



COMMENT

We've got three years to decide on casinos

Last week the Province spared Milton from making what may have been a wrenching decision.

A three-year freeze on new casinos in Ontario will effectively postpone any debate on what to do with Mohawk Raceway.

That gives both politicians and residents a breather; time to collect their thoughts, not to mention data on what ills or benefits gaming brings to the community.

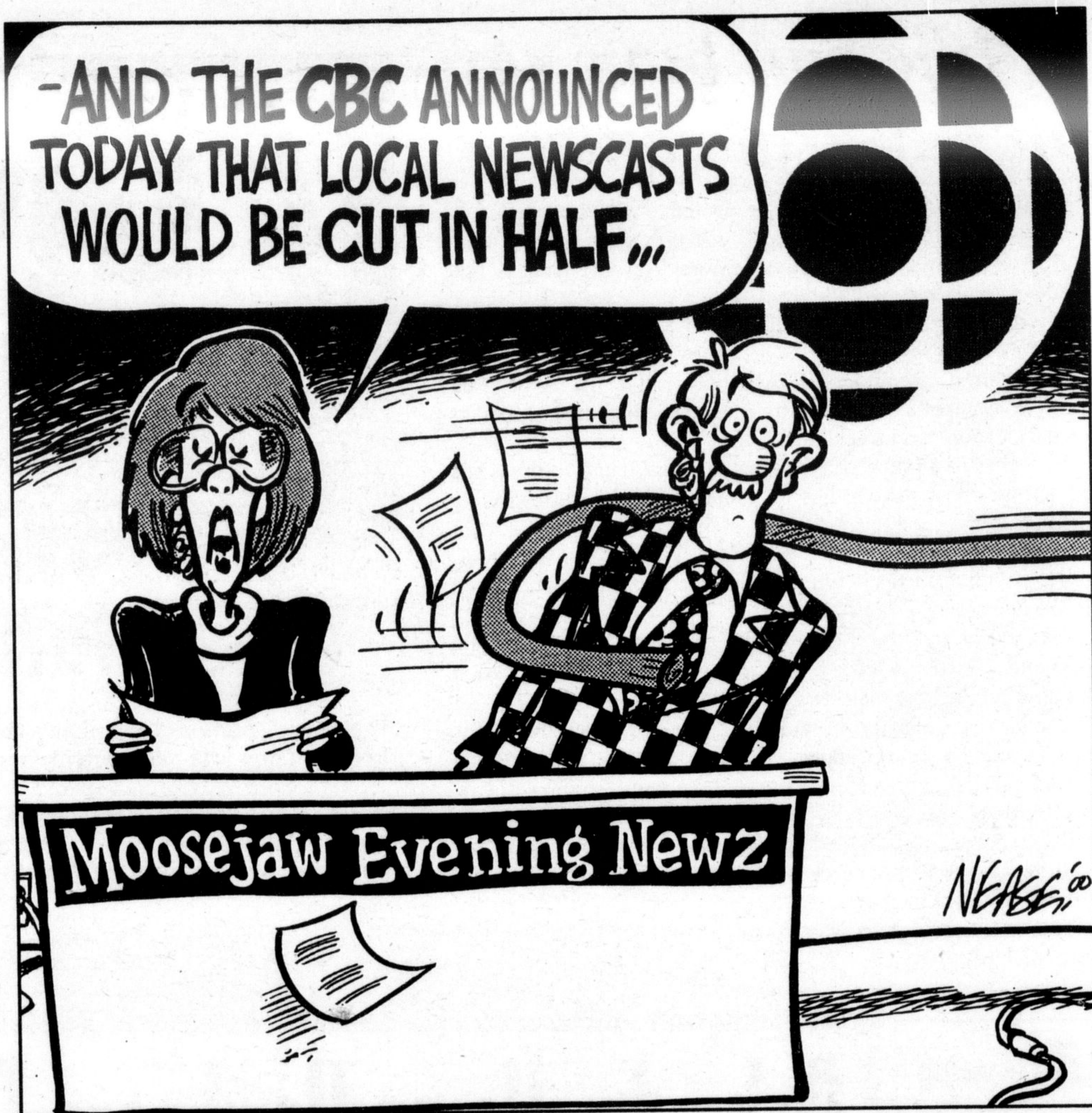
But the issue is much like a sleeping giant. It will rise again, and residents now have three additional years to decide what kind of community they'd like this to be.

