

# COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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## Keep on talking

In the last few weeks two of Milton's quietest municipal councillors have broken their silence at public meetings and made strong statements. Ward 2 councillor Ron Furik blasted fellow Ward 2 representative John Challinor and, Monday night, Ward 3 councillor Marion Howard told everyone on council, in no uncertain terms, to stop dithering.

We're not saying they were fully accurate in their comments, but it was a welcome change of pace. The two, who both showed promise during last year's election campaign as alert and capable, had been disappointing in the early going of the council term. This is perhaps understandable for novice elected officials, but it shouldn't become a standard of behaviour. We expect to see these two in the thick of things a bit more often.

A municipal councillor's effectiveness is not to be judged by the amount of time he or she monopolizes in public meetings, but those who say nothing, or next to nothing, will definitely be found wanting by this newspaper. Public meetings are the only forum in which most people have an opportunity to evaluate their councillors and hold them accountable. Elected officials would do well to judge their actions accordingly.

We are not advocating grandstanding chatter. But we will remain suspicious of conspicuous silence. Mr. Furik has already indicated he will be more vocal, and we trust Ms Howard will strive toward the same end. The period of grace allowed newcomers to public service in order to overcome initial stage fright is rapidly coming to an end.

## It's a bad sign

Any move by the provincial government to sprinkle bilingual road signs across Ontario will be contemptuous, irresponsible, and to top it all off will probably backfire.

Last week municipal council roundly condemned what Burlington Progressive Conservative MPP Cam Jackson has termed an "asinine" plan — to spend \$4 million on bilingual road signs. If the government follows through on this, it will be folly of the first order.

In a time of deep economic turmoil across Ontario, there can be no superfluous expenditures, no grand gestures aimed at a perceived reconciliation with Quebec on the backs of Ontario taxpayers.

This initiative would show contempt for the suffering going on among the most unfortunate in Ontario.

It would be irresponsible if it forms part of the package in a new budget which is almost guaranteed to hit beleaguered Ontario residents with yet more tax increases. These tax hikes will already be forced on a dwindling revenue base. In case anyone needs reminding, one million people in this province of 10 million are already collecting social assistance of some sort.

We suspect the intention behind the push for bilingual road signs, which has been around for several years, is laudable enough. It's to demonstrate that Quebecers should feel a bit more at home in this province because they are a part of Canada.

That would be fine if we could afford such largesse, but we can't. And should this measure ever come to pass, it will be amid howls of protest across Ontario. Many in Quebec will undoubtedly point to that outcry as yet another sign that they are viewed with something approaching disdain in English-speaking Canada.

This is a no-win situation for the provincial government, at least in its own constituency. It is a poorly-timed gesture that will generate ill will in Ontario toward our eastern neighbours. That's the last thing this country needs right now.

## LOOKING BACK



## Shamrock Art

Current Milton town councillor Art Melanson was on council in 1974 as well and turned up at a St. Patrick's Day dance in Milton that year sporting an Irish hat. From left the dance goers are: Mrs. Art Melanson, Mrs. Harry Barret and Oakville mayor Harry Barret. In the centre is Ellen Harkin who presented shamrocks to each of the four.

## PAGES OF THE PAST

### One Year Ago

From the May 1, 1991 issue

Reconstruction of Mill Street in the downtown core between Martin and James streets will start in July, if all goes according to the Town of Milton's plan. The work is scheduled to go on until December. The \$1 million reconstruction project will entail widening Mill Street to three lanes where it intersects Martin Street.

Eight lucky children from Milton were visiting Disney World in conjunction with the Air Canada Dream Come True program. The program took children, who were financially unable to travel, on a one-day trip of a lifetime. The Milton Optimist Club contributed \$2,000 to be used for fuel for the flight. Because of the club's involvement, the Optimists were granted 10 seats on the plane. The children, accompanied by two adult escorts, were selected through Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Halton, and the Children's Aid Society. Transportation to and from Pearson International Airport was provided by Howie Scannell of Miltowne Livery Service.

### 20 Years Ago

From the May 3, 1972 issue

This year's fireworks display at the Canadian National Exhibition came from Milton. Hand Chemical Industries Ltd. of Milton was awarded the contract to supply the nightly show for the C.N.E. Hand's fireworks are made in Quebec, but the Milton plant is the head office of the firm. C.N.E. officials reported that they had been buying their fireworks from a United States firm but last year two boats at the Ontario Place

marina were damaged by burning fragments.

Tiny television sets have been installed for patients at Milton District Hospital. The sets are complete with earplugs and are fixed to the wall by adjustable supports. Hospital Auxiliary noted this new system will be less annoying to other patients in the wards.

Milton Chamber of Commerce issued a warm welcome to the Town's most recently acquired industry, Barber-Greene Canada Ltd. The firm spent three years seeking the proper site for new headquarters before finally deciding on Milton. The company's Canadian president Frank Merrill said recently as he dipped a silver shovel into the earth and turned the first sod. The plant will be located at the rear of the Alliance property near the county buildings.

### 50 Years Ago

From the April 30, 1942 issue

Fire caused by the sudden explosion of chemicals in the back of N.L. Pickett's drug store recently caused considerable damage to the interior of the building. The quick response of the brigade to the fire alarm saved the drug store, along with the other stores on the south side of Main St. As it was, the firemen had to wear gas masks to work in the smoke-filled store. Mr. Pickett had a narrow escape when the explosion took place beside him.

Gray Coach Lines bus service between Milton and Toronto will be discontinued after April 30. Service on Milton to Toronto route has been cancelled by order of the Transit Controller for Canada to eliminate duplication of the service provided by the Canadian Pacific Railway.

## PUD

BY STEVE NEASE

