



COMMENT



THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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The Milton Canadian Champion is a Recyclable Product

Report brings good news and bad news

There's some good news and bad news relating to a report distributed to the Region's health and social services committee earlier this week.

Thankfully, the vast majority of Halton variety stores and gas bars are refusing to sell cigarettes to teenagers. An enforcement program, has 15 and 17 year olds — hired by the region — attempt to buy cigarettes.

The teens paid visits to 341 gas bars, variety stores, restaurants and grocery stores in an effort to buy a pack of smokes. They were successful in just 15 per cent of their attempts — down from 18 per cent in 2000.

While it is positive to learn that our retailers are wising up, the fact remains that Milton stores sold to teens 9 per cent of the time.

It's surprising variety store employees would take the risk of selling smokes to minors, especially when the Tobacco Control Act says retailers can be banned from selling tobacco if convicted of two or more sales offences within a five-year period, where the same person sold the cigarettes.

Perhaps the current fine of \$215 for selling cigarettes to teens needs to be increased to something more appropriate like \$2,000 to act as an effective deterrent.

We need to help our young smokers kick the habit.

And if that means coming down hard on the people who sell them tobacco — so be it.

The 'Main Event' is on so keep coming downtown

All the ruckus outside The Champion office Wednesday morning was a clear indication that Main Street re-construction has gotten down to business.

In fact business is the key word here as our downtown merchants need your support now more than ever.

I, personally, don't intend to let the ripping up of Main Street sidewalks and curbs between James and Commercial streets stop me from my everyday coffee at Espresso Yourself Cafe, grocery shopping at Quality Greens or grabbing lunch at the Ivy Arms or A Catered Affair.

And you shouldn't let the construction hinder patronizing your favourite stores and restaurants, either.

The Milton Downtown Business Improvement

Area (DBIA) is one of the players that has put a lot of work into a plan aimed at making the much-needed downtown re-construction the least disruptive to the livelihood of businesses over the next three months.

The DBIA's 'Main Event' (clever name) campaign is on, advising residents that pedestrian and vehicle traffic flow will be maintained throughout the re-construction project, and encouraging citizens to keep coming downtown.

So the many senior citizens in particular who walk and shop in the core can continue to do so safely.

And once construction is completed, the downtown will be even more safe for them to enjoy.

Kicking off the 'Main Event' promotional campaign is 'Our Easter Bonnets are Hard Hats'.



OUR READERS WRITE

Thanks for your support, says letter writer

Dear Editor:

I would like to thank Thomas E. LaPoint for his support of my letter to the editor by putting pen to paper.

I also received many personal calls from totally disillusioned and frustrated fellow citizens for so accurately putting to light this sad situation in Milton.

Included were many references to Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion's brilliant work and success, even at her age, along with some for Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman.

However, George Murdych of the Town of Milton totally missed the point of Jeff Smith's comments with his brisk rebuttal on Friday, Mar. 15.

Mr. Smith's point printed on Tuesday, Mar. 5 was why do we

have to put up with uneven road cuts? They have to patch the area anyway, so why not do a decent job to begin with? Why hasn't it been finished yet?

So what if the road is going to be repaired (finished) in 2002, which by the way has another nine months of car-bashing left. I was discussing this with a neighbor last week who quipped it's 40 road cuts, not 37. Mr. Murdych's letter shows us all the attitude the Town has toward our concerns.

This attitude illustrates my point about "driving on dirt paths until..."

Ripping up Main Street in the downtown has nothing really to do with all of this, but why are we doing this for yet a third time?

It's more money wasted again to

do what, get it ready to rip up again in a few years? As many past letters have pointed out, all the work in the world won't bring the world to our downtown.

It seems that more emphasis should be placed on establishing a better selection of stores, their merchandise and better customer service.

This was evident here in February with a letter discussing wedding plans a resident attempted with a local merchant and experienced by myself recently.

I was completely ignored in spite of standing there trying to get some attention while regulars who kept coming in after me got all the attention and service.

Andrew Willoughby
Tremaine Rd



From the
editor's desk

with KAREN SMITH

All DBIA businesses have been issued plastic hard hats for either their staff to wear or decorate and put in the window. (Check out ours in The Champion office front window.)

Further promotions will see draws for prizes, which will correspond with numbered rocks dug

out of a sandbox, and Mother's Day activities.

Weekly advertisements will also be published in The Champion to keep people informed of what the re-construction will entail the following week and what that means to shoppers.

The point is, businesses aren't sitting back and complaining, they're being pro-active, taking action.

You can do the same by continuing to shop downtown, or perhaps starting if you didn't before, even if it means a little inconvenience.

Used to parking on Main Street? Well, there's lots of other places for your car like parking lots on Mill and Mary streets, side streets and the rear of businesses.

Downtown Milton is relying on you.