

School board superintendent says he regrets using term

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"You're not the first one to point it out to me," said McMahon, indicating he had talked to other people since the board meeting who mentioned his use of the term.

"It was an unfortunate utterance on my part that I would retract in a heartbeat. The context was that the ministry is giving us money on the one hand and taking it back on the other.

"That was a colloquialism that I know is no longer appropriate and I wish I could have taken it back as soon as I said it."

The top administrator at the board, Education Director Michael Pautler, said he first talked to McMahon about the remark not long after McMahon had spoken to the paper.

"I did hear the comment at the time. The comment was entirely inappropriate.... I think I thought at the time I had heard something (inappropriate), but in the back of your mind you are kind of second-guessing yourself," said Pautler.

"I think rather than a lack of (immediate) response, it was probably that (it) played out

for a number of people in the room, 'Did I just hear that right?'"

The education director said McMahon expressed his regret to him about the remark and indicated it's possible that McMahon will address the issue at a future public board meeting.

At least one school board trustee seemed to have no problem with how McMahon used the phrase.

"I didn't take exception to it. It did not alarm or shock me," said Burlington Wards 4 and 5 trustee John Morrison.

"I have heard the term since I was old enough to remember. I don't think it was meant in any kind of derogatory sense."

The ministry of education, though, does take exception to the term.

"If that comment was made, it's considered inappropriate," Mike Feenstra, the education minister's press secretary, said on behalf of Minister Leona Dombrowsky.

According to the Webster's, the term Indian giver is defined as: one that gives something to another and then takes it back or expects an equivalent in return — sometimes taken to be offensive.

McMahon's use of the term came on the same night the board passed in second reading its new equity and inclusivity policy (see story in this Thursday's *Champion*.) It's an issue that has polarized sides with the debate on the sensitive issue of whether gay-straight alliance clubs should be allowed in Halton's Catholic schools.

The superintendent's word choice comes about three months after chair of the Halton Catholic board, Alice Anne LeMay, apolo-

gized for making remarks that linked Nazism with reasons why the board initially wouldn't allow gay-straight alliance clubs in its schools.

That remark spurred immediate condemnation from some individuals and groups offended by the term and the comparison.

The Halton Catholic board is also in the process, in partnership with the Halton public school board, of developing a Voluntary Aboriginal Student Self-Identification Policy.

It's a provincial directive meant to support Aboriginal student achievement in Ontario's provincially-funded schools.

A high-profile businessman was recently rebuked by the CBC's ombudsman for making a similar reference to the term Indian giver on a live TV program.

The use of the expression Indian giver during a live broadcast on the CBC last October by Kevin O'Leary, a regular on the popular *Dragon's Den* program, was "unambiguously offensive," according to a ruling by the CBC Ombudsman.

O'Leary made the comment on the program *The Lang & O'Leary Exchange* while he discussed the financial implications for Saskatchewan of BHP Billiton's proposed takeover of PotashCorp.

"The remarks were unambiguously offensive, disrespectful, and out of keeping with the values CBC has worked for decades to espouse and fortify," wrote Kirk LaPointe in his first high-profile ruling since taking on the CBC Ombudsman mantle late last year.

— with files from *The Toronto Star*

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- Remove Wheel and Brake Drum/Rotor, Check Pads/Shoes Thickness
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- Rotate tires, Examine for Damage or Wear
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More full-day kindergarten spaces available in Milton

Space for local full-day kindergarten are set for a significant expansion.

About 100 more spots for four and five-year-olds are now available with this fall's opening of Lumen Christi Catholic Elementary School, to be located in the west end of Milton.

Located on Savoline Boulevard, Lumen Christi will follow Escarpment View, Our

Lady of Fatima, P.L. Robertson and St. Peter as Milton schools that offer full-day kindergarten in town.

Roughly 800 students are in full-day kindergarten at the four Milton schools.

Those wishing to register kids for kindergarten at Lumen Christi can do so through Our Lady of Fatima (709 Bolingbroke Dr.) at (905) 864-0720.



