

Cloak of secrecy

The Champion has raised the ire of Mayor Anne MacArthur (and others) with the publication of a story on Milton Council's proposal to purchase the Campbellville Lions Club Hall. The \$50,000 purchase had been the subject of several in-camera council meetings earlier and we seem to have touched a sore point by publishing the facts July 30, before council was ready to announce the purchase as a "fait accompli."

This newspaper has no quarrel with council's proposed purchase—only the fact it was felt necessary to hold such discussions in secret. When a council slams the door in the face of the public it represents, it arouses the suspicions of the taxpayers. It is the duty of the press to ferret out the facts and publish them.

Why were the taxpayers shut out during these discussions? Were they not to be trusted to know about a decision involving some of their money? Why was the discussion of this purchase of such a confidential nature that the taxpayers couldn't be kept informed?

Whether or not someone talked to this newspaper is really secondary. The main point is, council dealt with this subject at in-camera meetings. Such secret meetings always run the risk of being broadcast around town by participants—and almost inevitably there is someone who will talk—usually putting their own views foremost.

Classroom-style scoldings, such as the one given The Champion by the mayor at Monday's meeting, won't deter this newspaper from seeking out the story when elected representatives try hiding such deliberations behind a closed door.

In the case of the Lions Hall story, our reporters heard all the details first from a local businessman, who was nowhere near the closed meetings. It wasn't hard to find a reliable source to confirm the details. The mayor herself confirmed details of the plan.

Now let's take the mayor's criticism, point by point. She claims there were "discrepancies" and "errors" in the July 30 story. Admitting the meetings on the

Lions Hall purchase were "in-camera" she refutes our use of the word "secret" in describing the meetings. Is there a difference?

She objects to our inference that the discussions with the Campbellville Lions were held at the time of town budget meetings. But they were.

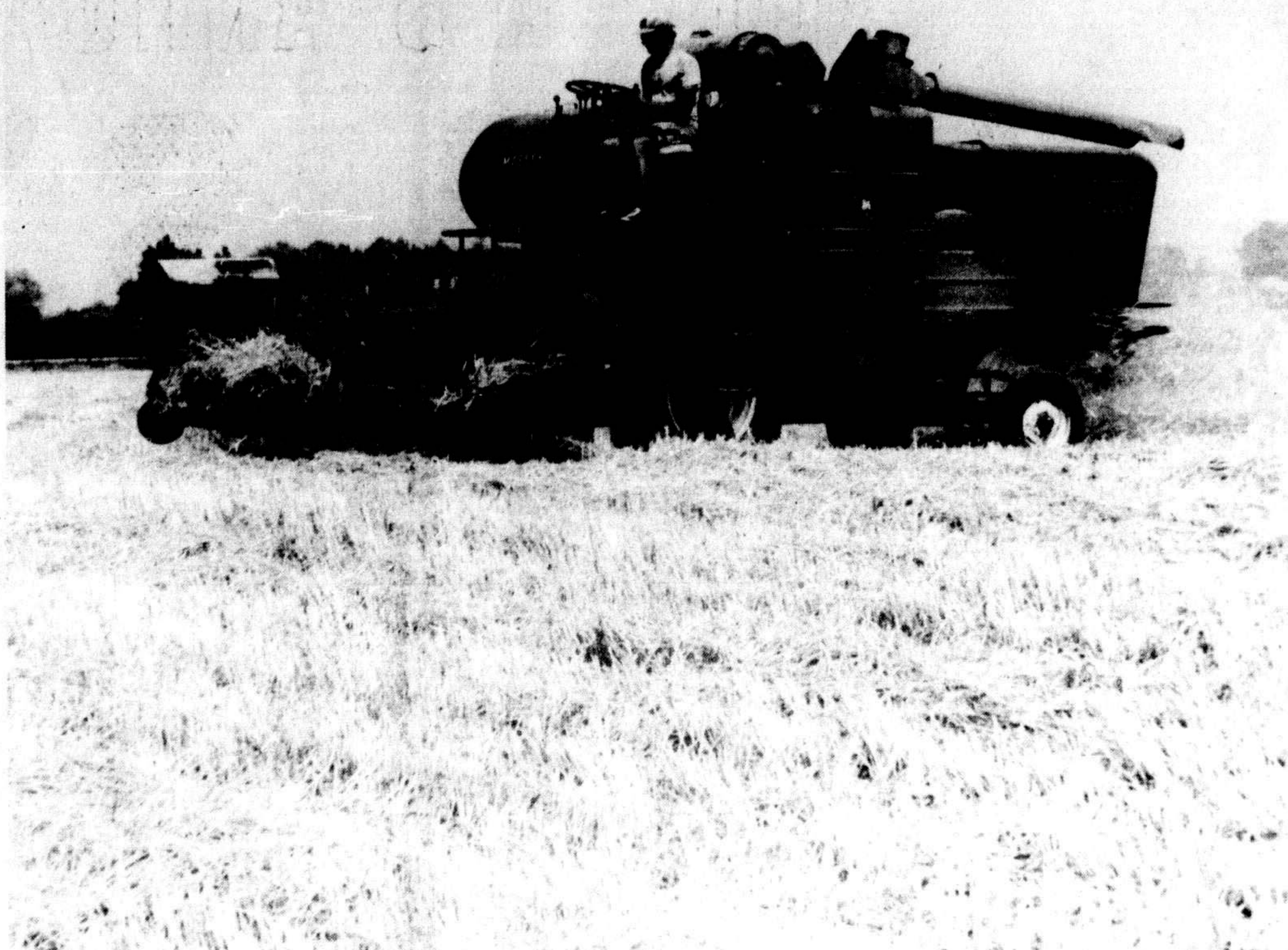
The mayor says The Champion's allusion to the \$50,000 cost of the hall being equivalent to \$6,000 more than a mill of taxes, was unfair comparison. How else would you compare it? The original story quoted the mayor as saying 25 per cent of the building's \$75,000 evaluation was available in a provincial grant. Then on Monday night she hinted that town money toward the purchase would be coming from "capitals levies from the Ward Three (Nassagaweya) area." The mayor did not explain it that way when a reporter checked the facts with her in an interview July 25.