On the one hand are fears about increased traffic, crime, addiction and the disintegration of families.

On the other is the notion that adults are expected to behave with both accountability and responsibility for their actions.

And at the bottom of it all there's a the potential of a big pile of money.

Gambling revenue can be used to achieve any number of positive ends. But is it worth it? There's at least three years to decide.



OUR READERS WRITE

Market vendor says street left in a mess

Dear Editor:

Milton has always had a reputation for being a clean town with tidy residents who care about its appearance. I was therefore unprepared for the way Main Street looked when I arrived to set up a stand for the Farmers' Market early Saturday morning, the day after the June 16 Moonlight Magic event.

Half-finished pop bottles had been heaped in the gutter and tossed into the beautiful upraised flower beds that line Main Street. Cotton candy bags were plastered against the bushes, and partly-eaten pizza slices with their accompany-

ing paper plates were rolling down the street. Candy wrappers were everywhere, and fluorescent gobs of 'silly string' stuck to the street, the sidewalk, and the sides of the flower beds.

I had to spend the next hour cleaning this mess with a helper.

Let's take pride in the way Milton looks and while enjoying next year's Moonlight Magic or other events, remember to keep it clean and beautiful by depositing our trash in the garbage cans.

Katie Patrick
Milton

Remember, you're innocent until proven guilty

Dear Editor:

Regarding the topic in the editorial section of your paper dated June 13, you implied those individuals released from Maplehurst on bail pending trial as well as those released on parole are also presumed to carry the stigma of guilt as it were.

Therefore, all of the above should be treated with some apprehension in the public domain under the circumstances you described. How then do you distinguish between the convicted on parole from those pending trial and released on bail predicated on the principle of innocent until proven guilty?

I had the misfortune a few years ago of having been arrested by police and charged with an offence. I prefer not to go into detail -- the Privacy Act, you know. I steadfastly refused under prolonged interrogation to confess to the crime I was charged with and was told by the officer that if I confessed it would

make it easier for everyone. I'm not in the habit of confessing to allegations when I'm certain I'm innocent of the charges. That's what the courts are for -- to determine one's guilt or innocence. As a result of my seeming intransigence, I was placed in custody for more than 36 hours and ended up in Maplehurst before bail was finally arranged.

Incidentally, I was found not guilty when I came to trial more than two years later. Talk about justice delayed is justice denied.

Unfortunately, there are some who fail to distinguish between a verdict of not guilty and a verdict of innocent declared in the courts -- a matter of semantics perhaps?

The media and the public are jointly concerned about those who've been wrongly convicted and rightly so. I believe we should also concern ourselves about the countless unfortunates who've been wrongly charged much less convicted with inadequate evi-

dence to make a case for the courts. Meanwhile the indignities, loss of freedom and livelihoods forfeited in some cases appear to be of little concern to the cynics of our society, regardless of guilt or innocence before the fact.

To summarize, there's a constituency in our society who have a mind set that once you're charged with a criminal offence and you're exonerated in a court of law, you should be eternally grateful.

No doubt you had the luxury of a good lawyer on your behalf, however in the cynic's self righteousness you're still considered guilty given the nature of the alleged crime. After all, they maintain with some conviction police charged you with an offence and you're stuck with it (the guilt) presumably in perpetuity, despite the outcome to the contrary in the courts.

All in the name of justice you might say. I'm not so sure.

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by Steve Nease

