

OPINION

Testing the system

When the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO), at its recent 2010 convention, issued a statement calling for the Ministry of Education to implement a two-year moratorium on Grades 3 and 6 Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) testing, it didn't come as much of a shock.

The organization, which represents more than 76,000 teachers across the province, asked the government to do away with the standardized tests altogether earlier this year.

Charging that the Ontario government has poured more than \$100 million into the standardized tests, which have been administered in schools across the province since the late 1990s, the ETFO argues that the money could be better spent elsewhere.

In addition, it says the drive for schools to improve their EQAO scores puts so much focus on literacy and numeracy that areas such as history, social studies and the arts get sidelined. Teachers feel they're spending too much time in the classroom teaching to the test.

Heightening the concerns are the fact that EQAO results form the basis for the School Information Finder, which real estate companies rely on to rank schools and neighbourhoods.

We wonder why after 14 years of administering the standardized tests, schools have been unable to find a way to teach the requisite numeracy and literacy skills without sacrificing other areas of the curriculum. By now, shouldn't the numeracy and literacy preparations be integral components of not only Grades 3 and 6, but also the grades leading up to the testing levels?

Earlier this year, Ontario's Auditor General concluded that the EQAO tests reflect the provincial curriculum fairly and accurately and are consistent in difficulty from one year to the next.

Further, they serve as valid, consistent and reliable indicators of student achievement.

In short, EQAO, created as an independent agency in 1996 to conduct assessments and gather objective information from our schools, is at the top of the class when it comes to providing value for money.

We doubt very much that a moratorium on the standardized tests would accomplish an effective review on how to best assess what our children are learning.



Readers Write

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

Traffic concerns on Britannia Rd.

DEAR EDITOR:

I noticed James Snow Parkway is now paved from Louis St. Laurent to Britannia Road.

Hopefully this new road will be opened later this year.

We also need traffic lights on this part of Britannia.

Also, I note — with great interest —

that Britannia westbound at the parkway now has a provision for a left turn lane going south.

However, the only place to go is into the farmer's field. Or is this to be the site of the Milton Ticats' new stadium?

Just wondering.

JOHN GALLAGHER
MILTON

Aroundtown

The most wonderful time of the year? Maybe, maybe not

It might not feel like it, but fall is in the air no matter what Mother Nature will have us believe with this heat spell.

Just as the Ex signals the beginning of the end for kids everywhere going back to school, there are certain things in Milton that, to me, mean summer is wrapping up and a new season is just around the corner — even if the thermometer's still in the thirties.

There's the obvious, with trees already sporting the occasional red or orange leaf. Soon the Mill Pond will host a full array of harvest colours, along with the impressive Niagara Escarpment. It's up to us to take advantage of these spectacles, and we all know how fleeting fall is.

But there are plenty of other signs of autumn's arrival — some welcoming, some not so much.

Perhaps the most exciting, for this reporter anyways, is when information first comes across my desk for stories on this weekend's Steam-Era and the September 24 to 26 Milton Fall Fair.

The events themselves are a tradition for many families, and I can't resist them either. I love the sound of the steam engines as they blow their horns during the Steam-Era event and, during Saturday's parade, slowly chug along Main Street.

And what's not to like about the fall fair's piglets, produce and the midway?

This past weekend's Ribfest was a great success, and with organizers hoping to make it a yearly event, I wouldn't be surprised if that becomes Milton's CNE equivalent — when you see Ribfest advertised in the *Champion* toward the end of August, you know the end is near.

Eventually, as the days get shorter, so too do the hours at Jay's ice cream. I'm not sure exactly when • see **LOOKING** on page A7



Stephanie Hounsell

The Canadian Champion

Milton's Community Newspaper Since 1860

555 Industrial Dr.,
Milton, Ont. L9T 5E1

905-878-2341

Editorial Fax: 905-878-4943
Advertising Fax: 905-876-2364

Classified: 905-875-3300

Circulation: 905-878-5947

www.miltoncanadianchampion.com

V.P. — Group Publisher

Neil Oliver

Regional General Manager

David Harvey

General Manager

Debbi Koppejan

Editor in Chief

Jill Davis

Managing Editor

Karen Miceli

Production Manager

Tim Coles

Circulation Manager

Charlene Hall

Office Manager

Sandy Pare

The Canadian Champion, published every Tuesday and Thursday, is a division of Metroland Media Group Ltd.

Advertising is accepted on the condition that, in the event of a typographical error, that portion of the advertising space occupied by the erroneous item, together with a reasonable allowance for signature, will not be charged for, but the balance of the advertisement will be paid for at the applicable rate. The publisher reserves the right to categorize advertisements or decline.

CCAB Audited

Recognized for excellence by

OCNA Ontario Community Newspapers Association

CNA Canadian Community Newspapers Association

SNV Suburban Newspapers of America

The Canadian Champion is a proud media sponsor for:

Halton Healthcare Child Fund Ontario

WELCOME WAGON LTD. SINCE 1930 Jingle Bell Fund MILTON SANTA CLAUS PARADE

UNITED WAY OF MILTON MILTON CANADA DAY

ATHENA Awards The Oakville, Milton YMCA OF OAKVILLE

MILTON GALA Awards FAO POLICE ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

The Milton Canadian Champion is a Recyclable Product