



COMMENT



THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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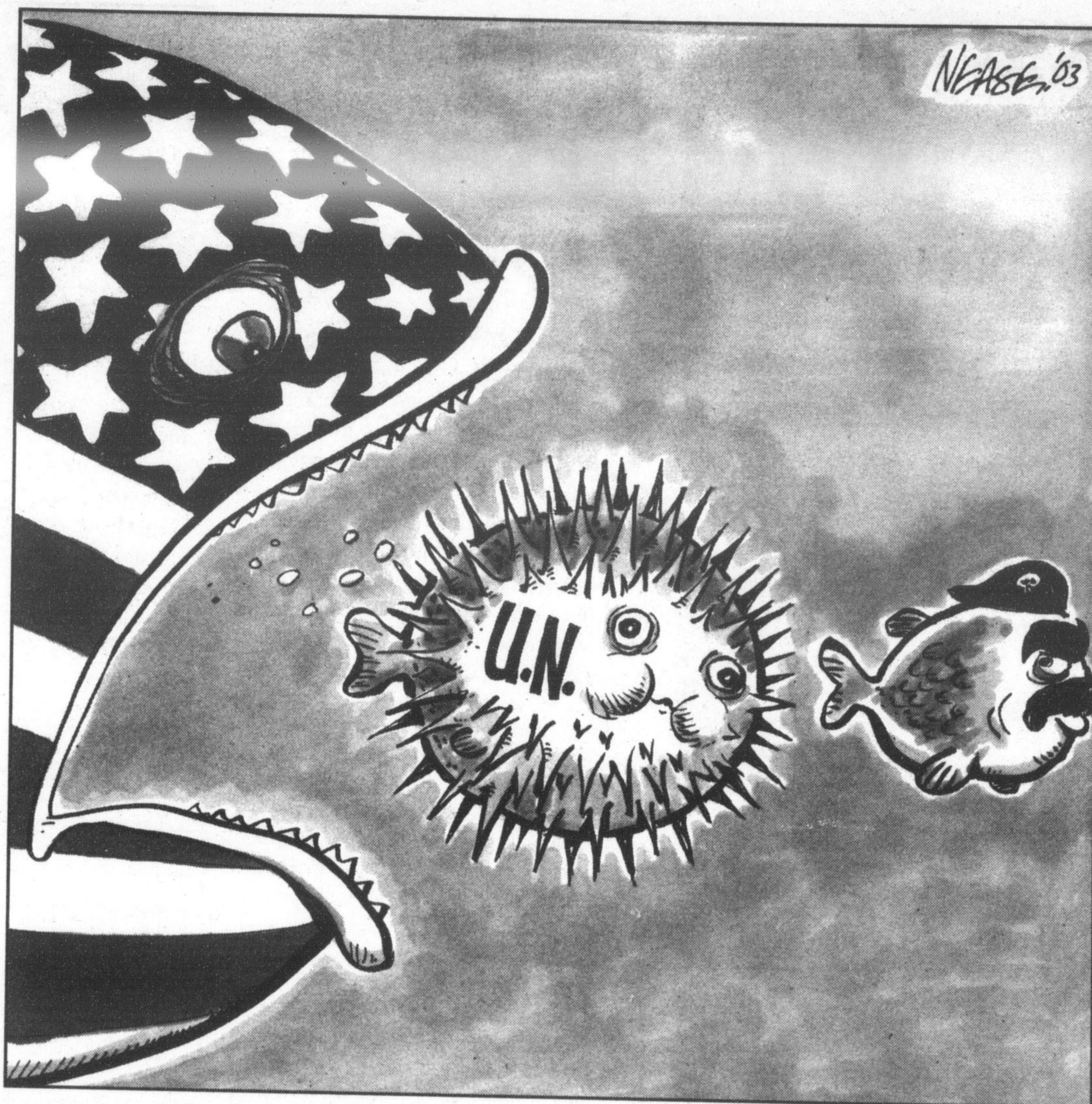
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Forty hours' work not a lot to ask, you guys

Excuse us for having little sympathy for the 2,000 Halton high school students who may not graduate this June because they couldn't sacrifice 40 hours of their time.

It's not as if the Class of 2003 hasn't been acutely aware of this new provincial requirement for earning a high school diploma.

In a region as large as Halton, there's no excuse for not being able to find a place to volunteer.

