

OUR READERS WRITE

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

Calling all former air cadets

Dear Editor:

We are planning a reunion of the 820 Milton Air Cadet Squadron for June 7, 1997.

This is the squadron from which Lt. Col. Chris Hadfield graduated. Lt. Col. Hadfield was the mission specialist who operated the Canadarm when it docked with the MIR space station in November 1995.

This reunion will mark the 25th anniversary of our squadron and we hope to get as many former members, cadets and staff as possible to return for this event.

All former members please contact us so that we may provide you with details as they become available, especially regarding the June 7 inspection. Any old photos, articles, etc. would be most welcome.

Contact Sue or Nick Klip at (905) 878-5154 or drop us a line at P.O. Box 83, Milton, Ont. L9T 2Y3.

Nick Klip
820 Reunion Committee

Call your trustee before it's too late

Dear Editor:

I would like to address five issues arising out of the Accommodation Report/School Closures — Halton Board of Education.

Financially, everyone recognizes the need for fiscal restraint and the saving of our tax dollars, however, it is questionable as to whether school closures will in fact accomplish this.

The sale of Woodside Public School, for example, is expected to return \$900,000. In a \$285 million budget this represents 0.3 per cent of the total budget. Assuming the sale of other elementary schools would net about the same number of dollars, the overall sales of the 10 elementary schools recommended for closure would only amount to 3 per cent of the proposed 1996 budget.

This in itself is misleading because it does not factor in the extra costs of such things as busing, portables and repairs/renovation to the receiving schools. It should also be noted that the senior administration of the board earmarked the monies from the sale of schools for technology infrastructure and administrative technology systems. (Source: Media Release — Halton Board of Education March 28, 1996.) This means computers for the administrative operations of the board and not any realization of tax savings for taxpayers or direct classroom use of the money.

There is also a legal issue. The Ministry of Education and Training policy guidelines from the Capital Grant Plan, 1979 state that before any school building may be disposed of the board must include statements and supporting data to the effect that "the board will not require additional accommodation to replace that under consideration in the attendance area of the school within 10 years of the date of disposal." For example, the Accommodation Report indicates a shortage of 1,869 elementary pupil spaces in Oakville in five years.

In addition, the reliability of the demographic data in the report is questionable. At the Town of Oakville Council meeting on November 4, 1996, Lynne Gough, manager of long-range planning for the town, said that she had not been contacted

Citizen tells off person who dumped six kittens

Dear Editor:

This is a letter to the person who sometime on Friday, Nov. 1 or early Saturday morning dumped six black and white kittens in the garbage can at the car wash on Commercial Street.

Just to let you know, four died of exposure and starvation and two were found alive. They were unable to stand or walk due to starvation, but they were still alive.

Just to let you know, both are doing wonderful and coming along fine. They were taken by the Oakville Humane Society and put in a foster home until old enough to be placed up for adoption.

Just to let you know, I hope one day you need help or food or maybe just a warm place to stay, and that you remember what you did to those kittens when all they needed was the same.

C. Caldwell
Milton

by the board for any demographic data on established, new or neighbourhoods yet to be developed in Oakville.

Is this also the case for the city of Burlington and the towns of Milton and Halton Hills?

In addition, it should be noted that enrollment statistics were determined in school clusters and that the rationale for the clusters was not consistent across the report. For example, in Burlington, schools were clustered in groups of north, south and west and in Oakville the groups were north and south only.

If the same clustering is used in Oakville, the statistics reveal occupancy rates of 100 per cent in the east and 118 per cent in the west (using Trafalgar Road as the line of division).

Oakville currently has 38 per cent of the total portable inventory owned by the board (71 portables in a total of 188).

To accommodate the surplus, 1,869 students would require an additional 75 portables or the equivalent of four elementary schools. Milton will require one new elementary school of the current grade configuration is maintained. A new elementary school will cost \$6 million. Five schools will cost \$30 million. Where will the board find these funds when the province has a moratorium on capital spending?

When schools close, communities lose playing fields, greenspace, community meeting places, services such as daycare and perhaps, most importantly, a sense of neighbourhood and community. People do not wish to live in under-served areas. What will be the impact on local stores and businesses?

These are an opportunity to ensure that no closures occur and the correct decisions are made. Nothing is decided until the trustees vote.

Call them at 335-3663 to ask what other alternatives were considered before school closures were recommended (the report does not say). Tell them how you feel about your schools, your community and your tax dollar.

Cheryl Christoffersen
Oakville



from the staff of:

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