

Awfully convenient timing surrounds board's book ban

DEAR EDITOR:

I was dismayed to read about the Halton Catholic School Board's recent decision to ban Philip Pullman's award-winning books from their school library shelves.

While I'm sure they had the best of intentions, I'm concerned that by trying to protect their students from 'atheist indoctrination,' they may be inadvertently promoting someone else's agenda.

I find it hard to believe it's a coincidence that the board received its single complaint about Pullman's books at precisely the same time that the right-wing Catholic League in the U.S. began its e-mail boycott campaign against them.

These are the same people who have targeted everything

from 'South Park' to Rosie O'Donnell to the infamous 'chocolate Jesus' sculpture as being 'anti-Catholic.'

I wouldn't be at all surprised if the complaint originated from either the Catholic League or from someone who had received an e-mail from them.

I would have hoped that most Canadian Catholics were capable of seeing through this kind of reactionary neo-conservatism, but apparently not. At least not in Halton.

I was also shocked to read that the board made its decision in direct opposition to the recommendations of their own book review committee.

What exactly is the point in having such a committee if their recommendations are simply going to be ignored?

From what I understand, the committee members were all required to actually read the book.

Did all of the trustees do the same, or were they simply reacting to what they had heard about the author and his views?

Ironically, it's precisely this kind of suppression of uncomfortable and controversial ideas that has led Pullman to be so critical of religion in the first place.

By banning his books, they have proven his point.

I wonder what will inspire more Halton Catholic students to question their faith — reading 'The Golden Compass' or being forbidden to read it.

**JENNIFER SMITH
COMMERCIAL STREET**

Help with safety issue appreciated

DEAR EDITOR:

I want to convey my sincere thanks to Ward 2 Councillor Greg Nelson for his efforts in improving the traffic safety conditions at the intersection of Ontario Street South and the mall entrance, in the area of the 40 Ontario St. S. seniors' apartments.

I wrote to Nelson back in July of this year, detailing the unsafe crossing conditions that existed at that particular intersection, which put many senior citizens in danger of being hit by fast-moving traffic.

Furthermore, I suggested to him some measures to reduce the danger, like installing a timer on pedestrian crossing lights and lengthening the

crossing times so that seniors can cross without risking their lives.

Early in the fall, I noticed that the crossing time was lengthened and just recently timers were added to the pedestrian crossing signals.

Councillor Nelson, I will attribute these changes to you and your advocacy on my behalf. It's great when a public official acts in their constituents' best interests in such an energetic manner.

Keep up the good work.

**CAREY DEPASS
SYDNEY STREET**

Leash-free dog park should be opened now

DEAR EDITOR:

My dogs and I have become very frustrated.

We drive to the leash-free dog park weekly, hoping for the gate to be unlocked.

The park looks great and my dogs are ready to run and play with their fellow Milton dog buddies.

Why does there need to be so much bureaucracy to do anything in the lovely town of

Milton? What can we do as dog owners and tax-paying residents to speed up the process?

We have been waiting for this park to open since the spring and now they're looking at pushing the opening back to this coming spring, according to information posted on the Town's website.

Truly this isn't acceptable, and I'm sure many other dog owners feel the same way.

Please, open the leash-free park now. Figure out the bureaucracy while our dogs run and play.

Maybe a petition with thousands of paw prints will get the gate unlocked, but that might just give council something else to debate.

**TONY SASSO
CLARK BOULEVARD**

Analysis shows water from hole drilled unfit for domestic use

'Time Capsules' are gems of information extracted from past issues of the Champion and other publications in order to provide a window into Milton's past. Explanatory comment is sometimes provided to place the situation in context.

December 1910

A sample of the water from the hole drilled in rear of the town hall at an expense of more than \$100 was sent to Toronto for analysis. News has been received by a member of the town council that it has been found to be unfit for use for domestic purposes and that it has a large percentage of salt in it. Councillor Syer is reported to claim that he is the father of the drilling scheme. The electors will no doubt take that fact into consideration next Monday when marking their ballots.

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The council held a special meeting on Thursday at which it was resolved to engage Ribey Ellis as electrician at a salary of \$65 a month, somewhat more than he received prior to his resignation last year.

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Perhaps the most enjoyable at home ever given in Milton was that given at the town hall on Tuesday evening on the invitation of the ladies of Milton, who made all arrangements and provided the refreshments, Mr. R. Bowlby paying all expenses. The decorations were elaborate and beautiful. The music, by the Lomas Orchestra of Hamilton, was pronounced the best ever heard at a Milton assembly. The attendance from Milton was very large. Before dancing began the lady patronesses held a reception and before the close a circle was formed around the host, Mr. Bowlby and "He's a jolly good fellow" was sung.

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On Monday the freeholders of the town will be called upon to vote on a proposal to establish a Carnegie free public library. Explanation has not been thorough, and a little will not be out of place here. Mr. Carnegie has agreed to expend \$5,000 for the erection of a library building here, on condition that a site be provided,

**Milton
Time
Capsules**



that the library be free and that the corporation guarantee the annual expenditure of 10 per cent of his donation for maintenance. All the expenditures for attendance, heating, lighting, for books, newspapers, periodicals, etc. will count as maintenance. Electric lighting from the corporation plant can be credited to the corporation at metre rates, on the maintenance account. So can heating by steam from the power house if the library building be erected, as proposed, close to the power house.

The same principle will apply to any services by corporation employees. Money for books etc. can be raised by entertainments as at present and the provincial government will give grants, as it does now, according to the amount expended for books, newspapers and periodicals. It is impossible that, with the corporation heating and lighting provided, the library will be self sustaining as far as the balance of the \$500 is concerned, but in any case the proposed guarantee will not be burdensome. In demanding guarantees Mr. Carnegie puts corporations on their honour. That is all on which he has to depend for fulfillment. Of the advantages of a free public library it is hardly necessary to speak here.

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A meeting of the Halton shareholders of the suspended Farmers Bank was held in Milton yesterday. We are informed that they favour the winding up of affairs by a government commission. It is feared that the shareholders will have to pay the full amount of their double liability and that the depositors will not be paid in full.

This material is assembled on behalf of the Milton Historical Society by Jim Dills, who can be reached through the historical society at (905) 875-4156.

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