

# The Canadian Champion

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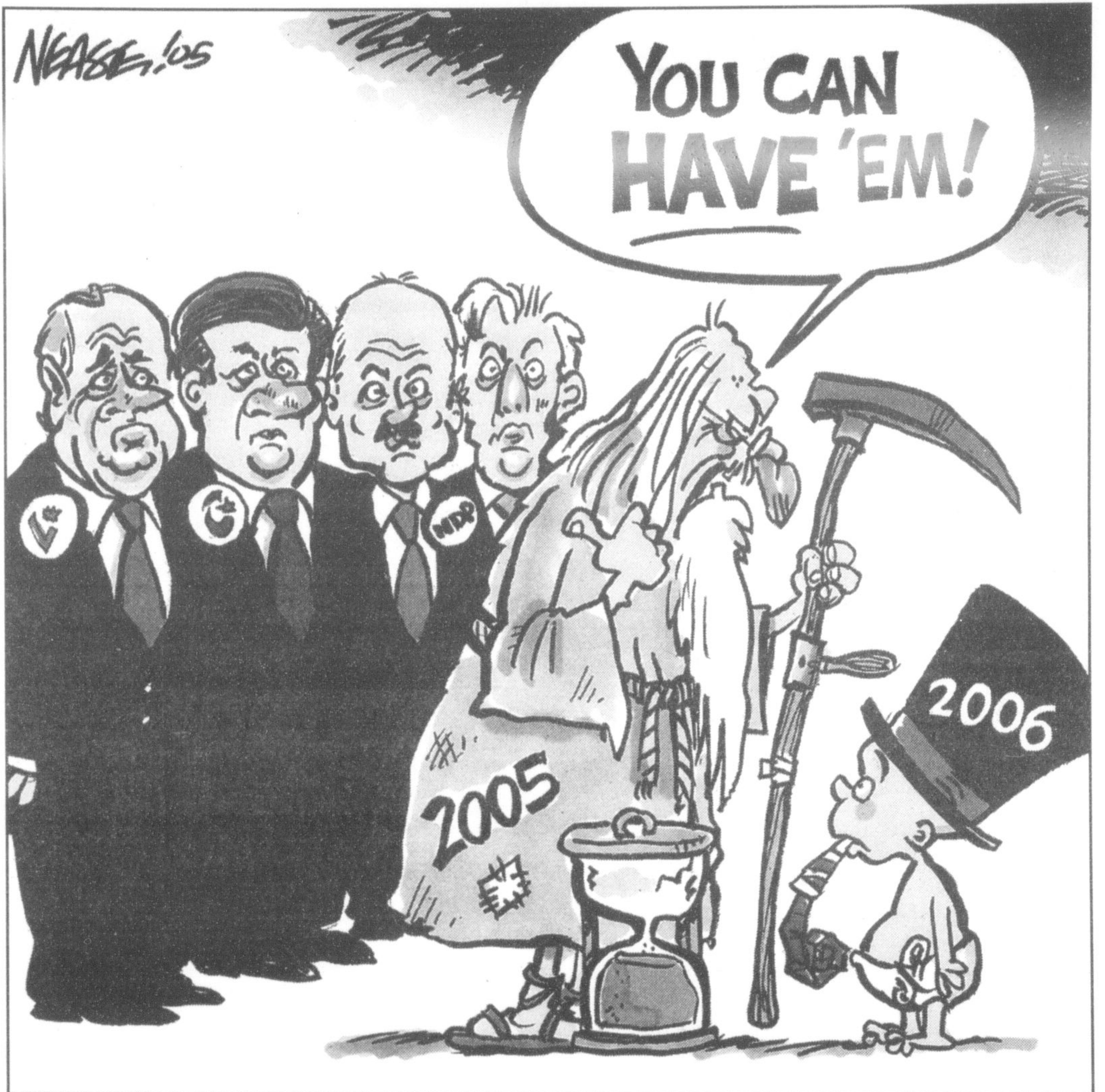
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## 2005 year of storm

A year ago this week few people knew the word tsunami or what it meant.

However, by the time the new year rolled around, tsunami was on everyone's lips and minds as the world joined together in an outpouring of support for the Asian and African nations affected by the giant waves that killed about 231,000 people. It was arguably the greatest natural disaster in the past century, but was only a portent of things to come in 2005 as Mother Nature wielded her fury time and time again.

In October, a massive earthquake in northern Pakistan killed thousands of people and left millions homeless.

