



COMMENT



THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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The Milton Canadian Champion is a Recyclable Product

Let's hope the slate will be wiped clean

Last week's announcement that teachers with the Halton District School Board had come to an arrangement with the board regarding extracurricular activities is a long-awaited, welcome bit of news for students.

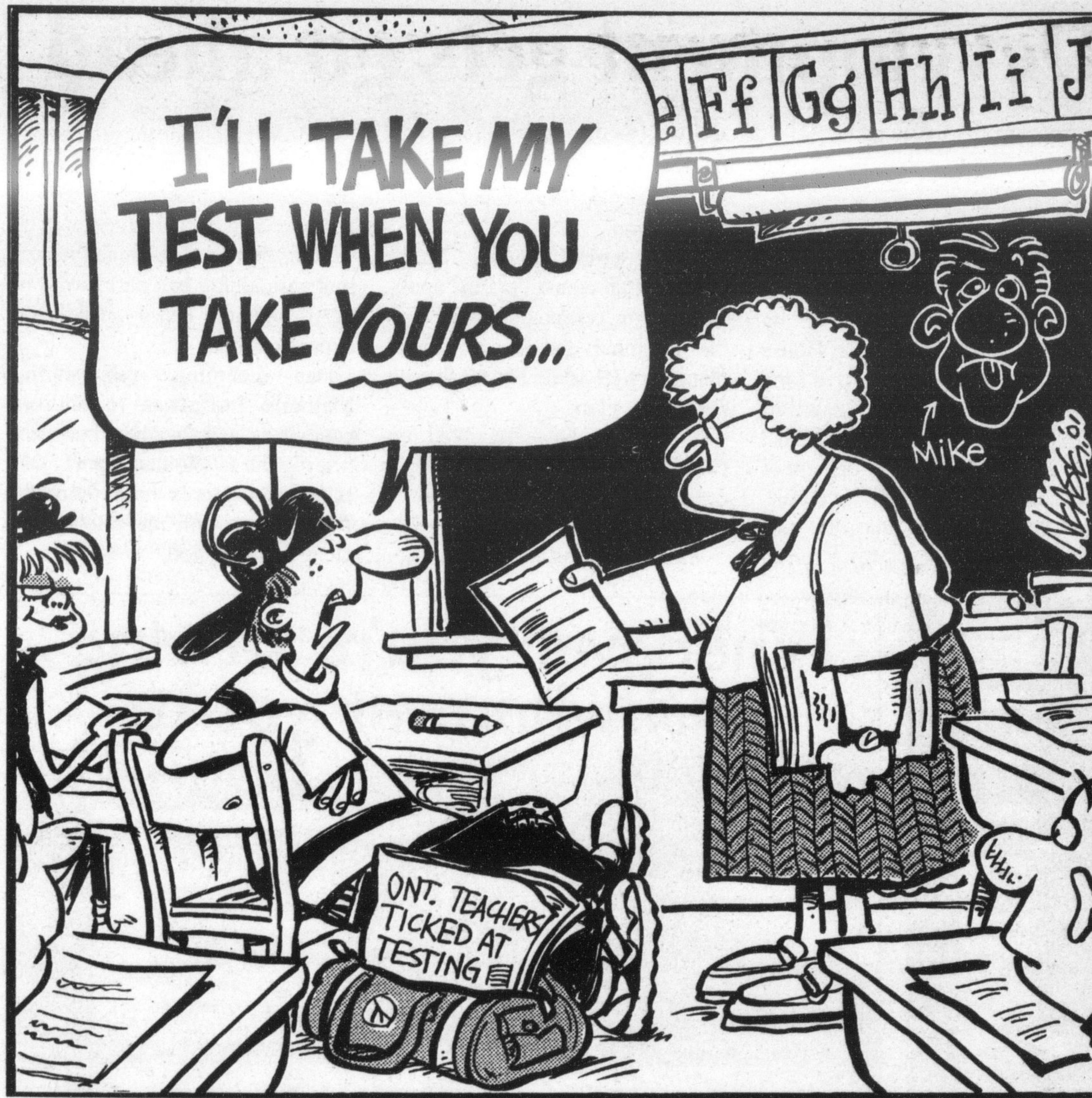
By being able to free up more teacher time in the school day, it's expected more staff will have the time and opportunity to resume after-school academic assistance, coaching duties and coordination of various clubs.