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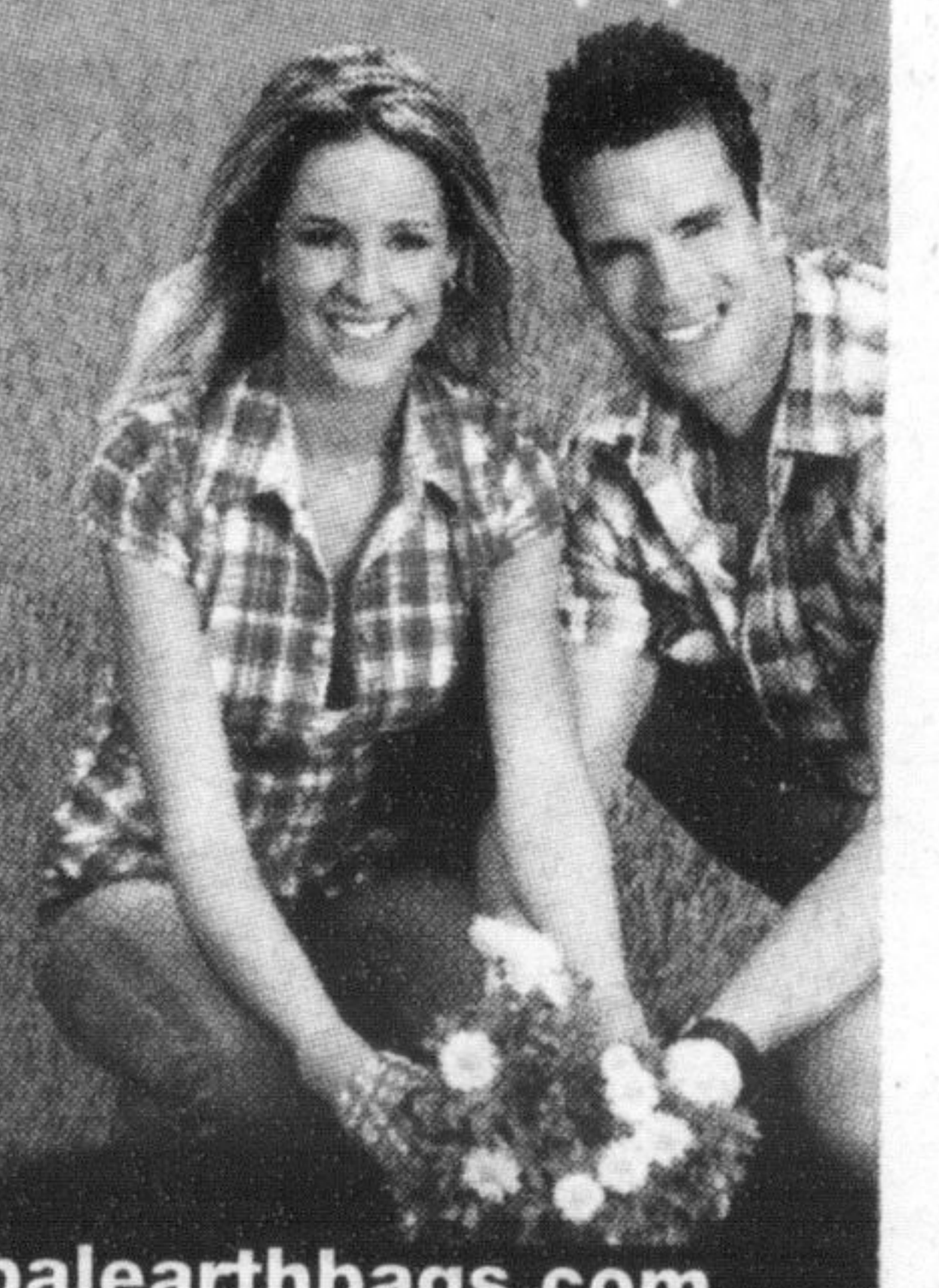
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