

# Backlash develops after woman complains about Christian group's school fundraising

• from **SLAMMED** on page 8 failed to schedule a meeting to explain their policies and procedures regarding fundraising drives involving religious organizations.

"Members of religious minorities and secularists should not have to be placed in a position such as the one the Federation of Muslim Women finds itself in, whereby the blame is placed on those who promote adherence to existing rules, regulations and policies, rather than on those who violate them," Ms Bhabha wrote, in a letter to board Director of Education Dusty Papke.

Ms Bhabha was vaulted into the spotlight after she wrote a letter urging Linbrook to pull out of a program called "Operation Christmas Child."

As part of the program, students and their families filled up shoeboxes with toys, school supplies and helpful everyday items like toothbrushes and soap, to be delivered to children in

poor and war-torn areas of Central and South America and Southeast Asia.

The boxes were to be given to a Christian relief organization known as Samaritan's Purse, which says it spreads "the word of Jesus' love".

Ms Bhabha suggested a program with a decidedly religious slant should not be supported by the public school board, which serves a multi-faith population.

## Did not conform

Board officials agreed the program did not meet board and provincial guidelines and laws regarding religious activity in public schools.

The boxes will still be distributed, but through a non-religious organization rather than by Samaritan's Purse.

Sean Campbell, the Canadian director of Samaritan's Purse, said that the organization delivers the boxes to all children in an area, without discrimination based on race or religion.

Literature explaining the meaning of Christmas and the birth of Jesus is distributed with the boxes, with the approval of local authorities.

## Won't apologize

"I'm not going to apologize at all, to anybody, for my beliefs in a Christian holiday and a celebration of a Christian holiday," said Mr. Campbell. "I feel that Christmas is about the birth of Christ and if we are going to be giving gifts to children in celebration of the Christmas holiday, we have the privilege to explain why we are giving those gifts."

This is not the first time Operation Christmas Child has come under scrutiny for its religious overtones.

Mr. Campbell says concerns have been raised in the past, but suggests people who feel uncomfortable with the program shouldn't take part.

"For every one letter from parents who are concerned, we receive dozens

of letters from the other side," he said. "If we are making people feel uncomfortable by talking about our relationship with God and the love we feel so strongly, then please, don't participate."

"But I find it ironic that a Muslim here would have a problem with this when I have a Muslim princess in Jordan who is a direct descendant of Mohammed and she is a strong supporter of the program," he added.

## Missing point

Ms Bhabha says Mr. Campbell, as well as others, have simply missed the point.

"It's against the law, it's as simple as that," she said. "Our children have rights and their rights are protected under the laws of Ontario. We would have done the same thing if it was a Jewish group, a Muslim group or a Hindu group."

"(Samaritan's Purse) can do what-

ever it wants," Ms Bhabha added.

"We're not objecting to missionary work at all. They can collect as much as they want in churches and in community centres, but just not in the way it was done in Linbrook school, under the laws of Ontario."

## Mountsberg Christmas

Mountsberg Wildlife Centre hosts its annual Christmas and Nature event Sunday, Dec. 6 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Visitors are invited to take a hike along a quiet forest trail, warm up with a steaming mug of hot chocolate and try their hand at making tree ornaments.

Mountsberg is on Milborough Line, just five kilometres west of Campbellville between Hwy. 6 and Guelph Line.

## Halton Region Transportation Studies - Notice of Public Meetings December 1998

### REGIONAL ROADS 5 & 25 CORRIDOR STRATEGIES (Formerly Hwys. 5 & 25)

Halton Council has initiated the preparation of a comprehensive Corridor Strategy for each of these roads. The **Regional Road 5 & 25 Corridor Strategies** have a number of key components as follows:

- Safety Audit (working with the Halton Regional Police)
- Traffic Operations
- Urban Design and Development
- Transportation Planning (Road and Transit)
- Engineering Assessment of Roads and Bridges
- Financial and Implementation Plan

The **Regional Road 5 (Hwy. 5) Corridor Strategy** will focus on the sections in Oakville and Burlington. The **Regional Road 25 (Hwy. 25) Corridor Strategy** will focus on 2 sections, QEW to Burnhamthorpe in Oakville and between Britannia and Derry Roads in the Town of Milton.

It is essential that these Corridor Strategies be prepared with the direct participation and involvement of the general public, road users, abutting landowners and residents of nearby neighbourhoods. There are two public meetings scheduled for this study in December to present preliminary results, findings and options.

