



COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Looking Back



A smorgasbord served by members of the Order of the Eastern Star, Halton chapter, in May 1973 drew more than 400 people to Milton District High School. An abundance of food was the main feature of the event. The meal was served in the school cafeteria.

Is this gamble wise?

Councillor John Challinor and Mayor Gord Krantz made it clear this week that they have a two-pronged strategy for dealing with the Milton chlorination controversy.

Not only do these political representatives, and presumably their colleagues around the council table, want an exemption from prevailing chlorination guidelines for Milton. They also want a bundle of cash to repair the Derry Road water pipeline that has generally been the source of Milton's water contamination problems, isolated though such instances have been.

This strikes us as a gamble, albeit a calculated one.

Put yourself in the position of a provincial or even Halton regional politician. Instead of facing Milton councillors waving handfuls of petitions opposing chlorination from the citizenry, you are now facing councillors who both disdain chlorination and want a few million dollars.

This will probably be a hard sell at Queen's Park, and at Halton Region.

Originally, the opposition to chlorination was based on two widespread local sentiments; that almost nobody wanted such a water additive, and that most people believed it was unnecessary to safeguard the local water supply.

In mounting arguments to back those positions, the generally advanced position was as follows:

One, we should be exempted from current guidelines given the minimal safety risk of the non-chlorinated water.

Two, a careful reading of water control guidelines indicated there was room for varying interpretations of the rules. Therefore Milton's anti-chlorine spin could reasonably be seen as just as valid as somebody else's opposing rationale.

Now, however, we're not just negotiating over different takes on a few paragraphs of legalese. We're talking about money, in a time of economic constraint. That's a harder sell to the decision-makers who have to be convinced chlorine is not what Milton wants or needs.

For years Councillor Brian Penman has argued that Halton Region's Derry Road pipeline installation has been plagued with problems due to some sort of construction fault, one that must be rectified in the public interest. That is all well and good, but this may be a bad time to bring it up. The pipeline probably needs to be fixed, and indeed if it was repaired perhaps most of Milton's contamination risk would disappear.

Still, let's remember the other side's arguments. They say Milton is the largest community in Ontario without chlorinated water, and that in itself is a questionable practice, regardless of the integrity of the water piping system.

They also say that given their interpretation of the chlorination rules, Halton regional leaders, and perhaps others, could face legal liability if they don't chlorinate, since the argument could be advanced that chlorination is a reasonable health precaution, while failure to do so constitutes negligence.

Let's address those arguments. If the guidelines are flexible, and can be read so as to appease the majority of Miltonians who don't want chlorination — let's go with that. If it then follows that legal liability is a non-issue, all the better.

Once that's resolved we can press for fixing the pipes, rather than linking the two issues. To link matters may well serve only to entrench the chlorine backers within their current position.

— Rob Kelly

Pages of the Past

One Year Ago

From the February 22, 1995 issue

- Heritage Awards were presented at Hugh Foster Hall during Heritage Week. Recipients included Vera and John Delacourt, Doris and Don Priddle, Donna Funnell, and Chris Burnette. The awards honored those who helped protect Milton heritage in the forms of archives contributions, literature, architecture, education and visual arts.

- Halton Region won an award in recognition of its National Public Works Week 1994 program, "Celebrating a Century of Public Works." The Bruce Brunton Trophy goes to the Ontario public works department that does the best job promoting their services in their community.

- The Safe and Sound Child Care Center held an open house to show off its new Milton Heights location. The new home was the old site of the former Milton Heights Montessori School on First Line.

20 Years Ago

From the February 25, 1976 issue

- The queen and king of Milton's abbreviated Winterfest '76 were chosen at a dance at the Lions Club Hall. The winners, selected by a panel of judges, were Nancy

McKinnon and Todd Corradetti.

- Campbellville Scout and Guide groups celebrated Scout-Guide Week with a parade to St. David's Presbyterian Church. Rev. Rod Lewis was the speaker for the event.

- The Nutrition Forum was conducted at Knox Presbyterian Church by the home economics branch of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food. The event was held in an attempt to educate Canadians about nutrition.

50 Years Ago

From the February 21, 1946 issue

- At the annual meeting of the Milton Red Cross Society, Mrs. Marcellus made an address expressing appreciation for Mrs. Dewar's helpfulness over the past six years. Mrs. Gordon McKenzie presented the long-time volunteer with flowers on behalf of the executive.

- Major Jack D. Duncan of Milton was recognized for his gallant service during the Second World War. Major Duncan was one of 100 war veterans honored. He was decorated with the M.B.E. for outstanding services during the Italian campaign.

- The afternoon meeting of the St. Paul's United Church W. M. S. was held at the home of Mrs. R. B. Galbraith with good attendance. The president, Mrs. R. M. Clements, occupied the chair and conducted opening exercises.

Pud

by Steve Nease

