

OUR READERS WRITE

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

Downtown advocate not happy with bank

Dear Editor:

In a recent article in *The Canadian Champion*, called "... leaving downtown after 41 years", the Bank of Montreal discusses their May 10 closing of their downtown branch. In this article Frank Houlihan, community banking manager, is quoted as saying: "Business here (his Milton Mall location) has grown many times over, but growth at the downtown branch is just not there." This article, and statement made by the bank, have infuriated many downtown business owners.

The lack of growth at the downtown location was created by the Bank of Montreal. In the three and a half years that I have been in my position as general manager of the Milton Downtown BIA, the bank has been constantly reducing hours and turning away new clients. Of course there is no growth when potential

new customers are told that new accounts must be opened at the mall location.

Mr. Houlihan also stated that "some customers who use the Main Street location will be disappointed by the move". The people most likely to be affected by the move are members of Milton's large senior population. Living in and around the downtown area, seniors could go for a short stroll to the bank and handle their affairs. Now many will have to either find a way to make it to the mall, or relocate their accounts to one of the four banks and trust companies still thriving in downtown Milton.

Downtown Milton is in the infant stages of its beautification program. With the hundreds of thousands of dollars that the business association (Milton Downtown Business Improvement Association) is pouring into the promotion and beautification of our historic downtown, people will soon be travelling from near and far to see what they have been missing. Many new businesses are opening in the downtown area regularly.

Downtown Milton is already the home of several incredibly well known businesses, with customers travelling from all over Ontario.

Even with the Bank of Montreal move, there are still four major financial institutions - Canada Trust, the Bank of Commerce, the Bank of Nova Scotia and the Toronto Dominion Bank, doing business in downtown Milton.

Anthony Allwood
General manager,
Milton Downtown BIA

Letters Welcomed

The Canadian Champion welcomes letters to the editor. We reserve the right to edit, revise, and reject letters.

Writers will be contacted in regard to revisions or rejections. Letters must be signed and the address and the telephone number of the writer included. Mail letters to:

The Canadian Champion
Box 248, Milton, Ont. L9T 4N9
or leave them at our office, 191 Main St.

Milton trustee defends her budget vote stance

Dear Editor:

In a recent article in *The Canadian Champion*, three trustees expressed the opinion that other trustees should not have voted when the entire Halton Board of Education budget for 1996 was brought to the table for approval. It is not uncommon for trustees to declare a conflict of interest on an individual item and refrain from debate and voting on that item. Once debate and discussion on these individual items is complete, the entire budget must be approved by the board.

During the discussion on the salary line item, I declared a potential conflict of interest. It is for this reason that some trustees feel I should not have voted on the entire budget.

I would like to clarify a few points.

1) Provincial law permits a person with a

family member employed by a board to be a trustee of that board.

2) One of the most important functions of trustees is to establish and approve the board budget.

3) Many trustees who declared conflicts of interest on various items which were included in the budget later voted on the entire budget.

When trustees are approving the final budget they are determining whether the board can reasonably meet the financial obligations in the budget with the projected revenues. As I had no conflict of interest performing this duty, I voted to support a budget which included a \$6 million reduction in the salary account.

Flo Belford
Trustee, Halton Board of Education
Milton Ward 2

The Canadian Champion, Wednesday, May 1, 1996

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