

Comment

The Canadian Champion

Box 248, 191 Main St. E.,
Milton, Ont. L9T 4N9

(905) 878-2341

Editorial Fax: 905-878-4943

Advertising Fax: 905-876-2364

Classified: 905-875-3300

Circulation: 905-878-5947

Ian Oliver *Publisher*

Neil Oliver *Associate Publisher*

Jill Davis *Editor-in-Chief*

Karen Smith *Managing Editor*

Wendy McNab *Advertising Director*

Tim Coles *Production Manager*

Charlene Hall *Distribution Manager*

Teri Casas *Office Manager*

The Canadian Champion, published every Tuesday and Friday at 191 Main St. E., Milton, Ont., L9T 4N9 (Box 248), is one of The Metroland Printing, Publishing & Distributing Ltd. group of suburban companies which includes: Ajax/Pickering News Advertiser, Alliston Herald/Courier, Barrie Advance, Bolton Enterprise, Brampton Guardian, Burlington Post, Burlington Shopping News, City Parent, City of York Guardian, Collingwood/Wasaga Connection, East York Mirror, Erin Advocate/Country Routes, Etobicoke Guardian, Flamborough Review, Forever Young, Georgetown Independent/Acton Free Press, Halton Business Times, Huronia Business Times, Lindsay This Week, Markham Economist & Sun, Midland/Penetang-uishene Mirror, Milton Shopping News, Mississauga Business Times, Mississauga News, Napanee Guide, Nassagaweya News, Newmarket/Aurora Era-Banner, Northumberland News, North York Mirror, Oakville Beaver, Oakville Shopping News, Oldtimers Hockey News, Orillia Today, Oshawa/Whitby/Clarington/Port Perry This Week, Peterborough This Week, Picton County Guide, Richmond Hill/Thornhill/Vaughan Liberal, Scarborough Mirror, Stouffville/Uxbridge Tribune.

Advertising is accepted on the condition that, in the event of a typographical error, that portion of the advertising space occupied by the erroneous item, together with a reasonable allowance for signature, will not be charged for, but the balance of the advertisement will be paid for at the applicable rate. The publisher reserves the right to categorize advertisements or decline.

Editorial and advertising content of The Canadian Champion is protected by copyright. Unauthorized use is prohibited.

The Milton Canadian Champion is a Recyclable Product



Waiting, anticipating

Pitting areas of the community against each other doesn't work.

We're glad to see the Liberal government apparently agrees. While we'll have to wait to see if the provincial government's new plan for school funding works, we welcome any move to scrap what has been the school funding formula.

The old formula pitted east against west, new against established, and communities against one another in the competition for new school construction.

It often pitted even neighbour against neighbour. And it just didn't work.

In order to get new schools built, existing schools had to be closed. Those school closures led to lengthy, emotional and bitter political fights that often ended up delaying new school construction in communities that desperately needed a school.

It left new communities waiting years and years for their school and students busing to other neighbourhoods and attending classes in portables sometimes through their entire school careers. Under the old system, if residents organized enough opposition to discourage the politicians from following through on school closure decisions, school boards backed away —

and new schools didn't get built.

At the same time, the need to close schools in order to build those new ones often sacrificed those valuable community institutions in existing neighbourhoods and stirred heartache and grief for the residents in those established communities.

While not full to capacity, the schools had earned their rightful place in the neighbourhood, in the hearts of residents. They often functioned within the community, not just during regular school hours but as an entity in the local landscape.

The new rules have politicians promising an end to the competitive, confrontational system of old. However details on just how the new system will work remain sketchy at this point in time.

There is, of course, the danger that in the future, schools that should be closed will remain open for the wrong reasons. Hopefully safeguards will be in place to ensure that the business of school closure and construction remains in the best interest of students and their communities.

We'll await the details of the Liberals' new plan to see exactly how it will work, but frankly, it couldn't be much worse than the scenario that did exist.

Our Readers Write

Town's finances need a lot more attention

Dear Editor:

Once again Milton property taxes are going up.

Despite slots revenue and increased revenues from both residential and commercial growth, Milton council approved a budget that not only increases property taxes but also substantially increases user fees.

In my opinion, there's no justification for this tax grab.

I'll bet members of council will say that the increases are necessary to cover the increased costs due to the growth Milton is experiencing. However, these would be the same councillors who promised us that growth would have no impact on property taxes, that growth would pay for itself.

I don't believe the problem is growth, but rather the mismanagement and poor administration of this Town's finances. The blame for that, as I see it, rests squarely on the shoulders of the mayor and members of council.

One clear example of this mismanagement, in my opinion, involved Milton Hydro, a profitable private company of which the Town of Milton is the sole shareholder.

To date, Milton has failed to collect any dividends from Milton Hydro.

Compare that to other regional municipalities Halton Hills and Oakville, which have each received approximately \$1.5 million from their respective hydros, while Burlington has collected a whop-

ping \$8 million from its hydro company.

A 1 per cent tax increase amounts to approximately \$120,000 in revenue for the Town.

Had Milton collected even \$1 million from Milton Hydro, the 3 per cent tax increase and the increase in user fees wouldn't have been necessary.

In fact, we could have even lowered taxes without cutting services.

Maybe the mayor and members of council should spend less time worrying about what the appropriate length of a dog leash should be and more time watching over the Town's finances.

Rick Malboeuf
Milton

Plenty of action waiting for me when I get back

It's day five of my vacation and as promised — to myself as well as others — I've managed to stay away.

That's easier said than done for your local sports scribe, especially at this time of year.

Now as it stands, I'll probably only miss one IceHawks game, with the Western Conference's final four getting a bit of a break before starting round two.

But then there's also a Halton 'AA' senior basketball championship today at Sheridan College involving either Bishop Reding or Milton District (who squared off Wednesday, after this column was written), as well as OMHA quarterfinal play pitting Milton's AA minor atoms against the Orangeville Flyers.

So while I'm no doubt relaxing and having fun this week, a small part of me is envying my regular replacement — Halton sports reporter Jon

Kuiperij — who wisely took his vacation at the end of January, just before the playoffs.

You see when your work and primary interest are so closely linked, you want to be there for every important game — no matter what the sport or level.

Now before you go jumping to conclusions, wanting to cover every important game isn't about feeling indispensable. I'm not delusional enough to think this operation can't survive without me for a week.

No, it's more about having made a certain investment in following a team or individual athlete and wanting to see their season through.

Then there's the welcomed familiarity of things like being greeted by a number of team members and super fans upon entering the arena each night and eagerly anticipating the opening puck drop during the national anthem.



with **STEVE LeBLANC**

*Up
front*

I suppose that's what's got many NHL followers so miffed these days, the indefinite interruption of their beloved weekly ritual.

One could certainly make the suggestion that I simply go to these games as a fan rather than a reporter during my time off, but that's probably not a smart move. I already know what would happen. I'd get five or 10 minutes into a period

and start making writing motions or mentally think up things to say about the action. And if I did that, I might as well be working.

And as objective as I consider myself to be, one thing I'm not come playoff time is unemotional. Milton's first-ever NHLer, Enio Scisizzi, once told me that he doesn't like watching games anymore before he gets too riled up. I remember getting a good chuckle out of this at first, until I considered my own emotional attachment to our local teams and athletes.

So when you figure that the whole point of vacations is to take a break from work — including everything it involves — it's probably better that I simply stay away this week.

Better to recharge the old battery and pick things up next week. Fortunately enough, I've got plenty of action to come back to — unlike poor NHL-starved fans across Canada.