

Our Readers Write

Trash the 'human garbage' comments

The following letter was sent to municipal councillor Bill Johnson. A copy was filed with The Champion for publication.

Dear councillor Johnson:

As a Milton resident and an employee of the Maplehurst Correctional Centre, I am somewhat disconcerted by your continued use of the term "human garbage" when referring to inmates in the Ontario correctional system.

There can be no excuses for those actions which brought these men to jail. And they rarely offer excuses or plead their innocence. However, should they seek to change their direction in life, every opportunity should be afforded them.

Certainly, some will never see the proper path, but others will. Society must provide those who wish to sustain a positive lifestyle with support and encouragement. Referring to inmates as "human garbage" is counter-productive.

Those who you refer to as "human garbage" have been a valuable asset to Milton in the past 15 years. Urban clean-up, tree-planting, snow shovelling for seniors, cemetery restoration and the clearing of Crown

lands are just some of the activities in which Maplehurst inmates have been involved.

During the early 1980s inmates from the educational program provided janitorial services for the three Milton firehalls.

As a municipal councillor you must appreciate the thousands of dollars that this co-operative education program saved the Milton taxpayers.

Currently, inmates are assisting in the building and expansion of two local churches, at considerable saving to the congregations.

During 1989, you and I were involved in bi-weekly United Way meetings at Maplehurst. Never did I hear you object to the coffee, cakes and cookies that were prepared for our enjoyment by the "human garbage" at Maplehurst. Also, an auction of inmate-produced furniture provided the Milton United Way with \$1,700.

Your public persona is one of a man of considerable compassion. I ask you to consider (using that) compassion.

Richard Mills,
Cabot Trail, Milton.

Logo 'miscount' report misled readers

Dear Editor:

When I read the report on the competition for the Town of Milton's logo stating that the Town officials had "unintentionally miscounted" the vote, and there was some doubt about the outcome of that vote, I immediately phoned Mr. (Roy) Main, the town administrator, and asked him if indeed there had been a miscount. Mr. Main assured me there had been no miscount. He told me he was as concerned about the report in *The Champion* as I was.

I then phoned Mayor (Gord) Krantz. He had also read the report and was, to say the least, equally concerned. He affirmed that he had no knowledge of any miscount.

Later that same day, I received a call from councillor Barry Lee. He was outraged at the report and told me he would support a motion to refer the matter to the Ontario Press Council at the (next) general committee meeting on January 15 if *The Champion's* report was incorrect.

(At the original debate on the logo matter) all members of council were present with the exception of Mary Long. All members of the committee took part in the debate and a vote was taken. Everything was in order. Not all members of council got the logo of their choice. Nevertheless, a legal vote was taken. There was no miscount.

On Monday Jan. 22, concerned about the reflection on the integrity of senior staff (who counted the ballots), I put forward a motion to instruct staff to read the article in question and to report back to the committee and council. At that time, I stated that if I thought it was justified, I would put forward a motion to refer the matter to the Ontario Press Council. Nothing more, nothing

less. As reported, I failed to get any councillor to second the motion, so the motion died.

I can only draw the following conclusions: 1) Council is not prepared to stand behind staff, even when staff act on their instructions; 2) Council got hilly-divered and feared political assassination by *The Champion*; 3) Reporter (Rob) Kelly was correct, there was a miscount.

Madame Editor, I suggest to you that it is less than ethical to permit a reporter to use editorial privileges against someone who has taken him to task. I also take exception to that same reporter using the plural "we" in that same editorial. He was the only representative of *The Champion* at both meetings in question. For your reporter to claim that I took exception to his criticism of my conduct at council, causing me to raise this issue, is complete nonsense.

Having stood twice as a provincial (election) candidate, having served as president for a large federal trade union, and having served as a town and regional councillor for 11 years, unopposed by the way, if I took criticism personally at any of these levels I would be in a padded cell somewhere.

I can take the heat. However, as a councillor who is always quick to criticize staff when I believe they are at fault, I endeavor to be at the forefront when they are maligned and unable to defend themselves.

Regarding the incident your reporter mentioned, appertaining to Dr. Laughren, it is unfortunate that your reporter did not retract his error with the same gusto and enthusiasm in which he editorialized the allegation.

See LOGO page 8

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The Canadian Champion, Wednesday, January 31, 1990

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