



COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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We'll take the Halton school board, every time

Here's an idea: Why don't we take photographs of all the bare bottoms, bosoms and assorted intimate parts of human anatomy displayed in some of the great art painted and sculpted down through the ages.

Then we'll make a collage of all those photographs, all that nudity, all that lewdness. We'll present it to the gallery and museum proprietors exhibiting the pieces.

When they realize what they have done, they will shrivel in horror and agree with us, that all such works should be banned from reproduction or display in any high school texts. As well, of course, people under 18 will no longer be allowed in the offending museums.

That sounds absurd, no doubt, to many of us, but it bears worrisome similarities to what a Milton man and his followers seem intent on doing.

Milton residents, and apparently many others elsewhere, have recently received a flyer that is highly critical of the novel *Foxfire*, which is being taught at Milton District High School.

The primary author of the flyer, Jack Huisman, has more than two pages of phrases pulled from *Foxfire* included therein, and all the phrases so documented are racy or filled with swearing and objectionable comments.

But no context is supplied, no framework within which the author is attempting to build scenes and plot. All that is questionable — when it stands alone anyway — is exploited for the purpose of having the book deleted from school study.

That is not credible criticism, it is a base and selective standard, skewed and shaped to serve political purposes.

The flyer is equally critical of the Halton Board of Education, and vindictive in its treatment of Graeme Barrett, the unfortunate board superintendent who was caught up in a sex scandal.

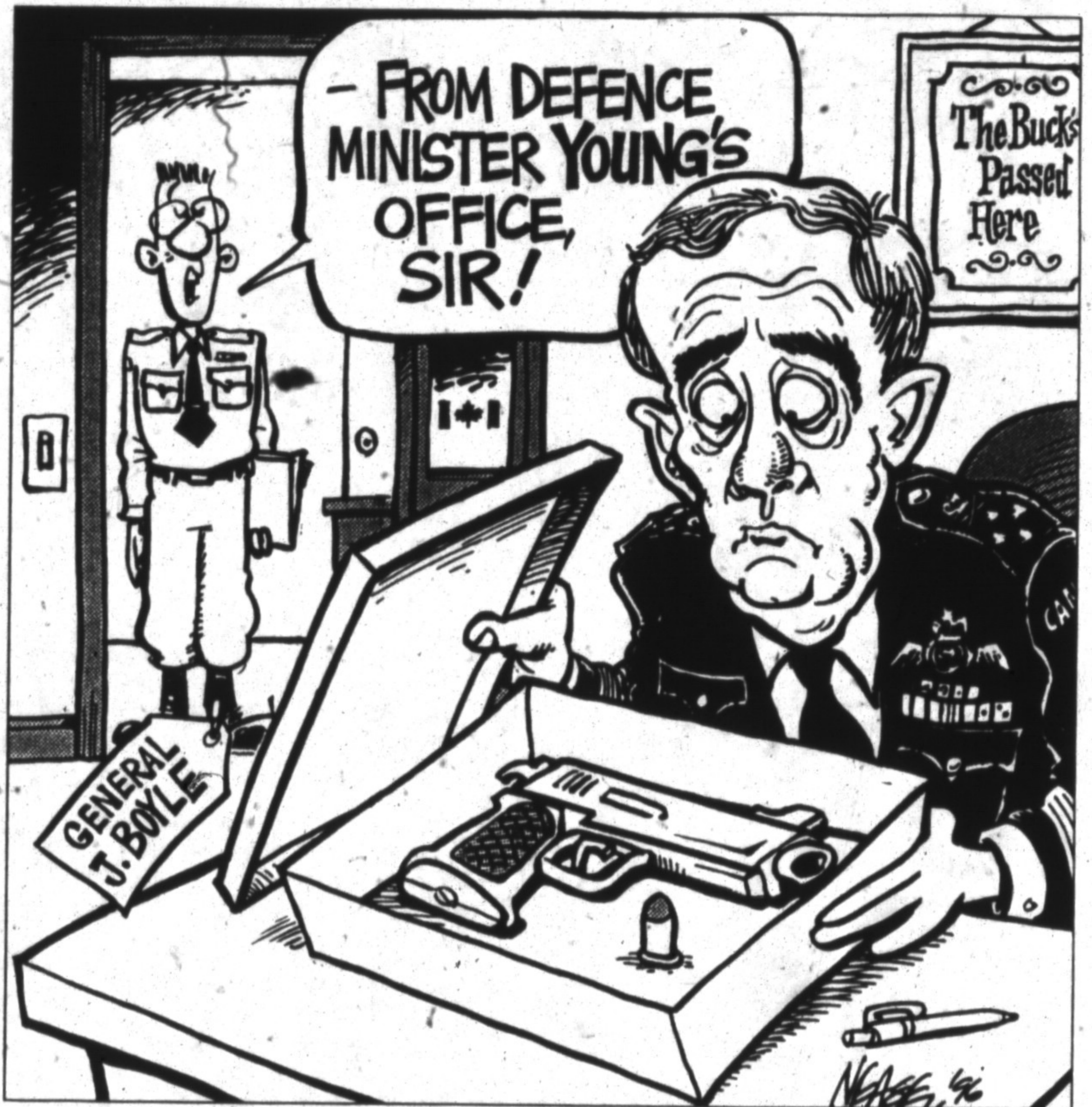
Mr. Barrett's judgement in relation to alleged indiscretions — he was charged in a round-up after complaints of sexual solicitation at a public park — may be in question. But that does not speak to his abilities or judgement when it comes to overseeing curriculum at the Halton Board of Education.

