifying, with regard to the income generated by casino gambling. How will the various service clubs that now run charity bingo games be affected? These organizations often derive substantial revenue from that source, money that is inevitably channeled back into the community in an efficient manner for a variety of excellent causes.

At present it seems that activity would suffer in the face of gaming competition from a casino. On top of that, since the host municipality gets a healthy slice of the casino action, in effect the disposable income people allot for gambling would mostly go to the Town of Milton instead of service clubs.

Since the Corporation of the Town of Milton would control the cash flow, they could do with it as they please.

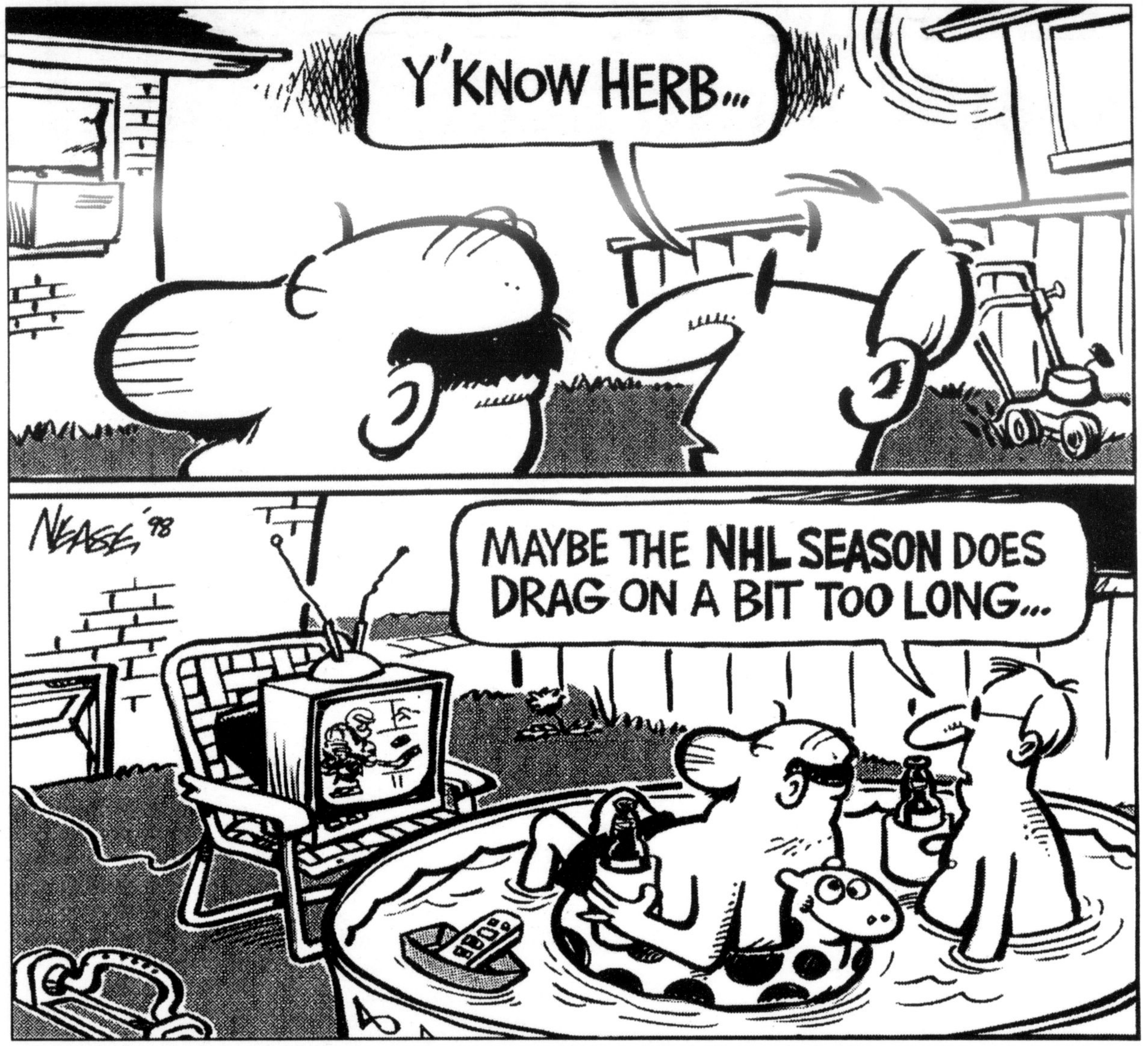
Granted, much of it would undoubtedly go to necessary municipal work. Still, if it comes to a choice between giving all the gambling money to service clubs in support of charities, or giving it to municipal government in support of whatever, how would you choose?

It's not as if government has never blown money on questionable exercises before. This happens at every level. Service clubs really can't do that, and are not set up to do it.

Council was faced with an either or proposition, what seems to be an unpalatable choice. Either endorse the idea of casino gambling, and let the details play out later, or face the prospect of potentially losing Mohawk Raceway entirely, since it's possible it would be shut down sooner or later, leaving Milton with nothing but a vacant lot, with no racetrack or casino.

If council has made the right initial choice, the hard work surrounding this whole project will come in deciding who gets how much money, and for what, from the gambling windfall. In a worst case scenario, the Town of Milton will just blow a lot of it on studies, consultants, hiring more staff and gilding lilies. In a best case scenario, they won't do that because people won't let them.

Rob Kelly



## OUR READERS WRITE

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

### Pay your share, says reader about tax system abuse

Dear Editor:

In reference to your June 9 story headlined 'Windfall may loom for some small businesses', I would take issue with the tone of the article.

Lawyer Melvin Newman's case that his wife act as a director in a company in order to split the dividend and thereby pay a reduced tax is just another example of how some people abuse our tax system in Canada.

The average taxpayer in Milton must realize that when some individuals exploit tax loopholes it causes the rest of our taxes to go up in order to make the difference.

Revenue Canada sets up the tax rules in order to generate a certain amount of income and when a few people discover ways of reducing their taxes, then the only recourse is to raise general taxes.

I would say that it is cause for celebration if someone discovers a way of reducing all of our taxes but it is cause for concern when a few people discover a method of shifting more of the tax burden onto the back of John Q Public.

In this time of cutbacks and concern over governmental deficits you should be reminding your readers that our provincial and federal governments would both be in the black today if they could collect all of their unpaid back taxes, some of which are due to certain individuals taking issue with tax rules.

I'm sure that many of these individuals will defend their actions by arguing that it is the government's problem and not theirs and that tax money is misspent anyway. But

frankly I am sick and tired of that line of reasoning.

Mr. Newman and Mr. Bourgon, I say pay your fair share of what is, after all, one of the best systems in the world and get on with it!

Mike Druiven  
Milton

### Board PD day letter misleading

Dear Editor:

On May 27, the Halton District School Board sent out a misleading press release and letter home to parents concerning professional development days in June.

Rather than inform parents and the public about the changes to the school year calendar and explain the reasons for the change, the board is attempting to blame teachers for the inconvenience and disruption caused by the actions of its top administrators.

A member of the public reading the news release heading would assume that teachers will get three additional professional development (PD) days. The news release does not explain that the board broke the collective agreement by taking away PD days that were negotiated in return for lost preparation time.

Now the board is breaking the collective agreement by unilaterally taking away teacher planning time as it staffs its schools for the fall. New grievances are being filed.

Instead of working together, the top administrators of the Halton District School Board continue to demonstrate the contempt they have for their own employees. Some leaders.

Breffny Boyd, Barb Baron,  
Valerie Jordan and Dave Toderick

### Pud

by Steve Nease