She also complains our source was quoted as saying the property purchase was "pushed on us." From all indications it was the mayor who was doing the pushing. Yet she admitted in an interview the Lions Club made the original proposal and the Lions "came to the point where they couldn't carry on" covering payments on the notes club members had signed for something over \$50,000.

Mayor MacArthur claims she has been stressing "unity" between the divergent segments of Milton since the town was thrown together by regionalization and indicates The Champion's story threatens to undo all that work. We hardly think so.

Parochialism is still evident at the council level and the Lions Hall purchase, which appears to have been one of her worship's "pet projects" is further proof that parochialism still exists. The Champion has also attempted to help knit the wide-spread community together under the name of Milton, but old ties seem to die a long, slow death—especially in the Nassagaweya area.

We did not make the news, we just reported what was happening beneath the cloak of secrecy.



Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

It wasn't quite the ridiculous and the sublime, but near enough. A good, contrasting picture of Canada on a Sunday in summer.

We'd gone back to the village to join Grandin in the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the little white church by the bay.

Sunday morning, breakfast over, off for a drive with the city-lawyer brother-in-law, while the wives were doing the dishes.

Poked around the neighborhood, shaking our heads over the property developments, where entrepreneurs were getting as much for a single lot as their grandfathers had for a 150-acre farm with house and barn.

Commiserated with each other over the fact that we'd both be millionaires if we'd bought some of this shore property 20 years ago, when it was dirt cheap. Conveniently forgot that neither of us had enough money to buy one lot 20 years ago, let alone a mile of shoreline.

Driving along the shore road, spotted a lot of activity. Naturally, stopped for a look, as one always does in the country.

It was a scuba diving expedition, complete with vans, tanks, goggles, snorkels, and man-from-Mars suits.

Hung around to watch, and asked some casual questions from one of the "divers". He was so reticent you'd have thought he

was just about to climb into a Moon-bound capsule, instead of into about 12 inches of water.

He finally admitted grimly that the group had just finished its training, and that this "dive" they were about to make was the "real thing".

There were about 20 in the group. We stood around and watched as they struggled and wiggled and squirmed into their skin-tight suits and heavy tanks, and sprayed their goggles and checked their air-lines and adjusted their flippers.

