

# OPINION

## Eyes on Halton

While Joyce Savoline has made it abundantly clear Halton Region has no intention of becoming an easy solution to Toronto's waste woes, it's easy to understand how outsiders might have recently reached a different conclusion.

Ever since the state of Michigan began getting tougher on out-of-state trash — making it possible that truckloads of Toronto's garbage will soon be turned away at the border — Halton leaders have feared that their years of foresight might provide Ontario's largest city with an easy way out.

And with good reason. In April of 2004, then provincial Environment Minister Leona Dombrowsky sent Savoline a letter stating that she couldn't excuse Halton's landfill from being a potential emergency site to take one-million tonnes of Toronto garbage per year.

The correspondence had a galvanizing effect among Halton regional councillors, who vowed to protect the landfill's lifespan through a series of waste diversion initiatives.

Halton council was back to a defensive posture again last fall after it became known the Province had been secretly compiling a list of Ontario landfills that could accommodate one million tonnes of trash per year from Toronto, York, Peel and Durham regions.

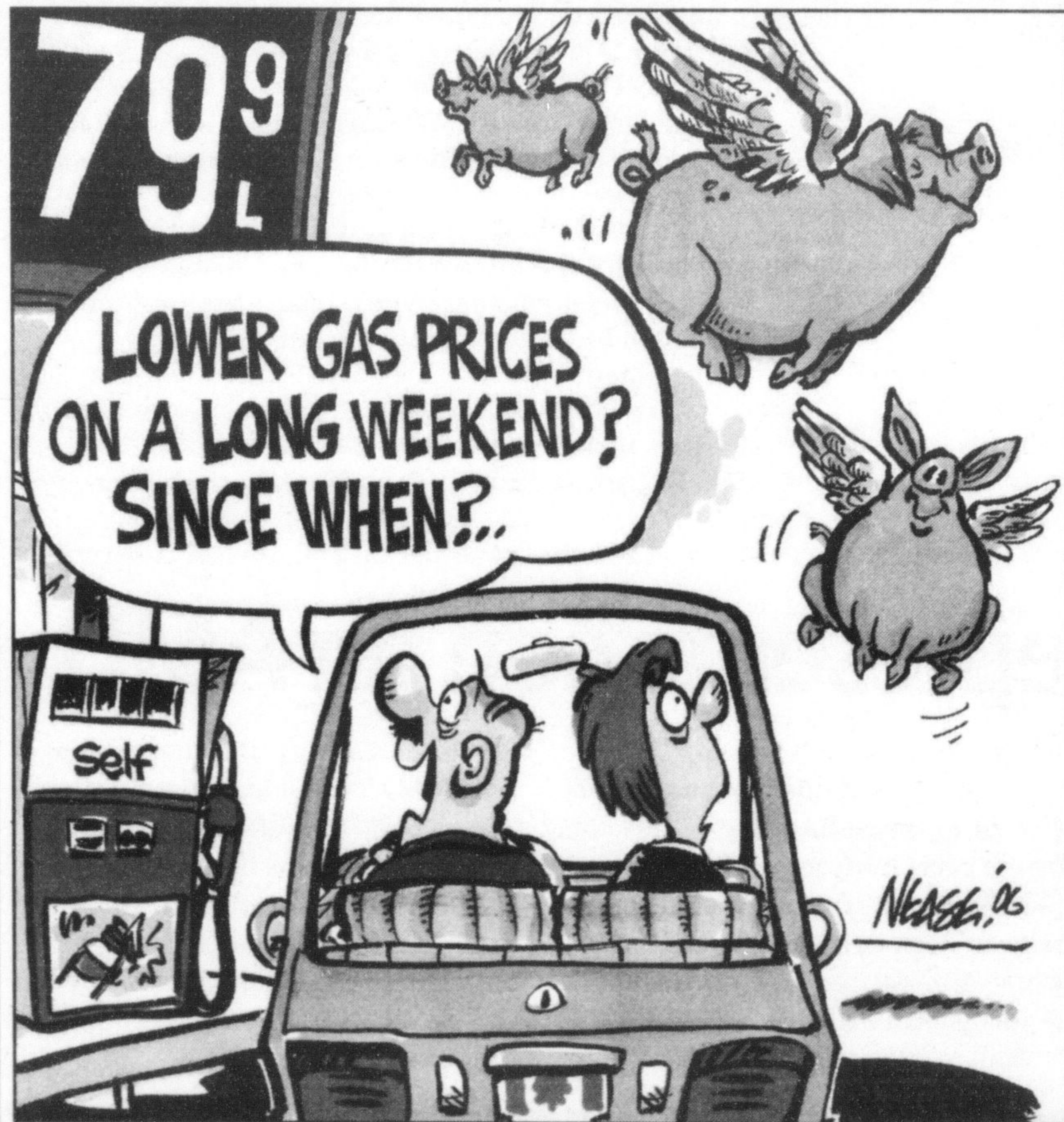
At the time, inside sources said Halton's landfill on Regional Road 25 in Milton could be on the list since it's one of the few in the province large enough to take extra garbage should Michigan close its border entirely to Ontario trash.