It also bears repeating that the charge against Mr. Barrett was dropped when he agreed to make a donation to charity, which speaks to the relative significance of the crime in the eyes of law enforcement.

Yet Mr. Huisman jumps on the opportunity to suggest Mr. Barrett has "been ill for a long time" in an attempt to shore up his case for banning *Foxfire*. Such tactics are to be expected, one would suppose, in these types of fights, but the side employing them can lay no credible claim to the moral high ground.

When it comes to censorship, and sensitivity, we'll take the Halton Board of Education, and the English department at Milton District High School, over Mr. Huisman and his associates. Every time.

— Rob Kelly



Pages of the Past

One Year Ago

From the October 11, 1995 issue

• Milton council continued its stance against the restructuring of government in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Council sent a second submission entitled "Bigger is Not Better — Smaller is Smarter," to the GTA Task Force. The paper highlighted some of the problems with a proposed move toward larger GTA municipalities.

• Amalgamation was also a hot topic in meetings between the Halton and Hamilton-Wentworth separate school boards. Halton Catholic trustees agreed unanimously that joining the two school boards was a bad idea. Burlington Trustee Miriam van de Vrande stated that, "amalgamation would just make the system bigger, not better." Joining the two boards had been one of the recommendations in a report by the Ontario School Board Reduction Task Force.

20 Years Ago

From the October 13, 1976 issue

• Former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker paid a visit to about 100 spectators at the Mohawk Inn in Campbellville. The good weather and smiling faces weren't the only thing that drew "Dief the Chief" to the area. The former prime minister took a stroll down memory lane as well. The

Mohawk Inn had acquired and restored the Acadia, an old railway coach that Mr. Diefenbaker used during the 1960s as part of his cross-country, whistle-stop campaign tours. Inn management had invited Mr. Diefenbaker to visit the newly restored coach. The Tory veteran joked it up with residents and told a few stories about his travels aboard the Acadia and his campaign against Lester B. Pearson.

• Halton Council zeroed its sights on the Tremaine-Britannia Road area for a massive, new landfill site. The region passed a resolution ordering test drilling at "Site F" with drilling at other sites to follow only if a study found the Milton site to be unfeasible for a landfill. Some councillors saw the resolution as a flagrant disregard of council and public opinion. Councillor Marjorie Powys of Milton objected to having Site F "shoved down our throats."

50 Years Ago

From the October 10, 1946 issue

• Cream producers from across Halton gathered at Milton's court house in what would turn out to be a rather enthusiastic meeting. In the end, a new county organization was established similar to one started previously by Halton's milk producers.

• Nearly 100 friends and relatives gathered to wish Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Denyes a happy 50th wedding anniversary. Guests came from as far away as Kingston and St. Catharines to give best wishes to the Milton couple.

Pud

by Steve Nease