The southern United States and Caribbean were hit with a record number of tropical storms and hurricanes that spanned several months before reaching a merciful end in November. The most devastating of these hurricanes was one that came only halfway through the hurricane season — Katrina. Belying her pretty name, this storm slammed into the U.S. Deep South with a ferocity few could recall. She wiped out large parts of New Orleans and surrounding areas, leaving hundreds of thousands homeless, hundreds dead and count-

less others crushed both financially and emotionally. Once again, the world opened its heart and the rebuilding began almost immediately.

Here at home, a different storm was brewing. The year began with the Liberals enjoying a shaky minority government that grew ever more unstable as Justice John Gomery heard testimony into the Quebec sponsorship scandal and rendered his decision in the late summer. His report pointed the finger at several high-profile Quebec Liberal party members for taking kick-backs and wasting millions in taxpayers' dollars. His report was undoubtedly the key factor, among others, in the NDP deciding to join the Conservatives and Bloc Quebecois in bringing down the Liberals in late November and sending the country to the polls in a rare winter election.

Locally, the Halton District School Board created its own storms by unexpectedly showing director Dusty Papke the door, watching several senior staffers leave and leaving new director Wayne Joudrie to play referee among the bickering trustees.

All in all 2005 was a stormy year. We sincerely hope 2006 brings calmer conditions.

## Our Readers Write

### NEC made the right decision regarding CHP

Dear Editor:

On behalf of the Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment (CONE), I would like to lend my support to the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) with respect to its recent decision that will prevent cars from being stored at Country Heritage Park (CHP) through the winter.

We certainly support the efforts of the volunteers who have kept the park running since the Ontario government withdrew its interest in 1996. This is an important heritage site not only for Milton but for southern Ontario as a whole.

However, it's not the role of the NEC to ensure that this now private enterprise is financially viable.

The commission acts within a specific legal framework — the Niagara Escarpment Plan — that

addresses land use planning matters on the escarpment. It's bound to follow the purpose, objectives and policies of the plan, which don't allow the proposed land use at CHP.

It can't play favourites with individual properties. To do so would make a mockery of the provincial planning apparatus.

CONE understands that the NEC has also received complaints with respect to other properties being used by the Toronto Auto Auction to store its cars. The commission is dealing with those complaints.

The Niagara Escarpment was never intended to be an industrial park. If the Toronto Auto Auction — a division of a large U.S.-based multinational company — wishes to park its cars in the vicinity, it should purchase additional vacant

industrial land in Milton for this purpose.

This would provide a long-term tax advantage for the municipality on land already deemed suitable for that specific use.

CHP is certainly a jewel, and the Town of Milton, Halton Region and provincial government should help fund it appropriately.

CONE applauds the recent decision by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to provide almost \$1 million in bridge funding to CHP. The park shouldn't be forced to destroy itself with inappropriate land uses in order to survive.

**Bradley Shaw, executive director  
Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment**

## It was another sensational year for Milton sports

If there's one thing us Canadian sports fans love to do, it's disagree.

Let's face it, no 23-player combination picked last week for our Olympic men's hockey team would have been immune to criticism. Scratch Todd Bertuzzi and the arm-chair general managers will still find fault with some area of the line-up.

Hey, that's natural. That's expected. That's even healthy for sports. It's part of why we love them so much.

It's also why I figure that among those who follow the local sports scene closely there will be some second-guessing about this year's Sports Year in Review selections — which can be read in today's Champion on page A16.

Now I would hardly rate my decisions as important as those regarding who should go to

Turin, Italy in February, but much like Wayne Gretzky and company I had some mighty tough choices to make.

I'd originally planned on doing only the top 10 sporting moments of 2005, but quickly discovered — like I shouldn't have already known — that would be just too difficult. Heck even compiling a top 20 list was tough enough, and meant leaving off a number of noteworthy feats by local teams and individuals.

But that goes to show you just how talent-laden our sports scene is. You know a town is athletically gifted when you can leave off a half-dozen national championship wins, countless more provincial victories and other things like a player competing in the Memorial Cup and still comprise a powerhouse overview of the past 12 months.



with STEVE LeBLANC

Up  
front

Like my prelude to the Sports Year in Review indicates, there were plenty more clubs and athletes who earned distinction in 2005 and their accomplishments are in no way diminished by not being named.

It's just that with any list you've got to draw the line somewhere.

This year's list gives as much consideration to reader interest as how prestigious a club or athlete's successes were, and is one that upon lengthy review I feel comfortable with.

But like I said, there's always room for debate. I expect it, and even welcome it.

One thing that's beyond question though, is just how great our sports scene truly is. Looking back over the past 52 weeks of papers, the amount of championship wins and extent of diversity of our athletic accolades — with success coming in everything from hockey and football to mountain biking and lawn bowling — is quite overwhelming.

So to all those who did us proud in competition this past year, I say congrats — and thanks for the memories.

See you again in 2006.