"This was the real thing, no question about it, and the tension mounted steadily as they spent half an hour getting fitted out for the dangers of the depths: octopi, sunken wrecks, sharks.

There was only one female in the group, an extremely chubby one, and she had so much trouble squeezing into her suit and getting it zipped over the bulges that I was mighty glad I wasn't out there, trapped in a wreck, waiting for her to rescue me. Finally, purple in the face, she was ready.

Then their leader appeared. He had been out there, fearlessly probing the possible dangers of the sunken wreck.

He stood there, barking orders, making them re-check their gear, dividing them into teams, ensuring that their boot-knives were available for a swift slash of a tangled life-line.

OUR READERS WRITE:

Chairman unconcerned

Dear Mr. Downs:
Being as Mr. Mackay found it necessary to comment on my letter about the disgusting way the grounds of the Library are being used, I just want to say to him that he made his letter very clear to everyone. He tells us:

1. His eyes are bad.
 2. Pollution doesn't bother him.
 3. He believes in reincarnation (of dead trees anyway).
 4. That the Library was built for people (who else).
 5. That children are people (naturally they are).
 6. And most important (to him) is, that he, Mr. Mackay is "Chairman of the Library Board", which is more reason why he should be concerned by what is taking place there.
- Yes, his eyes must really be bad when he says that garbage is non-existent. Also he must believe in reincarnation (especially of dead trees), he is really obsessed with that one at the Library. Let's hope it does come

back to life for his sake, he considers it a friend.

Yes the library was built for people, but not a place for people to dump garbage around on. Now we all know that children are people, our "little" people who look to us adults for learning, direction and also for correction. We are their models. They do what they see us doing as a rule. So if they see the older ones throwing stuff around they feel it's right for them to do the same.

Now as Chairman of the Library, I feel your sense of responsibility to your job, or the pride you should have for such a beautiful spot, would make you all the more alert to the way people are making such a mess there, but apparently you are as indifferent to it as are many others. We the ones who are fighting the filth of the world but especially for our own community, are fighting a losing battle, because we are in the minority.

I was born and raised in this great town, I believe it is the best, and I love to see it progressing and new people coming here, but I hate to see the way it is being polluted. There is garbage in every nook and cranny of our town. I suggest instead of strolling on one street Mr. Mackay you take a tour of the town proper, and see for yourself. If what is lying around all over is just "your ordinary waste", as you call it, then I can see why the country is as dirty as it is. No one cares and according to your letter, you are one of those who don't.

Yours truly,
Edith Sharpe
429 Pearl St.,
Milton.

Weeds growing out of mounds of earth are no longer evident along Ontario St. at the Valleyview subdivision. The mound of earth (which will be converted to berms once the homes sell) remain, but the weeds are gone. Even that improves the esthetics of the development as it is seen from Ontario St.

have to guess he's counting on one pretty soon. Big Jim has been trotting around the region posing in cheque-passing situations. Cynical reporters often joke about Queen's Park setting the government MPPs loose with a bag full of cheques just prior to an election.

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Pages of the Past

From Champion Files

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Canadian Champion, August 4, 1955.

Machinery is being moved into the Plyboard Company of Canada building this week. The machinery includes the huge presses used in the manufacture of plyboard. The plant is expected to start in about a week and will produce plyboard for the furniture industry. Expected to employ about 25 people, the new plant is in the old Canadian Excelsior Building on Main St. The new concern is owned by Joseph Fabian and Son, who operate a furniture manufacturing plant in Toronto. While other manufacturers make a similar product in conjunction with their business, the new Milton plant will exclusively produce this type of plyboard for the furniture industry, Mr. Fabian said.

President of the Milton Branch of the Canadian Legion Fred Johnson and Deputy Commander Len Pope attended the 19th biennial convention of the Canadian Legion Branches of Ontario Command in Windsor on Sunday. They were among 1,200 Legion members attending.

There has been no complaint that the present summer hasn't been a real old-fashioned scorcher in this district.

Mrs. May Booth, Milton's popular chief telephone operator for the past two years, was honored by her colleagues at a reception recently on the occasion of her retirement from the Bell Company after more than 28 years of service. Mrs. Booth, who came here as an operator in 1947 after 20 years with the Bell in Montreal, retired with the conversion of the Milton exchange to dial operation. She has seen the number of phones here grow to 1,874, more than 50 per cent more than there were eight years ago.

