



# COMMENT

## Evil can lurk @ home

Chances are, inside your home, there's something that could put your children at great risk, yet this item has no locks and is likely easily accessed by them.

If you're the owner of a home computer with Internet access, and a parent, it's imperative that you know what your kids are viewing on the information highway. Recently in Etobicoke, an 11-year-old girl went missing for 16 hours after arranging to meet a man she "met" on the Internet. Luckily the girl was found and the man was charged with a variety of criminal offences.

As home computer use becomes more commonplace, stories like these are also becoming less uncommon.

The Internet, when used properly, can be a wonderful tool, but there's an element of society that uses the information highway illegally.

On Tuesday, the provincial government gave the Metro Toronto Police Service \$2 million to help officers fight child pornography on the 'Net.

As Attorney General David Young said at the announcement, "Children become victims behind closed doors. Their predators operate in dark and shadowy places. Today's announcement will serve to shed some light on those dark and shadowy places."

And it's the responsibility of parents to police their children and ensure the home computer doesn't become "a shadowy place."



## OUR READERS WRITE

### Reader says she'd rather pay more taxes in order to receive better health care

Dear Editor:

This letter is in regard to The Champion's October 15 article announcing more layoffs at Milton hospital by Halton Healthcare Services.

In my own daily life I've learned that you get what you pay for.

It almost never pays to do things cheaply — you run a strong risk of getting shoddy merchandise or services that don't meet your needs.

Therefore, I wonder why governments think that they can underfund public services like hospitals and schools and

get away with it.

Maybe they think that the people of Ontario aren't paying attention or don't care.

If necessary, I would rather pay more in taxes to get the quality of service that we could be proud of.

We live in one of the most affluent parts of one of the richest countries in the world.

Surely we can afford to pay for adequate essential services.

Wendy Schau  
Milton

### It's too soon to close Percy Merry: reader

(The following letter was addressed to Al Greyson, chairman of Halton District School Board's School Closure/Consolidation Study Committee, and a copy was filed with The Champion.)

Dear Editor:

I'm writing this submission as a concerned Percy Merry School parent. My daughter attended Percy Merry for grades 4 to 6 and is now enrolled at Sam Sherratt School. My son attends grade 4 at Percy Merry and has since grade 1.

I realize that the difficult decision regarding the closure of Percy Merry School is not yours alone, and I trust you will convey my concerns to the other members of your committee.

I understand that if Percy Merry School is closed in June of 2003, all of our students will be temporarily relocated to an as-yet unnamed school, then possibly to the new north Mattamy school and finally to their permanent new home at the new south Mattamy school not

scheduled to be completed until 2007/08.

This is unacceptable — whatever your financial reasons for closing the school. The rural community which comprises the population of Percy Merry School has deep and far-reaching roots in Milton, with a long history at this school.

We joined this rural community in 1999 in order to become part of a close-knit family whose children attend a family-oriented small school. Of course, I would be thrilled to see Percy Merry remain open indefinitely, but if it must close, it shouldn't do so until our children's permanent new school is ready to welcome them through its doors. No child should be asked to relocate two or more times, and be a political pawn in order to serve this or that funding formula purpose and float indefinitely until a permanent school is ready for them.

Our children aren't second-class citizens and their education, self-esteem and sense of belonging

can't be toyed with in this manner. It can only be detrimental to intellectual and social development for these precious children to have to try to re-adjust to a temporary new school in a community not comprised of their peers, only to have to go through the process all over again. Our children have the right to feel respected and settled.

Stop this political play. The decent and logical thing to do is to place the new south Mattamy children into Percy Merry School to meet and interact with the children who will be their neighbours and classmates in the new permanent school and leave Percy Merry School open until that school is built.

As a parent and a taxpaying member of this community, I believe that if Percy Merry School must close, it must be at the right time and that time is when the new south Mattamy school is built.

Marni McEwen  
Milton



## THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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