

Board fails to meet quorum

By Tim Whitnell
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

For the first time in 25 years, the Halton Catholic District School Board last week failed to meet quorum for a scheduled meeting.

A special meeting of the board scheduled for last Tuesday saw only three of nine elected school trustees in attendance. One of the absent elected officials — Burlington's Bob Van de Vrande — admitted he didn't see the point in attending the meeting.

Director of Education Lou Piovesan told the *Champion* that in his quarter century as a senior administrator he couldn't recall a similar situation of the board failing to meet quorum.

"I haven't missed one board meeting since I became a superintendent in August 1982," he noted.

The nine-member school board must have at least five elected trustees present in order for quorum to be met at meetings. Only board Chair Al Bailey of Burlington and Oakville trustees Alice Anne LeMay and Ed Viana attended last Tuesday's meeting.

"We knew about a week or two ago that two (trustees) wouldn't be there," said Piovesan.

At the meeting a discussion was held in public by board legal counsel Bob Keel on generic issues around a trustee's role and responsibilities. However, a planned private session of trustees dealing with the board's process on the two-year uniform pilot project — planned for St. Gabriel elementary in Burlington and Guardian Angels in Milton for 2007-08 — and an expected discussion item to be presented by Bailey in public related to the matter could not proceed due to the lack of trustee representation.

Van de Vrande told the *Champion* he did not see the point in attending Tuesday's special meeting. A proponent of the pilot project, Van de Vrande said he believes the issue is moot.

"We want to carry on with valid board decisions. We can't continually be asked to revisit decisions that have been made. I don't see any point for the meeting. I don't see any point in (resuming) it."

Oakville's Anthony Danko and Pauline Houlahan, Burlington's Joanne Matters and Halton Hills' Rosanna Palmieri subsequently told the *Champion* they had prior commitments and advised the board of that in advance of last Tuesday's meeting.

As of *Champion* deadline,

two phone calls to Milton trustee Rev. David Wilhelm for comment on why he missed the meeting have gone unreturned.

Piovesan wouldn't cast aspersions on the timing of the lack of quorum.

"It's not up to me to question; it's not up to me to pass judgment."

Bailey, who says he's not against school uniforms just that he wants confirmation that proper board process has been followed, would like to have the suspended special meeting continue as soon as the next regularly scheduled board meeting on April 10.

However, Van de Vrande doesn't want to have anything to do with Bailey's item, if it is related to the pilot project.

"I will have no more interest in addressing the item than I did (March 27). The majority of trustees are sending a very clear message and it's up to him (Bailey) to receive that message."

While Bailey says he can't discuss specifics about what item he wants to bring forward when it resumes, he said he is not, as has been reported, launching a legal challenge on the school uniforms issue.