Once again came the loud and clear message from regional council — Halton doesn't want garbage from GTA municipalities to ever end up in its landfill. But earlier this month, the Region's consistent, hardline policy appeared to soften ever so slightly. In announcing the possibility of Halton building an energy-from-waste (EFW), long-term solution to the finite lifespan of its landfill, the Region noted that Ontario Environment Minister Laurel Broten had provided written confirmation that Halton Region had approval under the Environmental Assessment Act to implement an EFW facility. One potential scenario included Halton building an EFW large enough to take waste from other regions.

It sounds to us as if Broten has advised Halton to prepare for the inevitable arrival of garbage from municipalities lacking a back-up plan when Michigan turns them away.

If Halton wants to ensure it won't get dumped on by the likes of Toronto, it should consider building an EFW capable of handling only as much waste as our region produces.

While Halton may not be eyeing Toronto garbage, Savoline and the rest of regional council can be sure that Toronto and other GTA municipalities with serious waste management issues have never stopped eyeing Halton.



## ReadersWrite

Send your letters to [miltone@haltonsearch.com](mailto:miltone@haltonsearch.com) or drop them off at 875 Main St. E.

### Provincial government should deny Dufferin quarry expansion

DEAR EDITOR:

Dalton McGuinty's Ontario Liberals have lost so much ground on the environmental front stemming from recent decisions on the electricity supply crisis that one has to question whether they can recover in time to win enough environmental votes in the October 2007 election.

A cabinet decision expected soon on a Niagara Escarpment quarry expansion may well prove enlightening in regard to how seriously the Ontario Liberals want to try to regain a measure of credibility on the environment file.

The combination of the provincial government's abandonment of a fixed

• see TRACK on page A7

## Editor'sdesk

### Please someone step up and improve our health care

We've all heard stories about the sad state of our health-care system. Well now I have one to tell.

In early August, I left work and went to the Milton District Hospital emergency department to get medical attention for terrible pain I was feeling in my abdominal area.

I was assessed, registered and given a bed relatively quickly, but then the waiting began. In fact, I waited and waited, and waited. No doctor.

As the pain grew worse, I informed a nurse and was told simply there was nothing they could do as there was only one doctor working in the emergency department. There was an accident on the 401 and, of course, that took priority. Then heart patients came in.

Before I finally saw the doctor, I ended up waiting three to four hours, and in that time

no one even came to check on my condition. They were just too busy.

Does that sound right to you? Only one doctor in the emergency department for a town with a population of about 60,000 people and major highways nearby. It's a rotten feeling to be left in pain, worried about what might be wrong with you and not be able to get care in a timely fashion. I wouldn't wish that on anybody.

I'm not coming down on Milton District Hospital or any of its staff. They must be frustrated as well. It's the system — and our government — that I blame for this dismal situation.

The question is, who's going to step up to the plate and do something about it? Everyday we see funding being awarded for

this or that, and I'm sure it's needed. But shouldn't our health-care system come first?

Doesn't that make sense?

Shouldn't Milton District Hospital be adequately funded to have a reasonable number of doctors in the emergency department at all times, especially considering the growth. With all the taxes we pay on everything, everyday, is there any excuse for anything less?

After testing the next morning, it was discovered I had appendicitis and I had surgery that day. The pain in my stomach is now gone, but I'll always be left with a bad feeling from the experience. I know there are people out there with stories much worse than mine. Maybe we need to speak a little louder about them.



Karen Miceli

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