

OPINION

Moving forward

In just a few days the new year will arrive. Amid the celebrations, we're sure there will be many residents more than happy to say good-bye to 2009.

It hasn't been an easy year. The global economy took a beating and Milton didn't escape the spin-off effects. Workers found themselves out of jobs as companies downsized or shut down for good.

The difficult economic climate strained the region's social services. Charitable groups and foodbanks watched the number of people it assisted soar in 2009.

The need is also great for affordable housing. Consider these local stats:

- More than 95 per cent

of applicants for social housing in Halton can't afford to pay average market rents without spending at least 30 per cent of their household income.

- More than 1,800 people are estimated to become homeless in Halton each year.

Despite the turbulent 2009, residents are fortunate to be able to call this great town home. We have a strong economic base, a community that cares and an enviable standard of living. The town's location along the Niagara Escarpment is, quite literally, breathtaking.

Let's not take what we have for granted and ring in the new year with optimism and hope.



ReadersWrite

E-mail letters to editorial@miltoncanadianchampion.com. Letters, which may be edited, must include the writer's name, address and phone number.

More of a push needed for hospital expansion

DEAR EDITOR:

A glossy four-page flyer entitled 'Major Steps Taken in Facilities Construction Projects' recently landed on my doorstep.

One project was absent — the Milton District Hospital expansion. Hmmm, I wonder why? How could that be? As a 25-year resident of Milton, I've seen how a mayor should run a community, and her name is Hazel McCallion of Mississauga. Look no further than the Credit Valley Hospital expansion of the early 2000s.

Now why to this day hasn't Milton's hospital undergone its much-needed expansion?

It's abundantly clear to me that our local leadership has been asleep at the helm since, well since at least Milton's growth plan was first published in 1991.

In 1995, the provincial government implemented the Municipal Act that radically

altered the administrative landscape. However, other towns were able to get the funding for hospital expansion, so why wasn't Milton?

From 1996 to 2002, I was involved with hospitals and board directors across Ontario redefining computer systems infrastructure, and was very close to the administrative/political processes for hospital health-care funding formulas, administrative riders, conditions and the inside "politicking" needed to secure the funding from the various government agencies.

It's disheartening to hear provincial politicians say the expansion of the Milton District Hospital can't start before 2013 and that there are other municipalities in similar situations.

I don't care about other municipalities; I care about Milton. We've been left out of the loop.

It's obvious to me change is required at the

helm to redirect efforts to ensure that Milton District Hospital's expansion is put on the top of the Province's list, and the required funding will be a reality before 2013. The residents need and deserve nothing less.

It's just wrong that excessive finger-pointing has become commonplace during this fiasco, a fiasco that didn't need to happen.

The federal government is providing the majority of the infrastructure capital for the projects mentioned in the flyer for recreational and entertainment services for residents. But where is the value for the tax dollar when one is physically unable to participate due to an illness or physical condition for which they can't be treated at the Milton District Hospital and has to travel out of province or out of country to get better?

I produce pro comedy events throughout Halton for which the arts and cultural centre would be great to have, but wouldn't a hospital that addresses the needs of its ever-growing population be of a higher priority?

By the way, kudos to Milton Councillors Colin Best and Mike Boughton, who I think have a real pulse on the community. Colin knocks on doors and is present at the farmers' market every Saturday morning while Mike has his downtown barbershop.

God bless 'em. We need more people on council like Colin and Mike.

C.J. MCCARROLL
MILTON

Thanks to all who supported school fundraiser

DEAR EDITOR:

The students, parents and staff of Hitherfield School would like to extend many thanks to all the visitors and vendors who participated in our bazaar on November 24.

With your help — through raffle proceeds, 50/50 draws, contributions from vendors and independent contributions — we were able to raise a grand total of nearly \$5,000 in support of Sleeping Children Around the World.

The money will go toward providing bed-kits for less fortunate children in Third World countries.

This means that 142 children will be able to sleep more safely and comfortably because of your contributions.

Please keep us in mind for next year's bazaar, as either a vendor or a visitor. We would love to see you again.

HITHERFIELD SCHOOL BAZAAR TEAM

The Canadian Champion

Milton's Community Newspaper Since 1860

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Editorial Fax: 905-878-4943
Advertising Fax: 905-876-2364
Classified: 905-875-3300
Circulation: 905-878-5947

www.miltoncanadianchampion.com

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