**Wednesday, December 2, 1998**  
Halton Regional Centre Auditorium  
Regional Road 25, north of the QEW, Oakville

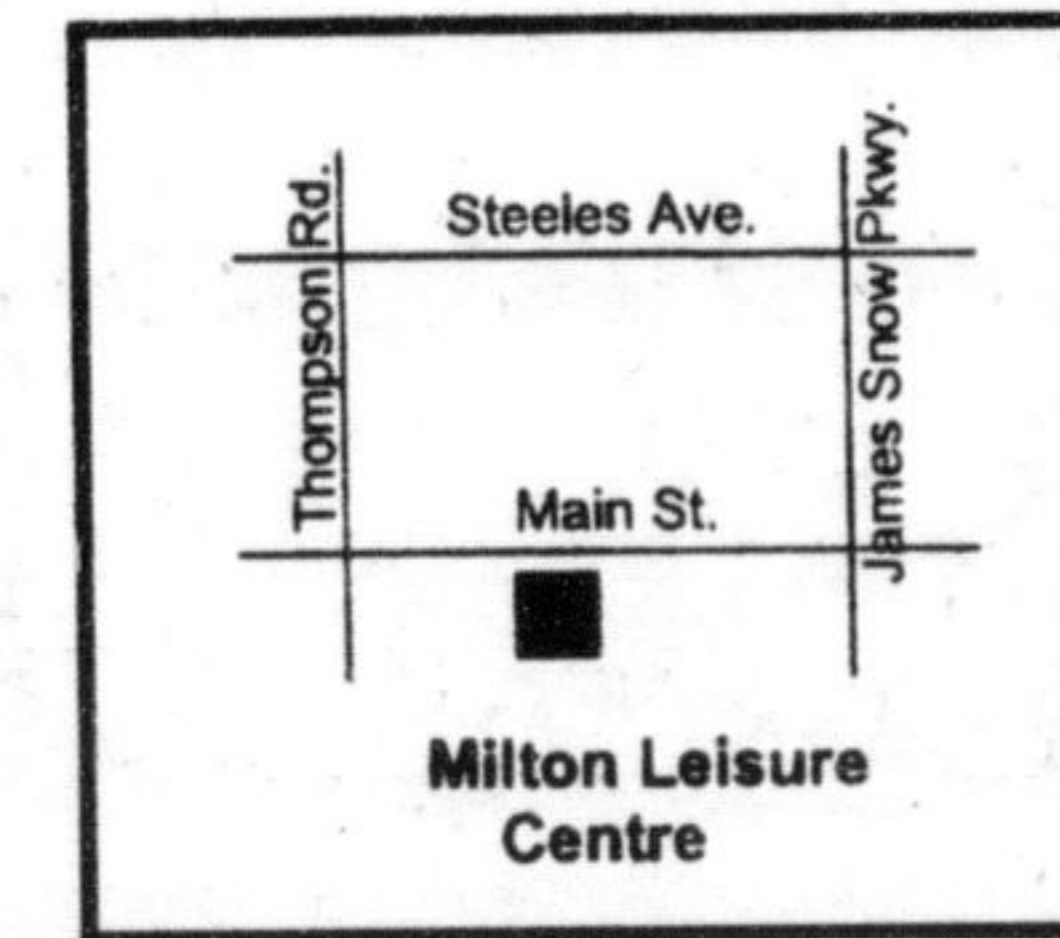
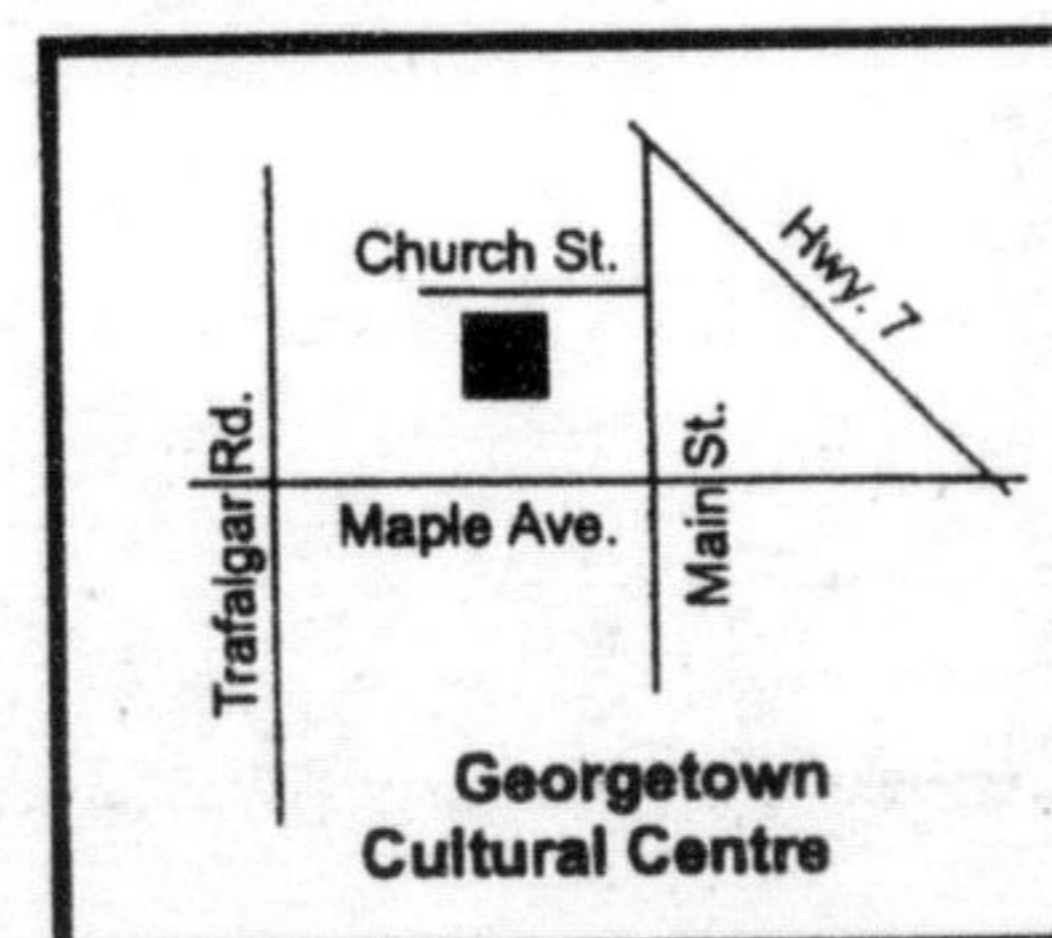
**Tuesday, December 8, 1998**  
Brant Hills Community Centre - Activity Rm  
2330 Duncaster Drive, Burlington

