



COMMENT



THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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The Milton Canadian Champion is a Recyclable Product

Here's our wish list

Since all The Champion staff are fortunate enough to already be in possession of their two front teeth, we respectfully submit a grown-up Christmas wish list to Milton's new council.

1. Remember who you are. With governance issues set to take centre stage, identity is more important than ever. Change may be necessary, and even good, but don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. We're a nice town and desire to be a nice town in the future. Only bigger.

2. Stay fiscally responsible. Despite all the talk of front-ending development costs, there's a price tag that comes with growth. So stay ahead of the game. Cut down debt — thus saving pricey debt payment costs. Spend slot machine revenues wisely. It's a bonus, not stable income.

3. Choose your battles. The community is about to burst at the seams and current residents will soon be on edge from the seemingly endless dust, noise and delay from various construction projects.

So if another E.C. Drury type war arises — and it likely will — think carefully about whether it's worth the time, money and bitterness to fight it. It might be. But since the consequences of these decisions will far outlast the current council, think long term when making them.

Then have a restful, rejuvenating Christmas. After all, our Easter wish list is only a few months away.

We truly believe what we write is honest and fair

At some point in its ink-stained history, newspapers weren't meant to be objective.

Instead, they were expected to shout the party line, and anyone wanting another view simply read another paper.

And not long ago, journalists made judgment calls on which truths were in the public interest and which weren't.

Think back to John Kennedy when reporters were fully aware of ongoing peccadilloes and kept them quiet.

Until they were busted. Then the pendulum swung the other way, particularly in the United States. That created the image of newshound as bloodhound, sniffing after the most mundane and personal truths, such as the brand of Bill Clinton's infamous cigar.

Today, the truth — all truth — is meant to be an integral part of the newspaper business. The people are supposed to have the right to know, and we're supposed to be the ones finding it all out for them.

Once we do, we're meant to deliver the result in a straight-forward, unbiased manner.

Which we try to. Believe me, we try.

The ironic result is the only people I know liable to believe what they read are other reporters. Especially other community newspaper reporters.

That's because we truly believe what we write is honest and fair. We don't want to pack an article full of lies. Not even one lie. Instead, we bend over backwards to be as accurate as possible.

Having said that, mistakes are made. Things slip by. If you knew how much we hate to see correction notices in our pages, you'd know how hard we try to get things right the first time around.

But there are choices to be made in any story. A reporter has to make the call on what information to put in and what to leave out. Not everyone agrees with that call, but it's made in good faith.

And the finished product can be altered further through space considerations. If the article is longer than the news hole available for it, something has to go.

Placement in the newspaper has also been interpreted as evidence of bias. A charge was



OUR READERS WRITE

'Godspell' was a great experience all-round

Dear Editor:

This fall I had the great privilege to be in the production of the musical 'Godspell' along with a bunch of my friends who make up the St. Paul's Phoenix Youth Theatre Group.

The production was performed November 23, 24 and 25 at St. Paul's United Church.

I'm so proud of all the people who performed. We had so much fun together.

The members of the congregation were very generous and

allowed the cast and crew to rehearse at the church every Sunday afternoon, Tuesdays after school, and Thursday nights with the help of our director Rob Croezen.

The community support was so great.

Assisting Rob on most days were Mr. Coates, a teacher at W.I. Dick Middle School and Mr. Twiss, the vice-principal of W.I. Dick. Also, there was Mr. Longley, the father of one of our musicians, who created our awesome set.

On behalf of the whole cast and crew, I would like to thank everyone in our community who helped us make 'Godspell' possible.

It was such a great experience and thanks especially to our director, Rob. His tolerance with hyperactive, adolescent drama kings and queens was nothing short of a miracle.

I only hope the positive response is even greater next year.

Juli Heinz
Elliott Crescent



Gentle persuasion

with IRENE GENTLE

made recently that The Champion favoured the Liberals in the recent federal election because our first candidate profile, on the front page, was of Julian Reed.

What the reader may not have realized was Mr. Reed was the only candidate going at the time. The election had just been announced and all the other parties were playing catch-up. Their candidates were featured later, some also on the front page.

Coverage of events is another area vulnerable to accusations of bias.

As a rule, we at The Champion believe community events are important. We would like to

promote, follow-up or attend as many as possible.

There are two caveats to that. The first is we have to know about it. There's not much point in yelling at us over events no one informed us of. The thinking of those who do so appears to be that as the community paper, we should just know.

Much as I'd love to claim the power of 'just knowing' anything, it's beyond me. We know things because people tell us about them.

So get the message to us clearly, and early. If you try and call on the day of the event, there's a chance it'll be too late.

The second caveat is someone has to be available. Our staff is smaller than the Bush-Gore margin of victory. Our one full-time photographer works hard, but he isn't always on call. And our reporting personnel is almost as tiny.

No matter what the future of journalism is, there will be those who insist it has just a passing acquaintance with the truth. Despite that, our intentions remain as solid as last week's Liberal majority. And for those seeking bias in this column, that's an illustration, not a plug.