"I can say unequivocally that anyone who says that I made a

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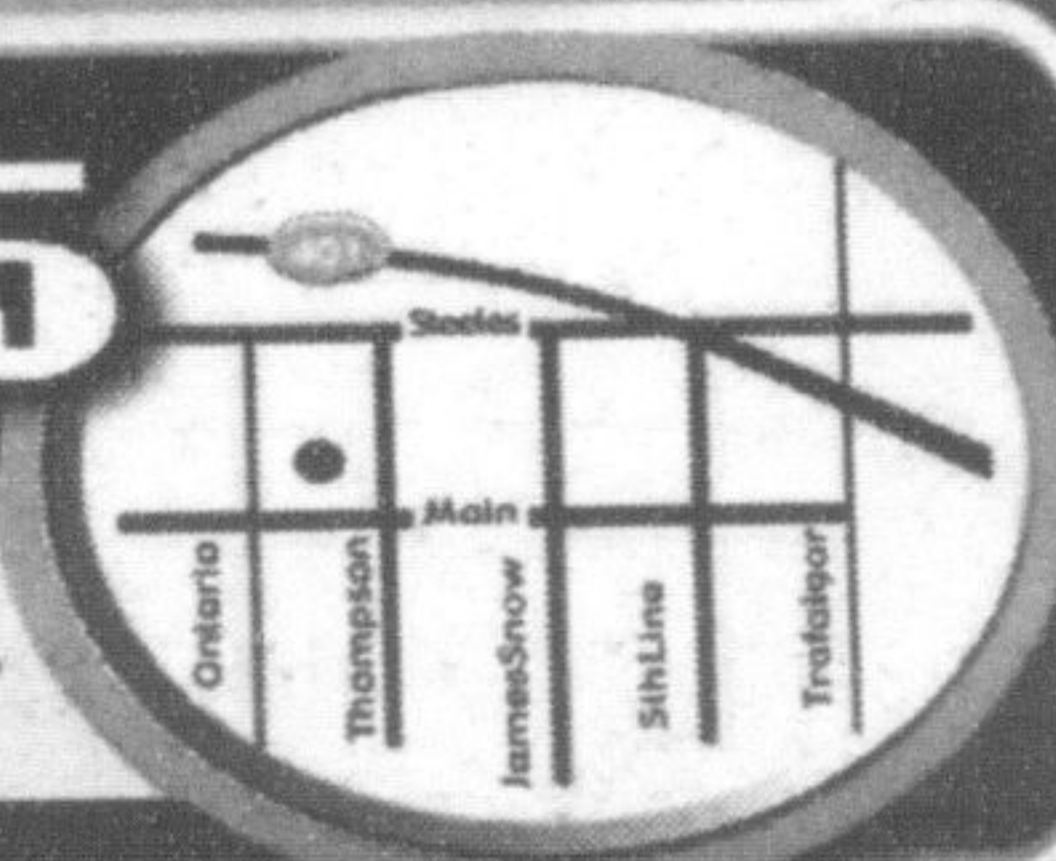
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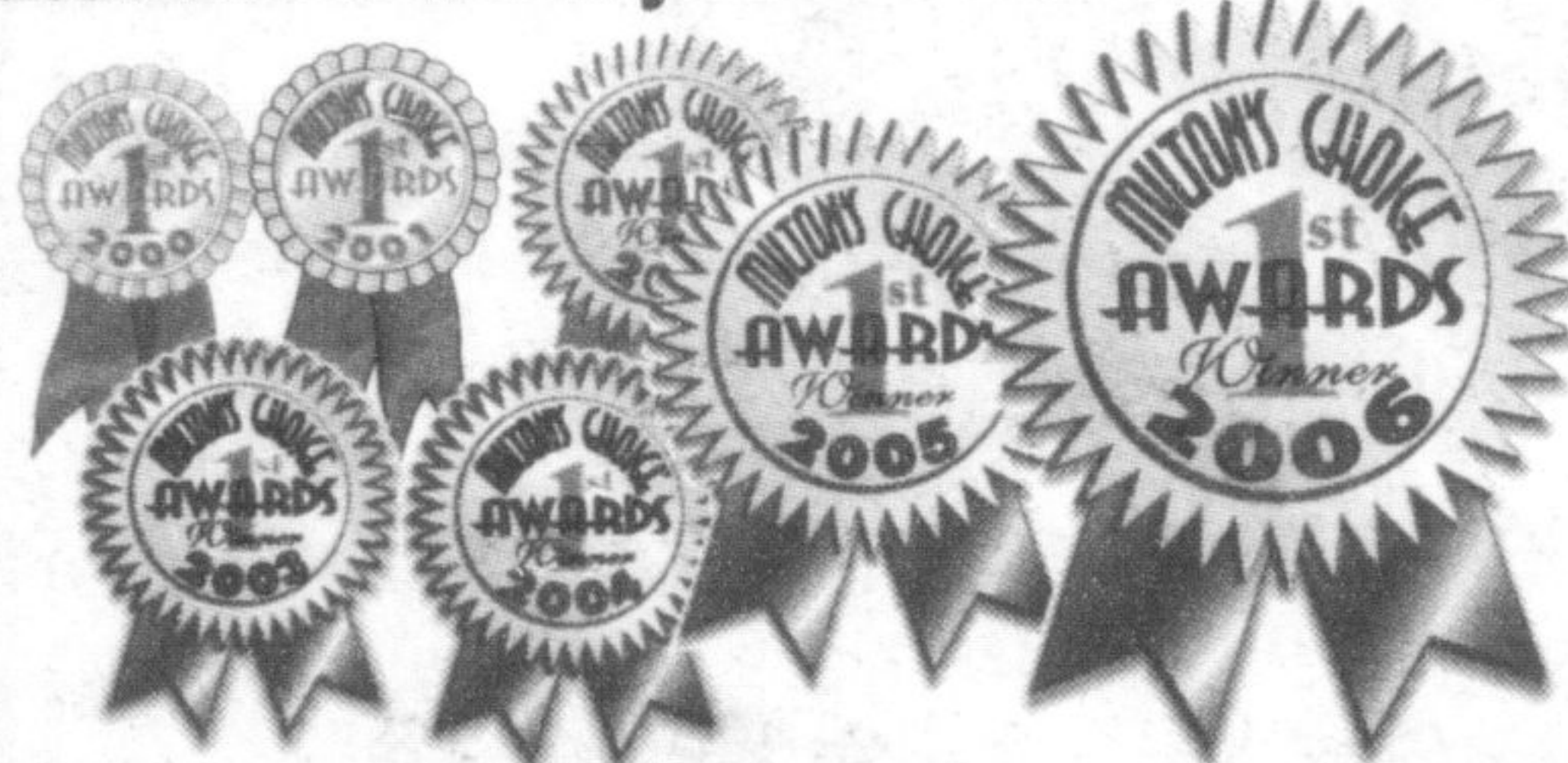
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