For the hundreds of Halton high school students who last year found themselves without many of the extracurriculars they had come to take for granted, it must seem like they've awakened from a nightmare.

Last week's nearly unanimous acceptance of a contract amendment will give the public board's high school educators the time to volunteer for the sports and clubs they didn't have the previous year.

While the vote doesn't guarantee all teachers will be back to volunteer, it provides a beacon of hope that previously cancelled extracurriculars will soon return to Halton schools.

We hope students and teachers, torn apart over this divisive issue last year, can wipe the slate clean and get back to forging the rewarding relationship often realized simply by participating in these school teams and clubs.



OUR READERS WRITE

Jolly old Scotty, Charles MacFarlane, will be missed by those who knew him

Dear Editor:

An old man passed away last week (August 23).

His name was Charles MacFarlane, but everyone knew him as Scotty.

Old people die every day, but Scotty's story is different. He touched people.

Scotty had no biological family and yet he was loved and cared for by a unique family — the employees of a pub.

Scotty lived at Allendale and would regularly make the rounds of

the pubs of Milton. A drink here, a taxi ride, another drink, another taxi ride, another drink and then home to Allendale.

But one pub on Scotty's rounds stands out, the Dickens. The owner/manager Roger looked out for him. The staff fed him fried egg sandwiches or whatever he wanted and loved him as perhaps no one else did.

Was he a trial? At times. Was he loved? No doubt.

Scotty would come in, order a half pint and sit. Many of the

patrons would come over for a chat, the wait staff would make sure he was comfortable and fed — for free — and then get him a taxi to his next stop.

Scotty is gone now but not forgotten. He's also mourned. The staff of the 'pub with a heart' is planning a small memorial for this Milton character.

Where else but in this remarkable town could you find a business with such a big heart?

Anne Cunning
Milton

Do you have an opinion on an issue? Send us a letter to the editor.

Public just isn't ready to accept a 25 per cent raise

Do MPPs deserve a 25 per cent raise?

For their current \$78,007 annual salary, MPPs spend six months of the year in the Legislature doing what they think, or are told by party leaders, is best for their constituents. The rest of the time is spent working from their constituency offices and hearing voters concerns.

Interim Integrity Commissioner Gregory Evans announced this week MPPs will see a 3 per cent raise every year until the next election (likely 2003), with a 25 per cent raise once the winners are announced. That pushes the annual salary to \$106,554.

Mr. Evans' reasoning? Higher salaries are needed to attract quality politicians.

The problem with that reasoning? Politics is like no other service and should be more about doing good than getting paid.