August 15 is the deadline for cutting weeds. After that the town will cut them and bill the work to the property owner.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Canadian Champion, August 13, 1925.

Alfred S. C. Tebbit, the Burlington man who says the earth is flat and the moon does not reflect the sun's rays, has written a long letter to The Champion defending his theories, with a "modest disclaimer to the calling of a vagrant." Webster's dictionary's definition of an astronomer is "one versed in astronomy; one who has a knowledge of the heavenly orbs, or the principles by which their motions are regulated, with their various phenomena." It must be admitted that one who holds Mr. Tebbit's views cannot be properly so described.

On account of the addition of two new rooms to the High School building an additional teacher has been engaged, Miss Evelyn M. Worthington, of Toronto. There were thirty-eight applicants for the position.

The public library will be closed the last two weeks of August.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Canadian Champion, August 9, 1900.

LOST—Buffalo robe and horse blanket, February 14, 1900, between Milton and Guelph Road. The finder will be suitably rewarded on leaving them with the Town Clerk, Milton.

Halton's aged poor still go to the jail, there being no other place of accommodation for them. Constable Sumner, of Oakville, brought John Ingram, an old man, committed as a vagrant, to jail a few days ago. Ingram's brother, somewhat younger, followed on foot and wanted Jailer Vanalen to take him in too, but the jailer was inhospitable and refused. Both the Ingrams had been in jail before as vagrants.

HORNBY—We have some smart people in the community. A farmer near town finished harvesting last week. Beat this who can.

The whistle of the steam thrasher is to be heard every day now. Ed Downs visited the vicinity last week with his splendid outfit and threshed for Neelands Bros. His machine is manned this year by Clure Brownridge and the old standby W. A. Robinson.

We understand that R. G. Baxter is going to take the agency for the Bank of Hamilton here. This will give our citizens and the surrounding community good banking facilities, as we will then have two chartered banks in the village.—from the Burlington Gazette.

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It's our responsibility

Milton appears to be having more than its share of vandalism and petty theft recently.

Bike thefts . . . repeated vandalism at a downtown office building . . . the frequent flag thefts . . . fences broken . . . smashed bottles . . . broken windows . . . mailboxes ripped out . . . vacant buildings razed by thrill-seekers . . .

Christmas tree lights disappearing . . . where will it end?

Police admit vandalism is growing but they are almost powerless, as the officer virtually has to catch the thief or vandal in the act to obtain a conviction. And for every conviction there are probably a hundred incidents—some minor, some major—some reported, some not.

The situation is serious enough that the regional council has posted a \$500 reward for information on persons opening fire hydrants; another \$200 reward was offered by town council over the vandalism and thefts of flags at Unity Park; and Milton Hydro has put up a \$200 reward over broken street marker signs and street lights. It's not petty vandalism or childish pranks any more, it's costly destructiveness.

The police admit vandalism is "human nature" among younger people. So, apparently, is keeping

quiet among older, more responsible people. Nobody wants to get involved.

But we'll all have to change our non-involvement if we want to end the rash of stupid, costly vandalism.

After all, if our own property is vandalized we have to bear the cost. If a merchant's or industry's property is damaged by vandals, we'll end up paying higher prices for their products and services. And if a municipality is deluged with vandalism it's us again—as taxpayers—who have to shoulder the cost of repairs and replacement.

Right now, resolve to get involved. If you see any vandalism taking place, report it. If you suspect your children or your neighbor's children are involved in thefts or vandalism, take action now to make sure they don't do it again. Your co-operation with the police or other authorities will pay off in the end. And if you have youngsters, impress on them the need for respecting other people's property and warn them that a criminal record resulting from a youthful prank can last a lifetime.

It's not the "other guy's job" to halt this costly community nuisance. It's our job too.

Commenting briefly

This provincial election coming up has been one of the most difficult to guess at, as far as timing goes. Reporters for months have been predicting dates for the election call but until now they've all been wrong. Everyone has his own indicator. But if you've been watching big Jim Snow lately you'd