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Observer sold to Milton publisher

By ROB KELLY

The Milton Observer has been purchased by Ted Lydan, owner of the Erin Advocate and Grand Valley Star.

"I believe the deal is closing at the end of January," said Scott Kline a reporter at the Observer. "There is an agreement to purchase with Mr. Lydan."

The new owner of the Observer is a Milton resident who formerly worked for the Ontario Community Newspaper Association. He became majority owner of the Erin and Grand Valley newspapers approximately a year ago.

The buyer remained coy on the subject, refusing to acknowledge that he will gain control of the weekly, which entered the Milton market in 1986.

However, he did say he will be holding discussions with John Baxter, president of Metroland, The Champion's parent company, in January.

Mr. Baxter confirmed the appointment, but said he has no idea why Mr. Lydan has requested the meeting.

The purchase date of the Observer appears to coincide with Mr. Lydan's sale of the Grand Valley Star to Claridge Community Newspapers, a deal which will be finalized in January, according to Pamela Claridge, publisher of the Orangeville Citizen. Claridge Community Newspapers also owns the Caledon Citizen.

Mrs. Claridge said Mr. Lydan approached them in November regarding the sale of the Grand Valley paper.

At that time, Mr. Lydan indicated he wished to pursue other publications and expressed an interest in

magazine publishing, Mrs. Claridge said.

Mr. Kline said Brian Reid, the current publisher and editor of the Observer "is maintaining editorial control," but that the deal means

Mr. Reid "basically does not have to look after the business aspects."

The Observer was first published as a broadsheet weekly. It suspended publication after less than a year and returned to the marketplace in a more modest tabloid format.

Literacy guild needs tutors for new year

The North Halton Literacy Guild needs tutors for the new year.

The Guild, which serves Acton, Georgetown and Milton, recently opened an office in Milton. It operates on a tutor system. Volunteers commit to a certain amount of time per week to teach someone to read and write.

Approximately 20 per cent of Canadians cannot read and write in English or French, and 70 per cent of those people were born in Canada. Approximately 45 per cent of those non-readers are under the age of 45, potentially the most productive period in their lives.

The accepted definition of illiteracy is someone over 16 years old who has Grade 8 schooling or less. There are many reasons for illiteracy. They include a dislike of school, lack of reading readiness, indifferent parents or teachers, and the fact that a family is constantly moving.

Illiteracy is expensive. Statistics show that the under-educated are often welfare and unemployment insurance recipients, and appear to have more accidents on the job as well.

They miss work through a sense of frustration and despair when they can't read the job manual or messages on the bulletin board

regarding job opportunities or social events.

Many illiterate people try to hide the fact from their family, friends and co-workers. Many are intelligent and use their initiative and strategies to survive. They may often lose their glasses when asked to fill out forms.

Newspaper ads are a real challenge, so is filling out an application for a driver's licence. They cope with travel on the bus or subway by learning the landmarks on the route or counting the number of subway stops.

They shop by recalling the colour, shape and size of the product on the shelf. These memory tricks work well, for awhile.

Illiterate mothers run risks at home when they can't read the label or instructions on how to deal with accidents, fire hazards or medications for their children.

The north Halton situation reflects the national picture — one in five residents are functionally illiterate.

To alleviate this problem, the Guild was formed in 1986. The office has two staff members who coordinate the volunteers, who have gone through a training program.

For more information in Milton call 876-4756.

The Staff at Richardson Chev-Olds would like to wish Morley & Tom Richardson and their families a very Merry Christmas and a safe and happy holiday season.

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