



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 *Distribution Manager*

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Making a difference

Peter Campbell is retiring soon as the chief of the Halton Regional Police Service, apparently after indicating quite some time ago that he would only serve one five-year term.

Good for him. Bob Middaugh, the recently retired head of the Hamilton force, who was once deputy chief in Halton, said not too long ago that nobody should be chief longer than a handful of years because the job involves a lot of wear and tear. This through controversy both within and without.

It brought some thoughts with regard to policing, which has been criticized, on the big-picture level, in this space before.

Perhaps not enough positive attention has been allotted, from a more personal perspective.

Through this business reporters and editors often come to know police officers, some on a personal level.

Your agent has both friends and acquaintances in various departments.

One thing that has become apparent is that as an officer's career goes on, he or she often becomes a bit jaded and world-weary. In fact, on more than one occasion an officer has indicated, as his or her career wound down, that getting out of policing would be a good thing because they didn't make any difference.

This stems from the observation, on their part, that there are at least as many criminals out there as when they started patrolling the streets 25 or 30 years ago.

Maybe so. But that isn't their fault. They didn't create criminal behaviour. For the most part, they spent tireless and tedious hours forging investigations aimed at curtailing it.

What they did was clamp a lid on crime, keep it from getting out of hand. The measure of success for a police department is not in the failures for which some tired officers may feel responsible in the twilight of their careers.

The measure of success for a police department is, in a significant way, seen all around us every day. It is the quality of life we enjoy.

Granted, Canada's embarrassment of riches and deeply moral commitment to social safety nets for the truly needy are the cornerstones of law and order in this country.

But effective, responsible policing can do a lot to preserve and enhance the quality of life in a community. Because police officers closely watch those for whom crime is a career.

They also act as a sobering influence on the rest of us when we're tempted toward wrongdoing, interceding in domestic disputes, nipping juvenile crime before it degenerates into something worse.

People often blame police officers because they weren't in place 'X' when thing 'Y' happened. That's hard to accomplish, since the objective of most criminals is to do their work when the cops aren't there. Catching people in the act is difficult. Catching them sooner or later is not easy either, but it happens more often than most people think.

Everybody gets tired of their job at one time or another, and police officers probably more than most. But if they have taken their work seriously, they should never think they didn't make a difference. They did.

Rob Kelly



OUR READERS WRITE

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

Trucks a major growth issue, reader says

Dear Editor:

The following are my observations with reference to a story in last Tuesday's Champion by Brad Reamue

The story states that Milton has the highest vehicle accident rate in Halton. I guess what really burns me are the 'head in the sand' comments from our local council in response to the report.

What really scares me is that if our councilors are blind to the underlying contributor to a majority of these accidents what the heck is going to happen when this issue has not been properly addressed and the shovel breaks the ground for Milton's expansion?

Now don't get me wrong. I am pro-development in Milton, but if important issues such as proper roads and transportation infrastructure have not been addressed where does that leave us when Milton doubles in size? Has the water and sewage issue taken the focus off issues of equal importance?

My home backs onto Ontario Street (Hwy 25). Since I moved to this location seven years ago I have seen Ontario Street widened to four lanes and the volume of traffic, in particular tractor trailers, increase steadily every year to the point where I cannot enjoy my patio

Now I must keep my windows closed because of the incessant blasting of diesel engines and the squealing of brakes and tires. Not to mention the black, oily film which forms around the edge of my pool and on my patio furniture from the exhaust fumes.

Milton is a desirable community not only for families but

also to companies who wish to locate here because of our excellent access to major transportation routes.

And what does that mean? More trucks.

Residential development may not be happening presently but commercial/industrial sure has. New warehousing and manufacturing operations are popping up in High Point Park and along Steeles Avenue like dandelions.

Transport companies with large fleets of trucks have been steadily relocating here. Local quarries have been reopened and upped production levels. What does that mean? More trucks. Where? A good majority right through the middle of town.

These trucks speed through the middle of town, unable to stop quickly, should one of our children happen to step out unexpectedly on their way to school.

Wake up councilors. Perhaps it's time to stop blaming our teenaged drivers and our police force and focus on the important issues under your control. I've read the newspapers over the years and seen the stories about traffic fatalities in the area and my recollections of many seemed to include trucks. I looked around and try to compare our little community to others. I could not think of one community that has a provincial highway bisecting it. Others divert heavy through traffic to safer bypass routes. Where's ours? Is it going to take those squealing brakes to suddenly end one day with a dull thud and the horror of one of our youngsters lying motionless in the middle of a crosswalk?

Steven Porter
Milton

Pud

by Steve Nease

