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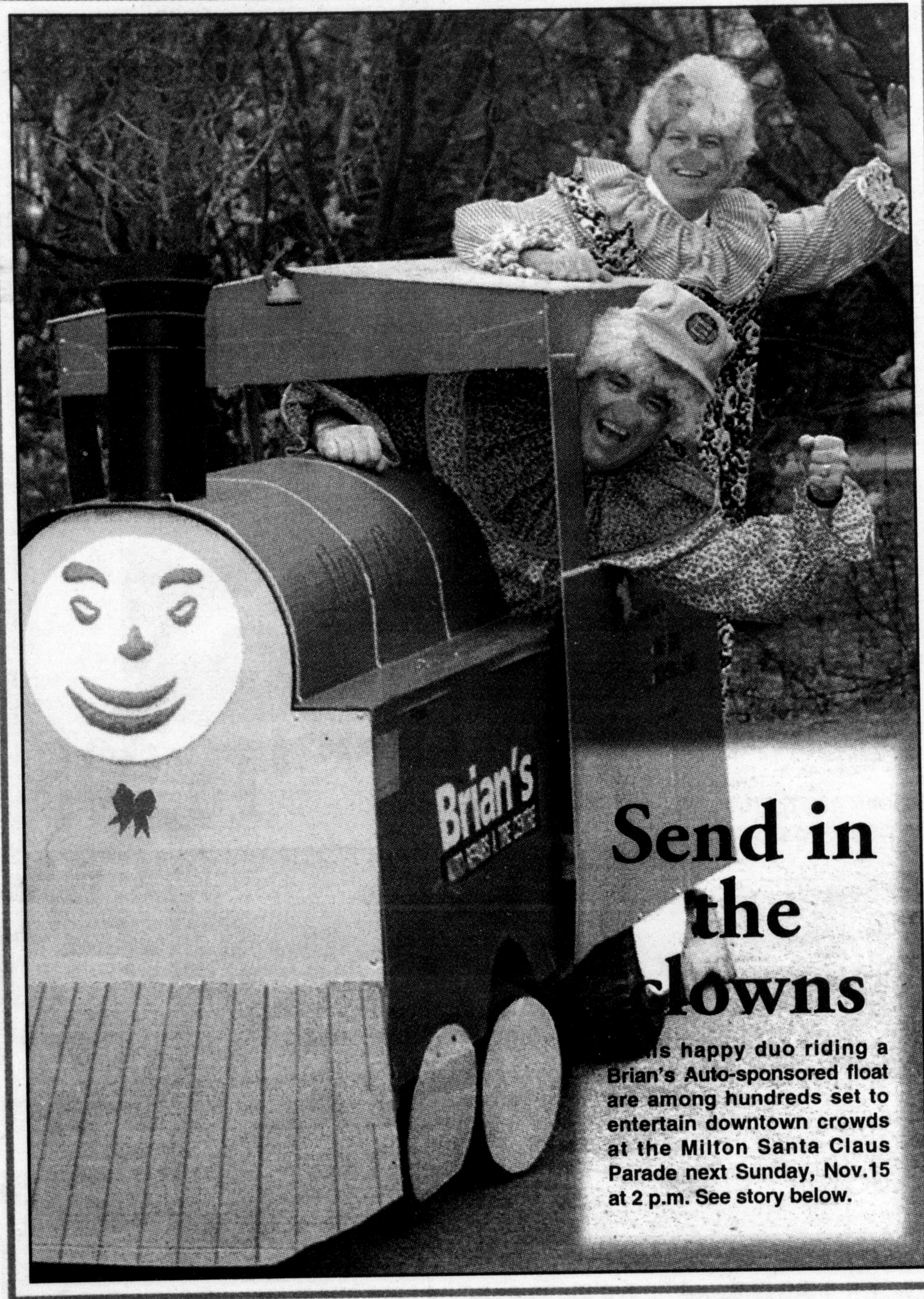
A Metroland Community Newspaper

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Send in the clowns

Two happy duo riding a Brian's Auto-sponsored float are among hundreds set to entertain downtown crowds at the Milton Santa Claus Parade next Sunday, Nov. 15 at 2 p.m. See story below.

Parade needs ho-ho dough

By IRENE GENTLE
 The Champion

This may go down as the year that the Santa Claus Parade was hijacked by the grinch.

With less than two weeks to go before the November 15 Milton Santa Claus parade, organizers are a full \$13,000 short of the \$16,000 needed to get the show on the road.

The annual Santa Claus parade is put on through the volunteer efforts of a number of service groups in Milton. It is funded completely by community donations.

The 1998 price tag is up \$2,000 from last year's \$14,000 toll, due to an increase in costs for the parade's 12 marching bands.

• see SANTA on page 7

Malboeuf slams slots approval as ludicrous

By IRENE GENTLE
 The Champion

An angry Councillor Rick Malboeuf has accused his colleagues of passing the buck on gaming in Milton. Now, Mr. Malboeuf warns, councillors have probably blown their hand.

The stake is the likely installation of 1,200 slot machines at Mohawk Raceway on Guelph Line.

Acting on council's earlier recommendation, the Ontario Jockey Club (OJC) recently went to the committee of adjustment (CA) seeking relief from a bylaw restricting the use of the racetrack to horse racing — in order to install slots at Mohawk.

The committee is an unelected citizen's group formed to judge minor bylaw variances.

On October 29, the CA granted the bylaw relief, opening the door for slots at the racetrack.

Last June council went on record approving in principle relatively large gaming operations in the community. This was in response to a provincial proposal at the time to create charity casinos. Before that idea died, a charity casino was slated for Mohawk.

The CA decision did not address the pros and cons of gambling. It probed whether the installation of 1,200 slots at the racetrack is a minor variance in usage of the raceway.

According to OJC estimates, the slots would draw 2400-2500 people per day to Mohawk.

It would also change the operation of the racetrack. Today, Mohawk races 100 nights a year, for a total of 350 hours.

With slots, that will likely leap to 24-hour operation 365 days a year.

That has at least some councillors arguing that the addition of slot machines is less a minor variance and more a complete overhaul of the use of the racetrack.

"To even consider the installation of 1,200 slot machines to Mohawk as a minor variance is ludicrous," said Mr. Malboeuf. "The slots, once installed, will not be an accessory to racing at Mohawk but rather it will be horse racing that will become the accessory to the slot machine operation. And that is a major change to the current situation."

Mr. Malboeuf worried that opening the door to slots could carry a hefty price tag for road repairs and policing to Milton, with no word on who will pay.

Slots could also dry up the charity bingos in town that raise more than \$450,000 annually for local charities, he warned.

"The fact that we have slots at Mohawk could mean the end of the local charity bingo hall," said Mr. Malboeuf.

"If this bingo hall is forced to shut down due to slots, or if their revenues drop, who will make up the shortfall?"

Mr. Malboeuf tried to galvanize council in support of appealing the CA decision before the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).

An appeal, he said, would at least slow down the process, giving council time to open a public debate on the issue.

"I do not accept that a decision of this magnitude could be made by this committee."
 • see SLOTS on page 5

NEWSLINES

Christmas fund help needed once again

It's time again for The Champion's annual holiday fundraiser for the Salvation Army.

The community newspaper is aiming to raise \$20,000 by Christmas to help families enjoy all the holiday trimmings and gifts for the kids.

Last year, generous Miltonians donated a whopping \$21,000, far surpassing the \$15,000 goal.

Send donations to the Christmas Bureau Fund, Box 248, Milton, Ont., L9T 4N9, or drop them off at The Champion office, 191 Main St. E.

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