



COMMENT



THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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The Milton Canadian Champion is a Recyclable Product



We hope you enjoy our stronger voice

Welcome to our stronger editorial voice.

In response to feedback from readers, we've rejuvenated Friday's editorial and op-ed pages to include regular columns and more letters to the editor.

Readers have told us they want more columns and local features, and comments made by judges scrutinizing our issues in community newspaper competitions have indicated we need a stronger editorial voice.

So our editorial staff will write weekly columns on local issues starting with today's feature by Steve LeBlanc.

And on behalf of the Milton Historical Society, former Champion publisher and local historian Jim Dills will look back at events from the town's early days through excerpts from old newspaper editions in the new 'Time Capsules' series.

Changes to Tuesday's editorial and op-ed pages are coming as well.

Please keep those letters coming, and we welcome anyone with an interesting column idea to contact us.

OUR READERS WRITE

Dream won't die thanks to caring community

Dear Editor:

Dreams do not die.

Two weeks ago our grade 1 and 2 students were badly shaken by the theft of their long planned-for vegetable garden box. Due to fear of another theft of vandalism, we wanted to set aside our dream, to quit.

But today, the generosity and encouragement of some special Milton people have restored our dreams.

Cathy Tanguay and her family

came to the school to share with us their personal philosophy — never give up! Never surrender! Their business, True North Landscape Design, offered to replace our box and soil because they believed that dreams, especially childhood dreams, should never die. Now our classes will again begin to plan their dream and to carry it out.

We would like to sincerely thank John King of Humber College's Landscape Design Department, who built our original dream; the

people who called and wrote to express their concern; and the Tanguays and True North for their caring and generosity.

As Milton enters a period of new growth, we will need to continue to develop a strong sense of community caring and sharing to help us to "Never give up and never surrender!" when we're faced with challenges in the form of crime and vandalism.

Carol Hyde, teacher
Martin Street Public School

I'm guilty as charged of a brush with intolerance

Well Miltonians, the wait is nearly over.

In the next several weeks the first wave of new residents will be flocking to town — marking the start of our beloved community's long-awaited population boom.

During recent jaunts throughout town I've come across countless people concerned over Milton's future — many of whom worry that it'll wind up mirroring the likes of nearby centres like Brampton and Mississauga.

While Milton may be poised to lose its small-town status, our small-town appeal won't necessarily be lost in the shuffle — not completely anyway, if we approach the change with enough tolerance.

That's not to say we have to like every modification that comes our way, but a general acceptance of newcomers — from all walks of life — will go a long way toward minimizing any problems that may lay ahead.

But as with most things in life, that's easier said than done. And though difficult to admit, I represent a prime example of this.

Although I've always considered myself to be a very accepting sort — the kind that judges peo-

ple on who they are rather than what they are — I stand guilty of a brush with intolerance during a recent visit to my local bank.

You see, one of the tellers there happens to be deaf and my first encounter with her was met with some initial trepidation.

Upon first realizing that a deaf teller was behind the counter, my first thought was, how could this woman possibly conduct banking business with the same efficiency as her hearing counterparts? How could I possibly relay my financial intentions without looking foolish to those around me — or worse yet, taking up a lot of time?

These questions arose from self-consciousness and general selfishness — simple human tendencies that while certainly not acceptable, didn't go away even after other customers completed their business with her. I started wishing I'd picked another day to conduct my transactions or that timing would direct me to the hearing teller's booth — where there'd be no call for extra effort on my part and no opportunity to look foolish trying to break the communication barrier.

I guess sometimes you just need that proverbial



with STEVE LEBLANC

Up front

slap in the face to break off the shackles of ignorance and intolerance — and in my case, the slap was hard and long-lasting.

Turns out this deaf teller was — and is — more than capable of all the responsibilities of anyone else in her position, and if the transaction took any more time or effort on my part, it was hardly noticeable and certainly not worth my initial concern.

I left the bank that day with a rather shameful feeling that — unlike your run-of-the-mill bouts of embarrassment — didn't pass with my next errand.

Had I really been so self-centered as to be wor-

ried about looking a bit foolish or having to make a little extra effort — which would have, to say the very least, paled in comparison to the enormous challenges this woman has to undertake each day to overcome her limitation.

Okay, perhaps this is small potatoes compared to many situations of intolerance. After all, it's not like I wished any ill-will upon this woman or even uttered concerns of our first encounter aloud.

But that makes it no less acceptable. All it takes for intolerance and prejudice to blossom is a little ignorance and laziness.

That's a scary notion — but certainly true, and something to keep in mind over the coming months and years as our town expands to include a much grander ethnic and cultural mix.

So to the nice teller at my bank, I apologize — I didn't think you were up to the task at hand and that wasn't fair. I'm glad you proved me wrong.

And to all those Miltonians who'll be greeting our new neighbours will the same level of acceptance as existing residents, I say thank you — your efforts will go far toward keeping this a wonderful place to live.