



The Canadian Champion

Established 1861



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Who has more rights -- smokers or non-smokers

What it has come down to in the minds of many people is: who has more rights, smokers or non-smokers?

The smokers will say their opponents do. Because it is the smokers who are facing the sharp end of new legislation across the continent concerning smoking. Their habit is being curtailed, cut off, dampened, doused, despised by more and more people.

Even an enthusiast, such as municipal councillor Bruce Attenborough, feels smoking may go the way of the dodo bird before the next decade expires.

In the meantime, councillor Attenborough will fight the good fight. Monday night at council's general committee meeting he warned against sacrificing the rights of small business operators before the altar of non-smoker's rights.

We have some sympathy for Mr. Attenborough and those like him. We are painfully aware of what an easy addiction smoking can be, especially in pressure-oriented work environments. And until recent years a cigarette or even cigar after dinner was the norm, not the exception.

Mr. Attenborough is correct to disdain some elements of Milton's proposed new no-smoking bylaw, if we can call it that. It hardly makes sense to designate one third of a small 30-seat restaurant non-smoking, at least as far as creature comforts go.

Unfortunately, there's a bigger principle at stake here. It is similar to the often-damned government programs advocating minority group hiring policies, or preferred advancement for women.

In the best of all worlds, such policies would not be fair. But to enforce them is an admission this is not the best of all possible worlds, and a previous wrong must be made right.

In the best of all worlds, discrimination against women and minorities would not exist. And smokers would be free to puff away because precious few normal people would smoke, given the health hazards. Smoking would be a non-issue.

We may come to that point some day. We have already come to the point where just about any smoker will admit it is a distasteful habit, which is perilously close to admitting it is a social embarrassment.

A similar case is the one of the spitoon. Now merely curiosities in museums, these were once commonplace convenience items for gentlemen to expectorate in. Such behaviour would be considered at least objectionable, perhaps eccentric, today.

Until we reach such a stage with smoking, unfortunately, some rights, the rights of the minority (smokers) will be curtailed. That's a fact of life.

The most distasteful part of all this, however, is the fervor with which certain extremists embrace such new rules. There are many among them who will crow about battles won. They are conspicuous in that it is obvious they couldn't care less about the rights of others, as long as they get their way.

Looking Back



For many years, the Crawford family owned the property surrounding Crawford Lake until donating it to the Halton Region Conservation Authority. Here, in this picture taken by Elmer Blacklock, shows the serenity of the scene. The picture was taken in 1940.

Pages of the Past

One Year Ago

From the June 15, 1988 issue

□ The most popular waterfront attraction in the Milton area was posted with signs telling the public they swim at their own risk. The Halton regional health unit posted Kelso Conservation Area with the placards when too much fecal chloroform bacteria was found in the water.

□ A former prime minister of Sweden visited Milton to take part in the official opening of Volvo GM Canada Heavy Truck's new national headquarters in Milton.

□ Former Milton resident and respected distance swimmer Kim Middleton announced she would attempt a double-crossing of Lake Erie in August. All proceeds from the 55-km trek called, "Swim with Kim" were slated to be donated to arthritis research.

□ Lieutenant Colonel E. W. Cutbill inspected the local army cadet corps at John Tonelli Sports Centre and took part in handing out some of the awards. Brent Tasker received the best cadet award and the training officer award.

20 Years Ago

From the June 18, 1969 issue

□ Local supporters of the California grape workers renewed their efforts to strengthen the grape boycott in Milton. Five of six Milton merchants who sell them promised supporters they would stop. Workers for the company complained of poor working conditions.

□ Sketch plans and a proposed budget were approved for the addition of a resource centre at the Martin St. Senior Public School Thursday by the Board of Education. The resource centre would be located between the two present wings of the school, which incorporate the industrial arts and home economics sections. Estimated total cost of the project is \$66,000, with construction estimated at \$40,000 and alterations to the existing building at \$6,500.

□ Lands at Rattlesnake Point and Kelso were being badly abused, according to a Halton Region Conservation Authority field manager. A motorcycle gang was said to be disturbing cub scout and girl guide groups camping in the area. The bikers apparently roared their machines all around the escarpment until early dawn. Both OPP and Burlington police agreed to stage a major crackdown on offenders in the park.

50 Years Ago

From the June 15, 1939 issue

□ J. W. Blain, Milton's relief officer, announced that he received a quantity of butter from the Canadian Red Cross Society to be distributed to needy families.

□ Milton L.O.L. No. 2385 paraded to the Grace Anglican Church, headed by the Georgetown Band.

□ There were 25 entries in a slogan contest sponsored by Milton Hydro and local dealers of electrical equipment. The winning slogan was "The electric way is the modern way" by Mrs. Jas. Ford. She won a floor lamp.

Pud

By Steve Nease

Pud

