



COMMENT



THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Budget and election could collide in fall

Let's face it, nobody likes tax hikes.

There's a potential local tax increase of 5 per cent — or about \$30 per household assessed at an average of \$250,000 — looming for 2004. Of course, this is only a forecast and it could change a number of ways by the time councillors vote for it in December or January.

But those two months — December and January — are interesting to note because by that point Milton will have a new town council. Municipal elections will be held November 10 and there's probably no reason not to think that candidates will use the budget as some sort of election issue.

Elections can be tough. With voter turnout typically in the low to mid-30 per cent range, candidates will want to use every bit of ammunition to secure precious votes.

If some do jump on the election ship and try to ride it promising a zero tax increase, be forewarned. Municipalities across Ontario are facing budget constraints, like through provincial downloading. A tax base can only take a municipality so far in keeping costs down. So let's not hear rhetoric.

Candidates thinking of budget electioneering should have constructive ideas to keep budget increases down. Welcome to politics.



OUR READERS WRITE

Reader doesn't think corner of Thompson Road and Steeles Avenue was planned well by Town

(The following letter was sent to Ward 4 Councillor John Challinor and a copy was filed with The Champion.)

Dear Editor:

I read with interest the article in the July 15 edition of The Canadian Champion about the Childs Drive couple that have concerns about safety with regard to the business that backs onto their property.

Mr. Challinor, you stated that Milton plans better now than 30 years ago and "no longer plans light industrial sectors and residential neighbourhoods side-by-side."

Please explain what planning went into the corner of Thompson Road and Steeles Avenue where those people now breathe exhaust fumes 24/7 plus lubricant, etc. fumes when both businesses are

open.

This taxpayer/resident wishes to see a council that puts our safety/health as priority above its cash flow. That corner was developed what, five years ago, not 30.

What assurances are there that council won't allow anything similar again?

Judy Swainson
Elliott Crescent

Letters welcome

The Canadian Champion welcomes letters to the editor. We reserve the right to edit, revise, and reject letters. Letters must be signed and the address and the telephone number of the writer included. E-mail letters to miltoned@haltonsearch.com, fax to (905) 878-4943 or drop them off at our office, 191 Main St. E.

Help prevent bike thieves from stealing kids' smiles

No news is good news. When it comes to major news networks, that seems to be true all too often.

I've realized that more than ever with the surprising number of times Milton has made it onto various newscasts this past month — first with the E. coli outbreak, and more recently with this week's theft of 19 BMX bikes used for a kids' special needs program.

Yes, as you may have guessed, this month I'll address the latter. And I'll make no attempts to hide the fact that this month I'm making a shameless appeal for money. I'm hoping to pull some heartstrings by telling you a bit about my experiences interviewing those involved with the Riders Ready BMX program.

First of all, let me introduce to you a special lady by the name of Nicky Pearson, who started the BMX program four years ago. When I visited Nicky Wednesday, she was still incredibly dis-

traught over the theft she'd just found out about. All 19 working BMX bikes in a trailer at the Milton race track were stolen.

I was impressed with her tenacity. Ms Pearson had no intention of folding up and going home. Her attitude was whatever she needed to do to rebuild the program, she'd do.

It was obvious she'd formed a special bond with the 25 children — most who have autism — who are part of the program.

"I can't go more than two weeks without these kids," she told me with emotion.

She spoke of the many challenges these kids have, and said this is the last thing they need.

When I spoke with Janice Spicer, a parent of a child in the program, she told me the services autistic children need aren't covered by the provincial government. Most of these parents are cash-strapped, she said, as they pay for treat-



Around town

with STEPHANIE THIESSEN

ments, and can't afford to buy their kids BMX bikes.

Am I getting to you?

Milton has a long reputation of looking out for its own, and I know this time will be no different. Let's reach deep into our pockets and help put smiles back on those children's faces.

Donations to the Riders Ready BMX program

can be made at any TD Canada Trust branch. The account number is 5204157.

As a side note — here at The Champion, I'm able to cover a variety of types of stories. Of course, there will always be the somber stories on crime and accidents — even Milton has its share. In those cases, no news is good news.

But my job's also to deliver good news stories — the stories of Miltonians who are doing interesting, heroic or unusual things. Those are the stories that give me, as a reporter, a daily pick-me-up. I hope it's the same for you. If you know somebody who fits into that category, please don't hesitate to e-mail me.

Hopefully, I'll soon be writing a good-news story about a bunch of twinkly-eyed kids back on their bikes.

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