**Both Locations: 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. Open House**  
**8:00 - 8:30 p.m. Presentations & Questions**  
**8:30 - 9:30 p.m. Workshop**

To contact the Study Team and/or place your name on the mailing list, please call:

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These studies are being undertaken as a Master Plan in accordance with the "Class Environmental Assessment for Municipal Road Projects". Public Input will be documented in the Master Plan report which will satisfy Phases 1 & 2 of the Class EA.

The programs for the public meetings listed in this advertisement have been co-ordinated to provide the public with the opportunity to obtain information on both studies.

visit our web site [www.region.halton.on.ca/ppw/roads](http://www.region.halton.on.ca/ppw/roads)

### HALTON FUNCTIONAL ROAD NETWORK & NORTH HALTON TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Halton Region, in conjunction with the municipalities of Halton Hills, Milton, Oakville and Burlington, has initiated a review of the role, function, needs and service level of major roads in the Region with the objective of determining the most cost-effective way of managing the road system. Part of this study will also address specific transportation problems and solutions within the Region, particularly in the area north of Regional Road 5 (Dundas Street).

Public input is a very important part of this study and the study process is designed to provide the public, stakeholders and interest groups with the opportunity to interact on an on-going basis with the study team of Regional staff, municipal staff and consultants. The purpose of the second series of public meetings is to seek input on the alternative transportation solutions, long term roadway improvements and future functional road classification. The meetings will be held at the following locations:

**Tuesday, December 1, 1998**  
Georgetown Cultural Centre  
9 Church Street, Georgetown

**Thursday, December 3, 1998**  
Milton Leisure Centre  
1700 Main Street East, Milton

**Both Locations: 6:00 p.m. - Open House**  
**7:00 p.m. - Presentation followed by workshop**

**Wednesday, December 2, 1998**  
Halton Regional Centre Auditorium  
Regional Road 25, north of QEW, Oakville

**Tuesday, December 8, 1998**  
Brant Hills Community Centre - Activity Rm  
2330 Duncaster Drive, Burlington

**Both Locations: 7:00 p.m. - Open House / Displays / Presentation**

To contact the study team and/or place your name on the mailing list, please call or write to:

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