On any given week in Milton there are fundraising events held by non-profit organizations that would welcome the efforts of an enthusiastic student.

There's probably a volunteer opportunity out there to suit just about any youth's interest, and down the road, the experience might help the individual get his first job.

And parents could help out their sons and daughters by providing them with support and guidance in their community service initiatives.

No matter how people feel about the province's current government, it's hard to find fault with making 40 hours of volunteer work a condition of receiving a graduation diploma.

Volunteers are the unsung heroes of our communities. Without the programs and services they provide every day, our towns and cities would wither and many people's lives would be thrown into chaos.



OUR READERS WRITE

Children real losers in Drury development: reader

Dear Editor:

Many people have written about the 'Drury Park' development issue with regard to the seniors and the loss of property values, but no one has talked about the future of Milton.

I'm, of course, speaking about our children.

Our children lost a wonderful place away from the traffic and power lines. It was an area for families and friends to come together.

My problem comes because this development didn't only take away this space, it has also infringed on our backyards.

Most people probably assume that because this new community is geared to adults that it's made up of

seniors. If they are seniors, then a lot of them are working because there's a steady flow of traffic in the morning and the evening during rush hour. The ones that don't work are driving in and out during the day.

My backyard was a safe place for my kids to play, but now I have to wonder. What will the exhaust fumes coming from the traffic that is a stone's throw away do to them?

The developer has planted small shrubs as its way of blocking the traffic, but they're small and useless and the trees in the winter don't hide their road nor stop the air pollution. I think the developer should put up a solid barrier for us. It would also be nice for those people

who use the wonderful pathways to take their dogs and kids for walks. I'm sure they used these pathways because they were away from roads and traffic — used to be anyway.

We've had to close the drapes in our kitchen every evening now as well so that we can eat our dinner in privacy since cars that go by take a look and then there are those families whose homes are invaded by headlights as well.

I now have more traffic in my backyard than in my frontyard.

Maybe next time a builder wants to move into a greenspace in the middle of Milton, people will think twice before going ahead.

Michelle Lane
Beaver Court

Heck, I practically grew up at Country Markets

I have to admit I wasn't particularly upset when Quality Greens shut its doors for good in November.

Now don't get me wrong — I recognized the closure as a significant loss to Milton and felt sorry for those affected. But not knowing any of them and being only an occasional customer of the downtown grocery store, I just wasn't invested enough to be truly disappointed.

Maybe that's human nature, I guess.

However, it's a much different story for your local sports scribe when it comes to the impending closure of Superchoice Country Markets — which has served the community for just over two decades.

For nearly a third of that time, the family-run grocery store was like my home away from home — the only part-time job I had as a teenager.

Having gone to high school in Oakville since

Bishop Reding wasn't around in the mid-to-late '80s, just about every memory I have growing up in Milton is somehow connected to Country Markets. Heck, I practically grew up there.

But that almost wasn't the case.

Just a few weeks after getting the job I messed up royally — putting the manager's groceries and party supplies into the wrong car one night. Please don't ask me how it happened. I just wasn't very bright at 15.

Anyway, the manager was understandably upset — having arrived home to find nothing in his back seat for his guests to eat, and realizing that somebody with a similar car had gotten some free groceries. His anger had only marginally subsided the next day, when he told his assistant to kick me to the curb.

After a few anxious moments, I sucked up my pride and went to apologize to the manager —



with **STEVE LeBLANC**

**Up
front**

assuring him it was a one-time blunder and that I was truly sorry. He took pity on me that day and for the next six-and-a-half years I kept my screw-ups on a much smaller scale — or successfully concealed them from the boss. I can't remember which, exactly, as it's been quite a while.

But in all seriousness, not only did that job mean many good times and a lot of money saved

for college, but it also taught me a couple of key life lessons — namely, the importance of owning up to one's mistakes and the value of second chances.

I'm sure I didn't fully appreciate these lessons at the time, but that were important all the same.

I have no doubt that there's many people out there who have similar fond memories of Country Markets — as well as Quality Greens.

While I don't keep in touch with any of my former co-workers and haven't set foot in the place in years, Country Markets' closure still makes me kind of sad. It also makes me feel bad that I didn't feel bad enough about Quality Greens' closure.

I guess it's the end of an era. Well, it was nice while it lasted. To all those affected by the two closures — good luck.