



COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Looking Back



These four lovely young ladies were among those vying for the Miss Milton High School crown at the Spring Formal in 1965. Showing off their best smiles in an effort to win over the judges were, seated, Margaret Hume and Doreen Carney and standing, Georgette Martinow and Marg Lawson.

Backing tax hike is a foolhardy gamble

Halton residents were given a stark illustration late last week that the organization to which public school board employees owe fealty is their union, not the taxpayers who employ them.

This is not to be naive — of course teachers and others will band together when threatened behind the union bulwark, but it is a question of degree. The school employees verge on temerity in their disdain for the truculent public mood.

Last week these employees announced — unilaterally of course — that the way to solve the Halton Board of Education's financial dilemma was to raise property taxes.

This effrontery is close to astonishing and serves little purpose but to steel the public's resolve regarding cost cutting. To date cutbacks have been seen as an unfortunate necessity, but given the attitude the board employees are displaying, sympathy for them is probably melting like spring snow.

Financially speaking, the status quo benefits these employees and no one else. Their position is isolationist, self-centred and out of touch with both the prevailing sentiment and political tone.

In an article on the front page of last Friday's paper, a coalition of unionized educational employees baldly stated that the public school board's education budget is already "lean" without the proposed \$16 million in cuts.

In advancing their rationale for instead inflicting a 7.64 per cent tax hike on hard-pressed ratepayers, the group fell back on a hoary old line tendered by second-echelon sales people everywhere; it will only cost you so much per day, a trifling sum, in this case 29 cents. Just to be clear, 29 cents a day adds up to roughly \$105 a year in new taxes, per household, for public school education alone. One teacher spokesperson called such an increase "modest."

If this is merely a face-saving bargaining ploy on the part of the education unions it certainly risks blowing up in their faces due to a visceral public backlash. But perhaps a gamble of such insulting audacity could only be mounted by a group resting secure in the knowledge they operate a de facto monopoly.

Teachers and others consistently warn that the quality of education will be compromised by cutbacks. Perhaps. Or perhaps judicious cutbacks will only marginally alter it, if at all. The union logic seems rooted in numbers — the quality of education is directly proportionate to the number of people employed by the system. But is that the case? Is there no room for new efficiencies? Many would argue there is. Hopefully they will introduce effective innovations, for the unions are shouting madly into the wind here, and will not carry the day, as they know full well.

— Rob Kelly

So many helped

So much has been said and done by the community to help Deidre Scholtz battle her life-threatening disease that little can be added now. It's important to note, however, that the family's ongoing ordeal would be worsened tragically had not this generous community come to their aid. A month ago, they were facing a potential bill for \$100,000 to underwrite tests aimed at helping their five-year-old daughter. Today that bill has been paid. By so many of you.

— R.K.

Pages of the Past

One Year Ago

From the April 19, 1995 issue

- Generous Miltonians donated three shopping carts full of non-perishable goods to the local Salvation Army Food Bank over Easter weekend. The food drive was continued in hopes of collecting more.

- Two Milton schools were among those recognized as 700 Halton students travelled to the Ontario Place Cinesphere for Blue Planet '95. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment Sheila Copps was the guest speaker, handing out 12 environmental achievement awards to Halton schools.

- Bishop Reding Secondary School's recycling club benefited from a generous offer made by the SoapBerry Shop in conjunction with Earth Day. When bottles were returned to the Milton Mall store, a donation was made to the non-profit student environmental group.

20 Years Ago

From the April 21, 1976 issue

- The Milton Kinettes took part in the skit 'Women of the Future' as part of their zone conference. The Kinette

Bulletin won an award for the second year.

- Provincial law started to require medical doctors to report epileptic patients who had two or more seizures and possessed driver's licences to the Ministry of Transportation and Communications.

- The Regional Municipality of Halton received \$255,000 toward the cost of improvements at Halton Centennial Manor in Milton.

50 Years Ago

From the April 18, 1946 issue

- The annual meeting of the Scotch Block W. I. was held at the home of S. Merry with a good attendance. The various convenors all reported a busy, but successful year.

- The April meeting of the Halton branch of the Garage Operators Association was held in the form of a ladies night at the Palermo Hall. Nearly 50 members and their wives attended the dinner.

- The Halton Junior Farmers' 'At Home' was held at the Brant Inn in Burlington. Between 600 and 700 people were in attendance. Among the guests were Junior Farmer leaders from the counties of Brant, Haldimand, Lincoln, Wentworth, Waterloo, Wellington, Oxford, Peel and York.

Pud

by Steve Nease

