



# OPINION

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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

(905) 878-2341

Editorial Fax: 878-4943

Advertising Fax: 876-2364

Classified: 875-3300

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## Wrong move by police

Community policing has its merits and we support it, but Halton Regional Police's latest move under the growing style of law enforcement goes overboard.

There's no question that assigning a police officer to work on behalf of the United Way is a nice gesture and will likely be a great asset to the organization's fundraising campaign. The problem is, it's inappropriate.

Police Chief Peter Campbell's decision to assign Sgt. Frank Phillips to help the United Way of Oakville fundraise on a full-time basis for three months is irresponsible to taxpayers, who expect to spend their policing dollars more effectively for crime fighting.

If Halton police can afford to dispense with an officer for three months so easily while still paying him, there's something wrong. We question the move, particularly when there's been an annual showdown between Chief Campbell and Halton regional councillors over obtaining enough funding to adequately police Halton and supply the service with sufficient resources.

Our criticism isn't a reflection on Sgt. Phillips. We have found him to be nothing but competent in his role as a sergeant and media relations officer. It's the situation that begs re-thinking.

We're also concerned that the placement sets a dangerous precedent. What about the other United Way organizations that operate in Halton? Doesn't the United Way of Milton -- which is struggling to meet the needs of the agencies it funds in times of cutbacks -- also deserve the benefit of a full-time police officer as a fundraiser for three months? United Way organizations in Halton Hills and Burlington could probably use the help, too.

What happens when they come knocking on Halton police's door asking for the same consideration?

Halton police aren't in the business of fundraising. Officers and civilian employees already do their part through voluntary donations from their paycheques and events such as charity barbecues. That's enough.

*Karen Smith*



## OUR READERS WRITE

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

### Former HRCA director criticizes board's spending

Dear Editor:

As a former member of the Halton Region Conservation Authority (HRCA) executive committee and the restructuring committee — term ending February, 1998 — the "elegant inn" expenditure is typical of the lack of respect shown for the municipal tax base by the HRCA directors.

Whether the unsuitable appetite for land acquisition or the maintenance of a fleet of passenger vehicles for staff use, cost to the property tax base is never a dominant consideration.

Subsequent to the release of a consultant's report on restructuring, multi-decade HRCA board

member Paul Farley is quoted in an article as saying, "You have to look at what will keep it financially viable."

While municipalities downsize their management structures and the Halton District School Board reduced superintendents by 50 per cent, the HRCA restructuring actually increased the size of the management team and increased the management team expense by close to \$100,000 per annum.

What has this restructuring binge cost the property tax base? The HRCA is paying for consultants, facilitators, legal fees, staff time, director's per diems and expenses and, most of all, severance packages, and yes, the 26 hours at an elegant inn — all for just less than one-half of a million dollars.

For this the property taxpayer gets more bureaucrats and higher

annual levies from the HRCA. Will this keep the HRCA financially viable?

The level of severance buyouts for the two deposed senior managers is directly a result of the failure of the executive committee to fulfill its mandate of human resource and budget administration.

Just as one cannot revive a dead fish by throwing money at it, no amount of money is going to create vision where there is none.

Our support for Councillor Paul Kidd of Flamborough is crucial. Councillor Kidd's out-spoken concern for the hard-pressed taxpayers will likely result in significant heat being placed on him by the less fiscally-responsible board members.

*Murray J. Harris  
Burlington*

## Some mighty big holes in that Titanic story

I had some great ideas about what to write for this week's column, including a sure-fire way to make everyone in Milton rich, and a foolproof method of saving the planet.

But, something more important came up. Something gigantic in every sense of the word.

You know what I'm talking about, of course: The Titanic. I saw it for the first time when it came out on video recently, which means I missed the boat the first time around. But, I figure even if you saw it at the movies, you would probably see it again on video, and you'd likely remember it either way.

This movie drives me nuts. If you're one of the few who haven't seen it, then don't read any further, just clip this out and wait until you have. I don't want to spoil the ending for you.

Let's just make sure those people are gone before we continue. Dum-de-dum-de-dum-dum-

de-da-dum.

Okay, I think the coast is clear.

I'm not saying the movie was exactly the way things happened, but since it's all I have to go by, I have some serious problems.

When everybody finally falls into the ocean, they all just stay in one place. Why the heck didn't they try swimming out to the lifeboats? It's not as if they were busy, other than freezing to death. That's one problem. Another is that people knew in plenty of time that there were no lifeboats left to get on. If it were me I'd go to Plan B very quickly. That means trying to salvage something from the ship that could be used as a raft of some kind.

Another problem. We see in the movie a mother telling her kids a story and putting them to bed while the ship was sinking. What's up with that? Sure, she was in third class, but that



with MURRAY TOWNSEND

### On the loose

doesn't mean you just give up, does it? She should have kept trying any way she could to get up-top and get them on a lifeboat.

In another scene we see a young child alone crying by herself. The bad guy, whatever his name is, scoops up the child to use as a means of getting on a lifeboat. Pretty convenient, wouldn't you say? Just where the heck were the kid's parents? So busy they'd leave their child alone

while the ship went down? Don't think so.

When Leonardo DiCaprio's girlfriend gets on a lifeboat, she gets some kind of brain cramp and decides she wants to stay with Leonardo. So, she jumps off and goes to him. How dumb is that? When you think about it, she probably kills him. Leonardo seemed like a pretty resourceful guy. After he knew she was safe, he would have found a way to survive so he could be with her again, maybe by making that raft or at least swimming out to the lifeboats. Instead, he's got to spend his time saving her, when she had already been saved.

I would have given the Academy Award for best picture to Good Will Hunting or As Good as It Gets. Mind you, I have a few problems with them too. But, that's a story for another time. Right now, I think I'm going to go rent that Titanic movie again.