

## **Rick Malboeuf vs. Milton Canadian Champion**

The National NewsMedia Council has dismissed a complaint centred on an exchange of letters to the editor in the Milton Canadian Champion.

Rick Malboeuf said his letter to the editor about a town council committee decision against an election expenses audit was edited with his consent and posted. It prompted a member of the community to write a letter in response, which contained contradictions to the complainant's statements. Both letters were vetted for libel by the paper's lawyer.

The complainant submitted a second letter to refute what he described as errors that malign his reputation. The editor declined to publish the rebuttal in print, though an online rebuttal was accepted. The editor decided no further letters about the audit issue would be published pending outcome of an appeal against the audit decision.

In dismissing the complaint, the NewsMedia Council noted the editor of the newspaper took proper steps in handling the letters in question, including having the letters reviewed for potential libel. Newspapers have the latitude to select which letters to the editor to publish, and in this case offered an alternate venue via the website.

While journalism standards require that the subjects of serious allegations must have fair opportunity to comment or respond, the contradictions cited rely on he-said, she-said exchanges about procedural issues and verbal reports.

**Article:** "Milton councilor believes committee got it wrong"

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