



OPINION

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Tone of discourse leaves a good deal to be desired

The tone of political infighting locally is getting pretty harsh. Councillor John Challinor is fighting with taxpayer advocate Pat Kelly. Pat Kelly is beginning to fight back, having apparently had enough.

Various municipal councillors and Mayor Gord Krantz are battling with regional Councillor Rick Malboeuf. They are dismissing Mr. Malboeuf's criticisms over council procedure as unwarranted. They also charge that Mr. Malboeuf likes to grandstand, since he has precious little better to do in the political arena.

Now, there is such a thing as the normal give and take of politics. But lately, in several quarters, there has been a more bitter edge to the discourse. Mr. Challinor, for example, seems intent on discrediting Mr. Kelly and the organization Mr. Kelly represents -- a ratepayers' lobby group.

Mr. Malboeuf generally paints the majority of his council colleagues as ethically compromised in terms of the matters they debate behind closed doors. He charges that they should be discussing these issues openly, in front of constituents, in public council sessions.

His opposite numbers angrily denounce Mr. Malboeuf as what amounts to an irresponsible gadfly.

Acrimony and controversy may sell newspapers, but there's a limit. Much of this stuff is a little too personal. If that's warranted, fine. But if it's not, let's see more talk on the issues, and a little bit less about the personal shortcomings of antagonists.

Rob Kelly

News Item: Canadian Armed Forces approves combat uniform for pregnant soldiers...



OUR READERS WRITE

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

Old days weren't this bad

Dear Editor:

I was dismayed and saddened by comments attributed to Halton North MPP Ted Chudleigh in Irene Gentle's article 'Chudleigh acclaimed' in the Friday, Dec. 12 edition.

"I ran in the last election because something had to be done," stated Mr. Chudleigh.

Let's see what Mr. Chudleigh and his colleagues have "done" to health care in Milton since he was elected:

1. Milton District Hospital now has 29 per cent fewer beds than when Mr. Chudleigh was elected.
2. More patients have to wait in Milton's emergency ward for a bed to become available because of bed closures.
3. Beds are closed at Milton District Hospital to save money, and thus to help our amalgamated partner Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital deal with its

chronic budget deficit.

4. The obstetrics ward at Milton District Hospital is closed.
5. Milton women must now go to other towns to deliver their babies.
6. The waiting time for microbiology test results at Milton District Hospital has increased from two to five days.
7. Skilled nursing staff has been laid off.
8. Morale among the medical and the nursing staff is at an all-time low.

What puzzles me most is, in light of the above facts is that Mr. Chudleigh believes, "Now that things have improved, it's hard to remember how bad it had been."

Mr. Chudleigh, if what you have done to health care is an improvement, my patients, colleagues and I are unanimous in our desire to return to the bad old days.

Dr. Garnet Maley
Milton

My days of procrastinating are over ... well maybe

I had the perfect story for a Christmas column last week, but I left it until the last minute when it was too late. So, I figured it would do for New Year's just as well. I didn't get around to that either until I had run out of time again.

So, that's my New Year's resolution. I'm not going to procrastinate anymore, or maybe I'll just wait until next year for that one. Here are some other random thoughts.

- I thought the sand and salt trucks did a great job in Milton the other night when the roads threatened to turn into a skating rink. I thought they did a lousy job last year, so consider this positive reinforcement.

- Everywhere I go I see these new mega-theatres being built or already finished. I don't know what that has to do with anything, but I'm thinking about it, and will get back to you.

- I consider myself a hockey arena snack bar expert, having been to almost every one of them within a 100 miles radius of here. My 1998 rankings place the one at Milton Memorial Arena number one. It has great selection, great drinks, and most importantly, great popcorn. The popcorn, however, only ranks second in the top 100 behind Mount Joy Arena in Markham.

corn, however, only ranks second in the top 100 behind Mount Joy Arena in Markham.

- I got a Dixie Chicks compact disc for Christmas. I like the Dixie Chicks. And their music is pretty good, too.

- I'm not a big New Year's Eve party fan. I don't particularly like kissing people I don't know, and I can't imagine they'd feel any differently about me. Now, if the Dixie Chicks were at the party...

- Once I was at a New Year's party, and this guy said to me: "I don't know what everybody's so happy about, it's just another year of being miserable."

- I've lost 23 pounds since the picture for this column was taken. Please use some kind of marker to erase a chin or two to get a better perspective of what I now look like.

- It bugs me that I agreed to pay the cable company for the extra channels that everybody else is still getting for free. I want a refund.

- My five favourite hockey teams are the Halton Twisters Girls UPS team, Caledon Hawks AA minor peewee, Markham Waxers



with MURRAY TOWNSEND

On the loose

AAA peewee, Milton Winterhawks AA midgets, and the Odessa Jackalopes of the Western Pro Hockey League. The latter, just because of its name. I don't know what a jackalope is, but it must be a cross between a jackrabbit and an antelope. Fascinating.

- I'm going to quit smoking this year, or next year. Guaranteed.

- I had to take my daughter to Milton District Hospital recently. I expected the usual three-hour wait you get at all hospitals, but she was in, checked, and had a prescription written within 15 minutes. Call that positive reinforcement, too.

- I always say I like cold weather and snow. But, when we actually get it, I tend to change my mind.

- My three favourite songs of all-time are Stairway to Heaven (Led Zeppelin), Money (Pink Floyd) and Time of Your Life (Green Day). As if you cared.

- My three favourite things to eat are shrimp, cashews and turkey. As if you cared, Part II.

- The holiday hockey tournament season is a treat for me. One day this week I saw four different hockey games at three different locations. The Milton Beaver Tournament is one of my favourites, and, of course, you can get good snacks, too. My brother coaches and my nephew plays for the peewee AAA Markham Waxers. They were at the Bell Challenge Cup this week with 20 of the best teams from Ontario and the United States. The hockey is fantastic, and the size of some of these 13-year-olds is unbelievable. They made it to the final four, but I won't know if they went on until I watch the semi-final game, which is where I'm going now.