



COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Congratulations, in order for MPP Noel Duignan

Congratulations are in order for Halton North MPP Noel Duignan, who has introduced and guided a meaningful piece of legislation through the vagaries of Queen's Park and seen it become law against all odds.

Mr. Duignan's Private Member's Bill banning landfills on the Niagara Escarpment recently received third reading.

The Niagara Escarpment adjacent to Milton is a study in contrasts; it is protected yet it is abused. It is a natural phenomenon of great allure swathed in the artificiality of at times ludicrously abstruse regulation.

While an escarpment quarry may in a day dislodge thousands of tonnes of rockface through blasting to make construction industry gravel, a stone's throw away a homeowner will get his wrist slapped for building a backyard deck without approval from regulatory bodies hither and yon.

Still, despite the controversies and contradictions surrounding the magnificent cliffs and undulating hills of the escarpment, there has been a gradual and inexorable, at least hopefully inexorable, shift toward more common sense in escarpment protection, and Mr. Duignan's substantial bill will form a bulwark in the fight to preserve this important asset. The political appeal of the legislation is obvious in that all three major provincial parties were jockeying to claim some share of the credit through their supposedly precedent setting activities while in power.

Yet it is Mr. Duignan's day, pure and simple. His party's ship of state may be battered to the water line, with no safe harbour in site nor likely to loom. Yet this accomplishment will stand.

At the trough again

It's interesting to see the three levels of government doling out \$2 million to Milton and then grandstanding in the same breath about fulfilling promises and recognizing there is but one beleaguered taxpayer for all three to fleece.

Instead of fulfilling promises, how about fulfilling obligations? The country is in hock up to its ears thanks to profligate spending by governments and their subsequent lack of fortitude when it comes time to make the hard decisions about where to rein in.

How much of this local work is really necessary?

If Milton gets \$2 million, there's certainly no reason to believe any other municipality across Canada got shortchanged. They all submitted their wish lists, then lined up at the trough while area politicians undoubtedly called press conferences across the country just like the one in Milton Tuesday to crow about their job creation schemes and commitment to the electorate.

Included in the Milton work is sprucing up some parks which are already serviceable, and blowing all kinds of money on road projects mired in controversy, such as the poorly conceived widening of Martin Street and the expensive facelift for Bell School Line, a rural dirt road that is far from a thoroughfare.

It's not clear from a cursory examination whether the Martin Street funding is deeply linked to the odious idea of widening the road at the expense of its mature tree canopy.

But those monitoring developments in this debate should not be surprised if the proponents of the Martin Street Massacre attempt to somehow use the grant money as leverage to ram their agenda through council later in the summer. The ratepayers who favour maintaining trees over advancing half-cocked road widening schemes should remain vigilant.

Meanwhile, the whole government pseudo-largesse scenario played out Tuesday is steadfastly bizarre. Restraint having been abandoned for now, the politicians are milking the event for positive press. Tomorrow they may be advocating restraint again, which bears testament to how seriously they should be taken.

Looking Back



More than 250 children registered in July, 1963 for the Milton Recreation Commission's summer program. Supervised summer recreation was provided for children at J.M. Denyes School, Rotary Park and W.I. Dick School. Here, leader Andrena Cumella registers (left to right) Brenda Graham, Marilyn Waters, Evelyn McMullen, Susan Graham, Debbie Graham, Marilyn Horning, Susan Milne and Maria Catherine Horning.

Pages of the Past

One Year Ago

From the July 7, 1993 issue

- Dr. Allan Somersall resigned as Reform Party leader in the Oakville-Milton riding, leaving the job to Milton's Rick Malboeuf. A Reform Party statement from Mr. Malboeuf announcing the changes yesterday said Dr. Somersall resigned for "personal reasons." "While I regret Dr. Somersall's decision, I feel uniquely prepared to step in as the new candidate, having been actively involved with the riding, as well as Allan's campaign from the beginning," Mr. Malboeuf said. Mr. Malboeuf, 42, was the runner-up to Dr. Somersall at the September 15 riding nomination meeting. He trailed by 63 votes on the second ballot.

- Milton Mayor Gord Krantz supported a bid by mayors of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) to gain more leeway from the province when it came to cost-cutting methods. Through the proposed social contract, municipalities across Ontario were expected to trim between \$165-\$175 million from their payrolls as part of a \$2 billion spending reduction for public sector employees. Milton's share was about \$300,000.

- The Town and a rural area landowner were set to go to court again after a preliminary hearing in June failed to produce any change in the status quo. Eugene Cummins owned property on Eighth Line near Lower Base Line. It was a source of irritation and nuisance to neighbours, because "thousands of loads" of construction debris and fill had been dumped on the land. However, Mr. Cummins argued that the family was merely filling in what was unproductive land so it would be of some use.

20 Years Ago

From the July 10, 1974 issue

- First-time political aspirant Dr. Frank Philbrook

returned Halton to the federal Liberals in the recent swing to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, knocking Conservative Terry O'Connor from the seat he wrestled from them in 1972. Dr. Philbrook had almost a 2,000-vote margin over Mr. O'Connor while NDP candidate Archie Brown trailed the three-man field, a poor third. Dr. Philbrook's win followed the trend in Ontario, where the Liberals took 19 seats from the Conservatives in almost a direct reversal of the 1972 elections when the PC Party almost upset the Liberal government.

- Halton Regional Council was expected to consider the future site of Halton regional headquarters during a meeting. Site committee chairman Tom Hill said the committee was considering four sites. He told reporters it would be up to council to choose one of the four and eventually buy it and build a headquarters on it. A member of the committee noted three of the four sites were north of Highway 5. The region established temporary headquarters in Burlington at the junction of Guelph Line and QEW in April for a period of three years.

- A man digging a post hole in Milton disrupted telephone communications. The man cut through some Bell cables and damaged others, leaving up to 900 residences and businesses without service. Among those affected were Milton District Hospital, the ambulance service number and the Liberal headquarters.

50 Years Ago

From the July 6, 1944 issue

- In a recent interview with agricultural representative J.E. Whitelock, we learned that, to date, 17 Halton farmers have secured western farm hands. Needless to add, this is far short of the number required as we understand that there are applications for 75 of these men on file at the agricultural office in Milton.

- During the school term from September, 1943 to June, 1944, Milton public school pupils and teachers participated in many causes to assist the war effort.

Pud

by Steve Nease

