



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

Bill Begin General Manager

Rob Kelly Editor

Karen Casas Circulation Manager

Teri Cosas Office Manager

Tim Coles Production Manager

The Canadian Champion, published twice weekly at 191 Main St. E., Milton, Ont., L9T 4N9 (Box 248), is one of The Metroland Printing, Publishing & Distributing Ltd. group of suburban companies which includes: Ajax / Pickering News Advertiser, Alliston Herald/Courier, Barrie Advance, Barry's Bay This Week, Bolton Enterprise, Brampton Guardian, Burlington Shopping News, Burlington Post, City Parent, Collingwood / Wasaga Connection, East York Mirror, Erin Advocate/Country Routes, Etobicoke Guardian, Flamborough Post, Georgetown Independent/ Acton Free Press, Kingston This Week, Lindsay This Week, Markham Economist & Sun, Midland / Penetanguishene Mirror, Mississauga News, Newmarket / Aurora Era Banner, Northumberland News, North York Mirror, Oakville Beaver, Oakville Shopping News, Orillia Today, Oshawa / Whitby / Clarington This Week, Peterborough This Week, Richmond Hill / Thornhill / Vaughan Liberal, Scarborough Mirror, Uxbridge / Stouffville Tribune, Today's Seniors, City of York Guardian. Advertising is accepted on the condition that, in the event of a typographical error, that portion of the advertising space occupied by the erroneous item, together with a reasonable allowance for signature, will not be charged for, but the balance of the advertisement will be paid for at the applicable rate. The publisher reserves the right to categorize advertisements or decline.

Vandals and attackers showed lack of courage

Courage is a quality that people prize because it is elusive and difficult to muster. None of us has courage all the time. We've all lost our nerve in some circumstance or other. Sometimes that happens in mundane conditions and sometimes in more dire ones, where the consequences can be harsh.

Courage is not the absence of fear. We all feel fear, unless we are deeply maladjusted. It is the ability to accept that fear and somehow move beyond it, to cope with being afraid while doing what needs to be done.

Courage is not picking fights or pushing people around in an emotional or physical manner. That's bullying, and it stems from fear.

Perhaps a reason why courage is so respected is that fear is much more prevalent. And fear is probably responsible for most of the hurtful actions we take.

People who feel the need to hurt others, or to neglect others, have themselves been badly injured, probably emotionally and probably for a sustained period. They lash out in a kind of pre-emptive strike, because they can't deal with their problems any other way.

This is not to excuse their actions. We all have to take responsibility for what we do.

But it might be illustrative to some people, who are busy trying to convince themselves that they are tough, or they are in control, at the expense of others.

They really aren't, and they are deeply afraid, mastered by their fear and insecurity.

Police officers deal with these types of people on a regular basis, as do Children's Aid Society employees, and a host of others.

This past week in Milton we saw a few examples of a lack of courage, a need to lash out at others. And of course, people were hurt. Children were hurt.

Some high school-aged kids, it would appear, vandalized Halloween decorations at a couple of places. In one case a young girl had spent a good deal of time decorating a pumpkin, and they smashed it, and hurt her feelings for no real reason except that they wanted to break something, because they're scared of the world around them right now and can't cope very well.

Hopefully the perpetrators will grow out of it, become responsible citizens, and later on cringe at remembering how their vandalism hurt a little girl's feelings.

Maybe in one of the other instances, it's getting a little late.

There might not be a whole lot of time for the three people who attacked two 12-year-olds and stole their candy the other night.

These people were old enough to drive a car, or at least one of them was, and they were skulking around roughing up 12-year-olds for their Halloween candy.

That is sad, and it is difficult to perceive of a normal 17-year-old who would do such a thing. These people need help because if they keep walking down the road their trodding now, police officers will soon have a keen interest in their activities. They are already taking a very dim view of this type of deeply troubling bullying, and justifiably so.

For these three, the first step in developing courage may be accepting that they've got some problems serious enough so that they feel compelled to beat up kids for Halloween candy. It takes a person with some bravery to realize that they are in a sad and disturbed place, a dangerous place, and that only they can begin moving away from it.

Rob Kelly



OUR READERS WRITE

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

Reader questions Catholic school board's sincerity

Dear Editor:

How serious is the Halton Catholic District School Board about negotiating and signing a fair and just collective agreement with its secondary school teachers?

At the end of September the chair of the board made his request to the teachers' president to negotiate before scheduled meetings for mediation on October 8 and 9. When board negotiators met with the teachers to fulfill this request, the board had nothing to offer, yet attended the meeting to expedite the process. How does this bring an end to the impasse in negotiations?

Following the student-based, fair-funding model, the board could timetable its secondary school teachers at six out of eight and still have a \$1.4 million surplus. The board has the money yet refuses to spend it as allocated by the government. Why? What does it plan to do with all of its excess money from the secondary education envelope?

Why is the board still insisting on assigning its secondary teachers a seven of eight timetable? Why does it claim to need government legislation to end the job action when it has more than enough money from Queen's Park to solve its own labour dispute?

Why was there a need to deduct 25 per cent of my daily salary when I was teaching according to the terms of the previous collective agreement? Does that not add even more to the board's \$1.4 million surplus if we used the six of eight timetable? Does this sound like Catholic social justice teaching in action? The board has made an offer that

allegedly meets with much of what they were asking for -- with a few reservations -- and claims to be optimistic that it will be accepted by the teachers.

However, the board has already made it obvious in these negotiations as well as previous negotiations, that it's less than sincere in its efforts at negotiations and has very little credibility with its teachers. Why would we believe that this offer is fair and just? Why would anyone?

Michael Jenny
Oakville

Don't forget human factor at new 'superjail', says father

Dear Editor:

As the story goes, a Cyclops took 'junior' to the balcony of their farmhouse and said: "Someday all this will be yours, my son, as far as the eye can see."

We mortals have two eyes, though, and it's important to use both. Efficiency is one eye and the human factor is the other. The latter is sometimes forgotten by our Cyclopean government -- education and health care come to mind.

I have visited with prisoners in London, Hamilton and for 10 years at Maplehurst Correctional Centre. One concern of theirs is that family and friends have access -- public transportation, telephone -- for contact with them. This is the human factor.

It would be wonderful to hear that the budget allows for a lot of counsellors and chaplains at Maplehurst. That's right -- it's the human factor.

Father Earl Talbot
Holy Rosary Church

Pud

by Steve Nease

