



COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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LOOKING BACK



Concentration was important to get a song right for Cathy Galbraith and Cathy Riley, Grade 4 students at W.I. Dick School. They were among 90 students in the school in February, 1973 preparing for a music concert at Milton High School.

Small talk, big waste

Last week Milton Mayor Gord Krantz let a crowd of well-meaning but dawdling protestors hijack a municipal council meeting. Mr. Krantz is consistent on this type of issue. Consistently confused.

That's not to say it's all Mr. Krantz's fault. The nine other municipal councillors present (everybody except Ward 1 representative Rick Day) bovinely acquiesced to the floundering pace of events. Nary a voice was raised in protest.

The upshot of this disarray was a town council meeting that began at 7:30 p.m. on a Monday evening and dragged on until after 1 a.m. the following Tuesday morning. Much of that time was simply wasted.

The problem is that Mr. Krantz, who runs the council meetings, simply cannot bring himself to rein in people who stray from relevant points while addressing council. And he is apparently under little pressure to do so from his political peers, despite the fact that at least a few of them are obviously annoyed with such behaviour.

The subject being discussed was a proposed nine-home subdivision made up of rather expensive houses in a rural area, near the Blue Springs Creek. Approximately 35 nearby homeowners came to council's public hearing on the matter to protest the plan.

Around midnight, council finally began debating the issue, having listened to the protestors from 7:45 p.m. until that point. By then, councillor Marion Howard wearily but candidly confessed aloud, she could no longer think straight due to fatigue. Undoubtedly, she was not the only one.

This is not to make light of the issue, which was serious, nor the quality of many arguments and questions raised by the protestors, which were relevant and sound.

But a good deal of what they said was irrelevant and repetitive too. Only once did Mr. Krantz gently chide a man waltzing off on a long-winded tangent, and it did little to dissuade the speaker from continuing.

At 11:30 p.m., in a tentative attempt to expedite matters, Mr. Krantz pleaded with protestors to avoid repeating statements already entered into the record. The next luminary scorned that advice, and launched into a dissertation about trees, a topic which had been addressed by numerous other speakers equally cavalier about repetition.

Under the procedural rules for this type of public meeting, everyone is entitled to speak three times, in order to allow for a full presentation of the facts and an opportunity to refute counter-claims.

Given the fact that there is a provision for the full venting of concerns by all involved, there is no reason not to tighten up the speaking procedure, to clamp down. This is reportedly common in other jurisdictions.

Many municipal governments have time rules for speakers, such as 10 minutes. In Milton, by comparison, you may pretty well talk until hoarse.

Other municipal government leaders, such as Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion, have a reputation for cuffing wandering speakers back onto topic, in stark contrast to the Milton approach.

Besides being silly and wasteful, there is a disheartening aspect to this. It has been a source of complaint in this quarter before, and nothing has been done.

Milton needs to set some formal rules for public meetings. That will get Mr. Krantz off the hook personally, and make for a more efficient operation. The other councillors should demand this, but based on their apparent apathy last week, they probably won't.

PAGES OF THE PAST

One Year Ago

From the May 27, 1992 issue

□ Milton residents would have the perfect opportunity to do something good for themselves while at the same time representing their community. All it would take was 15 minutes of exercise and a call to Town Hall to ensure being counted in the Crown Life Participation Challenge between Milton and Halton Hills. The town with the highest percentage of the population taking part in a physical activity would win.

□ Patricia Pearce of E.C. Drury High School had won the silver medal in Sudbury at the Canada Wide Science Fair. She had previously won gold at the Hamilton and District Science and Engineering Fair for her project on biological denitrification. Ms Pearce had also been selected to attend a prestigious program at the University of Calgary which was aimed at helping Canada's top science students reach their goals.

□ Kathy James of the Milton Runners Club had run up two wins over the recent holiday weekend. She had placed first in the Whitey Sheridan 15 kilometre in Waterdown in her 30-35 age bracket. She had also managed a personal best time which put her second overall among the women. Later the same weekend she also won her age-group in the Woodstock five kilometre Victoria Day road race with another personal best time. Again she placed second overall among the women just 12 seconds behind the winner.

20 Years Ago

From the May 30, 1973 issue

□ Dominion Day was to be officially known as "Community Day" in Milton. Members of the Milton Parks Board and Milton Council were pitching in to plan an interesting July 1. Among the highlights of the

program being put together were fireworks, a band concert, free swimming, free movies, the official opening of the new building at Rotary Park and water and aquatic displays. Board members and council would be teaming up to serve hot dogs and orange drink at cost prices although family picnics in the park were being encouraged. The main objective of "Community Day" was for residents to get together and meet their neighbours.

□ Results of a community-wide survey recently conducted by Grade 13 Geography students at Milton District High School and geography department head John Horner had been released. The survey showed that the "typical Miltonian" had lived in Milton for less than 10 years, drove to work and smoked cigarettes. He also enjoyed his work and agreed with capital punishment. The results represented 76 per cent of the houses and apartments in Milton.

□ A plan to have baby pictures taken at Milton District Hospital had been approved at the meeting of the Board of Directors. A member of the Women's Auxiliary would take pictures of newborns twice a week, on the request of the mother. The pictures would be sent out for developing and printing and returned for payment in approximately eight days.

50 Years Ago

From the May 28, 1943 issue

□ The amount raised for the Chinese Relief Fund on tag day was \$128.07.

□ Milton Fair Officials were planning to have one of the finest agricultural and general exhibits in history.

□ The committee in charge of the Red Cross Street Fair were working hard to make it the best ever. They were promising games to suit everyone's fancy and fun for young and old alike. The prizes for the lucky raffle were on display in the Hydro window.

PUD

BY STEVE NEASE

