



# COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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## Can't help you, Greg Pavelich

Among today's letters to the editor is one from Greg Pavelich, who is apparently representing a Toronto-based group called Out!Spoken. The sub-heading on the organization's letterhead says it is "An action and advocacy group to end media discrimination against lesbians, bisexuals and gays."

Mr. Pavelich takes this newspaper to task for printing Graeme Barrett's name when Mr. Barrett, the superintendent of education services for the Halton Board of Education, was charged in a police crackdown. The raid took place in parklands owned by the Royal Botanical Gardens in the Burlington-Hamilton area after public complaints of lewd behaviour in the area.

The charge against Mr. Barrett was later dropped, as the Crown cut a deal which saw Mr. Barrett, while admitting no wrongdoing, make a donation to charity and promise not to return to the park.

A dozen men were charged with various indecent acts in the raid.

Now these alleged indecent acts centred around homosexuality, according to police, but that in and of itself didn't lead to the crackdown. Indecent acts, generally construed in this context as unacceptable public sexual behaviour, could just as easily have involved heterosexual exhibitionism. That too would have drawn objections from the average park stroller, no doubt, especially if accompanied by children.

Mr. Pavelich says this newspaper would likely never waste time reporting on "straight" people found in lover's lanes. Probably not, given the innocent connotation of the term 'lover's lane', which conjures up visions of high school kids necking in a parental car on a ridge somewhere.

But we would report on prostitution in a residential neighborhood, or complaints of lewd heterosexual antics loosely camouflaged in a public park. And, of course, we would name prominent people who were alleged to have taken part in such illegal behaviour, once they were criminally charged.

In Mr. Barrett's case the fact that the charge centred around alleged homosexual advances was not the crux of the issue, although no doubt it engendered controversy.

The fact was, a man who enjoyed a high position of trust and influence in the local public board of education was alleged to have stooped to a lower moral level — to committing a crime.

When Halton North MPP Ted Chudleigh learned of the situation, he made it clear he was taken aback and concerned, in truth partly because of the alleged homosexual nature of the act but equally so due to the fact a man in a position of public trust had been charged with a criminal offense related to what Mr. Chudleigh felt was deeply flawed judgement.

He was not the only one to hold such a view.

It is true, as Mr. Pavelich states, that gay people who have their sexual orientation discovered often undergo profound stress, and there has been at least one documented case in southern Ontario in which a man killed himself. That is tragic, but we must at some level accept responsibility for our actions. If discretion is so important, why seek dalliances in a public place? This is not the first time this has happened in Halton — the same sort of crackdown took place at Shell Park in Oakville a few years ago.

We won't stop printing names in such circumstances. That would be an abrogation of responsibility. Our mandate is to inform the public. It is up to the public then, to decide what to do with that information, and how to treat those adversely affected by it.

— Rob Kelly



## Pages of the Past

### One Year Ago

From the August 16, 1995 issue

- Staff at Mountsberg Conservation Area's raptor rehabilitation centre were preparing one of their patients for surgery. Merlin the great horned owl was getting set for its trip to the University of Wisconsin where surgery was to be performed on the cataracts in its right eye. It was believed to be the first time such a procedure was administered to a great horned owl.

- Members of the regional health and social services committee threw their support behind a plan that would put a heftier price tag on Allendale's better rooms. There was some concern that the new implementations would create a two-tiered system at the Ontario Street retirement home. The plan was passed and was expected to generate \$115,000 to offset the anticipated loss of provincial funding.

- Halton Region official Tony Amalfa reported the successful clean up of low level water contamination near Milton District Hospital. Two samples taken during the previous week showed no coliform contamination, allowing region officials to give the area's water a thumbs up.

### 20 Years Ago

From the August 18, 1976 issue

- A two-mile stretch of white water and belly-up fish met Environment Ontario inspectors as they investigated the

- Sixteen Mile Creek near Milton. The accident was traced to the sewage treatment plant in town. Ministry personnel found out that an accidental spill released lime slurry into the creek, consequently altering the pH level and killing a large number of fish. The contamination was eventually stopped and the creek's flow returned the pH levels to normal by that evening.

- Budget restrictions forced Milton District Hospital to close about 25 beds on the first floor during the months of July and August. The closings were part of an attempt to meet the Ministry of Health's ordered \$37,000 reduction in the hospital's budget. No employees had to be laid off, but there were substantial reductions in part-time work. The surgery and pediatrics wards were closed as well. Patients needing these services were relocated to another hospital.

### 50 Years Ago

From the August 15, 1946 issue

- Milton paid tribute to 204 men and women who served during the Second World War with a celebration at the fairgrounds and a parade down Main Street. The Lorne Scots Regiment led the parade which saw Mayor Dawson being driven in a 1904 model car. When the festivities reached the fairgrounds, a number of races and contests took place and a moment of silence was held for those servicemen who died overseas.

- The Milton Juveniles trounced Oakville 11-4 to take the Halton Baseball Championship. Milton was to ride a terrific record of 10 wins and one loss into the next round.

### Pud

by Steve Nease

