



# OPINION

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

Box 248, 191 Main St. E.,  
Milton, Ont. L9T 4N9

(905) 878-2341

Fax: 878-4943

Classified: 875-3300

**Ian Oliver** *Publisher*

**Neil Oliver** *Associate Publisher*

**Rob Kelly** *Editor*

**Karen Huisman** *Circulation Manager*

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## Who'll invite Milton to the party?

Milton is going to have to shop itself around to potential suitors.

Municipal reform might force Milton into a marriage with a larger municipality. This little town could become a footnote in local history like Streetsville, Port Credit, Bronte, and Aldershot before it.

When the provincial government brings forth legislation on municipal reform in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), expected this spring, it will likely remove a level of government, insist current municipalities amalgamate, and threaten to impose amalgamations if locals cannot do it themselves.

Milton, currently the municipal equivalent of a dog's breakfast, might explode.

Northern sections are already staging a quiet revolution and talking of moving on, southern sections might be attracted to the bright lights of Oakville and Burlington, while urban Milton has little choice but to put on its best dress and march to the altar with a bloated, older Mississauga, a city which has gone down the aisle before.

Milton will not disappear but it will fast become a quaint echo of yesteryear as it blurs into the polyglot of Mississauga.

Milton needs water servicing. Mississauga is the only place Milton can get it without spending huge sums of money.

The area between urban Milton and Mississauga is a natural tract for residential development, thanks to geography, Highway 401, and water.

Milton regional Councillor Barry Lee suggested not so long ago that Burlington was the lynchpin in local decisions on municipal reform. He said whatever Burlington did would have a dramatic impact on other Halton municipalities.



## Reaume with a View

with BRAD REAUME

While Halton Region fades as a player, its constituent municipalities should be forming their own plans. Despite howls to the contrary, Burlington and Oakville will soon see that their only real option is to amalgamate. Any hope of urban Milton joining the new city will likely be stymied by the high cost of water servicing.

Numerous surveys in Burlington suggest people there want a revised form of Halton as their local government, instead of joining either Toronto or Hamilton.

Rather than opt to be a big fish or a little fish, Burlington wants to be the pond. However, the province will consider Burlington alone too small a puddle. The province seems to have ruled out a utility board replacing Halton Region, and the idea of a City of Halton has met with little enthusiasm from elected officials around the region.

Once politicians have had a chance to play their political games and wave around a few studies, it will become obvious to those in Burlington and Oakville that they should become one municipality. Forming a single municipality is the only way for Burlington and Oakville to stay out of the GTA and control their own destiny.



## We want to tackle school reform

Elementary and secondary education will be the topic at the next Milton Ratepayer's Meeting, Wednesday, April 17 at the Optimist Centre. It gets underway at 7:30 p.m.

Speaking of education, students within our area concerned about recent layoff announcements have formed the Halton Student Alliance, in an effort to get a better idea of the workings of the educational system.

Their observations following a meeting with board officials were pithy. To quote student alliance representative Scott Kubacki on recently announced teacher layoffs: "The government is blaming the boards (of education), and the board is blaming the government and unions."

It should come as no surprise that when nobody is in charge quality goes down and costs get out of control. That briefly defines the state of our public and separate schools.

Established vehicles such as parent-teacher associations provide little or no authority, particularly on the key issues of cost, curriculum and



## View Point

with PATRICK KELLY

educational standards.

What a difference I discovered in visiting some local private schools. Parent committees interviewed potential teachers. They were consulted and voted on teaching subjects and budget matters.

Education to these parents was not a spectator sport. The price of admission was mostly comparable to our public school system. Yet not surprisingly, they consistently produce a higher percentage of Ontario scholars than the public system.

What are they doing right?

Admittedly, they don't have to strictly follow the latest provincially mandated, ever-changing eggheaded teaching theories. When something doesn't work, they dump it.

And, trustees are actively involved parents. Unpaid! Administrators do what they are told. Amazingly they also attract top quality teachers, who consider their job a vocation.

Are charter schools, or a voucher system, the answer? Let's talk about the ideas on April 17.

We are attempting to put together a group of involved and knowledgeable people from both inside and outside the public school system, who will hopefully engage in some enlightening debate and propose solutions. Yes, taxpayer-supported teachers, you will be represented and are more than welcome to participate. Trustees may sit and listen.

And what about you? Are you content to vote once every couple of years for a trustee whose name you probably don't remember? Mail your questions or suggestions to MRA, P.O. Box 121, Milton, L9T 2Y3. We are still working on the program and we do more than listen.

Pat Kelly is a board member of the Milton Ratepayers' Association.

## Co-op class is a break from high-school grind

Any teenager can tell you that high school is not the most exciting place in the world. With a never-ending string of homework and assignments, not to mention sky-high university requirements, it is easy to get bogged down and depressed.

Young people everywhere can vouch for the fact that high school life is not like "Beverly Hills 90210". School is work.

But I shouldn't say that it was always so bleak. For the first week of grade nine, high school was pretty neat. All too soon, however, a week turned into a month; a month turned into a semester; a semester turned into a year.

That single year spread into another four, monotonous and mind-numbing. Year upon year you'd slog down the same halls with the same royal blue lockers. Pretty soon, students are driven to pounding their heads against the crumbling, paint-chipped walls, longing for the day when they can leave for good, off to university or college or work, anywhere but high school. And then, amid all the pounding, something pops into mind. Ontario is still one of the few places in North America that requires five

## Hyde Seeks

with ANDREW HYDE



years of high school instead of just four. Depressing.

Surely there must be something interesting offered by the high schools, something to keep bored and uninspired students from dropping out. Isn't there some kind of course they can take that will give them a jolt of enthusiasm, a kick in the pants, a reason to go? The answer is yes. The course is co-op.

Co-op puts what you learn into use in the real world as students spend a semester at a local business. One thing I've realized already in my placement at *The Champion* is that there are consequences in the real world. If you mess up

on what you're doing at co-op, it doesn't mean you lose a piddly little mark. It means a customer is going to get mad, you're going to look stupid and your company is going to lose business. Placing what you learn into real situations is an exhilarating change from the tedious pace of regular school.

The course also teaches you valuable tools about the job market. By choosing a co-op placement in a field of interest, you will quickly learn whether or not that occupation is really for you. Co-op can confirm or change your career plans before you spend thousands of dollars in the wrong courses at university.

But the most important thing about co-op is that you're not learning from some textbook or from some teacher who took a seminar on the topic. You're learning hands-on. You're receiving expertise from people who depend on this knowledge to put food on their table. What you get while at your placement affects actual people as they live their lives. You won't learn anything so useful, so real in any other class at school.

Andrew Hyde is a Milton District High School co-op student at *The Canadian Champion*.