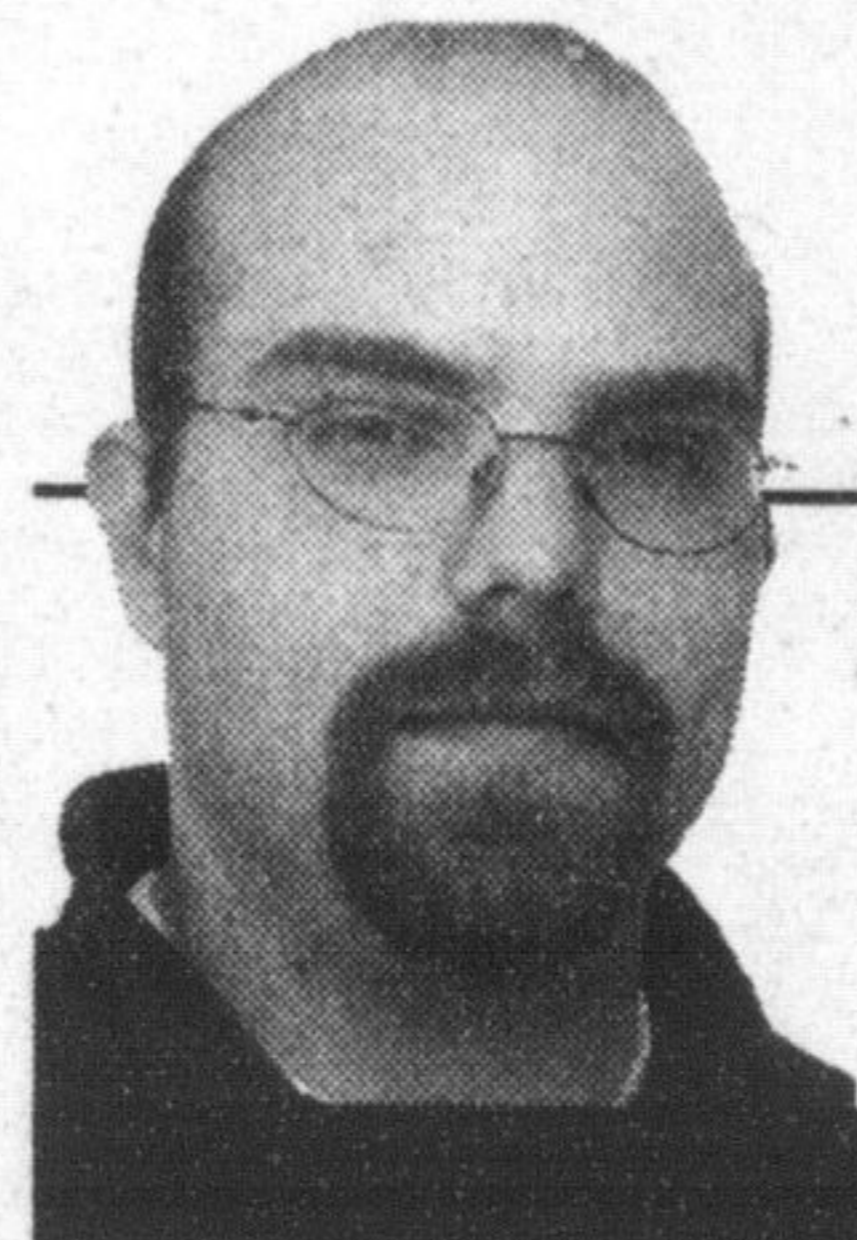
A politician's job is to address the concerns of

their constituents as best they can, rallying the support of other politicians to get the job done. Spending time counting their earnings isn't in the job description.

There's no question that MPPs, who haven't seen a pay raise in about 10 years and experienced a pay cut under the NDP leadership, deserve a raise. However the question remains, how much is appropriate?

In the spring, Premier Mike Harris announced a proposed 42 per cent raise for both himself and his fellow legislative seat warmers. But public outcry and the possibility it could cost him the next election (no need to worry, Walkerton already has) convinced him it may not be the best way to approach the topic.

Instead, the Harris government appointed a mutually-acceptable integrity commissioner with the input from both the Liberals and NDP parties.



From my
perspective
with RICHARD VIVIAN

What that did was take the brunt of the flack over the raises off the shoulders of Mr. Harris — a well orchestrated, if not completely transparent tactic.

Giving yourself a raise is always a politically-sensitive situation and the appointment of Mr. Evans is understandable. However, that does nothing to change the public perception of politi-

cians as hogs lined up at the money trough.

A much more sedated approach to pay hikes would have done wonders to improve the already falling perception of the Tory leader.

While the Harris government is known for its hack-and-slash financial tactics, there seems to be plenty to go around when it comes to themselves. A raise is warranted, but why should MPPs take 25 per cent when all they offer provincial employees is 2 per cent? Maybe Mr. Evans should move the decimal place a little to the left.

No matter who grants it, or how long it has been since they saw a raise, the public isn't ready to accept figures as high as we're seeing.

There's also the possibility that the pay hike will do more than attract worthy politicians. It leaves us more susceptible to spin doctoring — smooth-talking types who are more after the cheque than bringing forth changes for the good.