

# THE GEMINI

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## Town to lease 125 Pentium computers

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK  
The Georgetown Gemini

Halton Hills will no longer own its computers but, in what the Treasurer called a "fairly dramatic change in policy," will instead lease them in an effort to save money and allow the Town to outfit most of its staff with current technology.

Although the majority of councillors accepted the concept of leasing and not owning the computers and laser printers, they balked at replacing the Town's existing 131 computers with state-of-the-art Pentium 133 models.

Councillor Norm Elliott, a long-time critic of what he called the Town's "worship" of computers, argued that the plan to lease 153 Pentiums was a "Cadillac" proposal — one that would be very hard to sell to taxpayers and one that didn't show "one iota of restraint."

He convinced councillors to reduce the number of new computers to be leased to 125 from 153 and to reassign some of the more powerful computers that the Town bought in the past two years, a move he predicts will save approximately \$20,000 a year.

"That's more than generous," Elliott said, adding, "you've heard of a chicken in every pot. Well, we don't need a Pentium on every desk."

Ward 2 Councillor Kevin Kuiack also convinced councillors to reduce the number

of laser printers to be replaced to 20 from 30 for additional savings, arguing that 10 of the Town's existing 29 printers must still be acceptable.

In defense of the lease proposal, Koopmans said the present financial environment has resulted in attractive lease rates and leasing will allow the Town to acquire improved technology for all staff at one time. That, he said, will increase efficiency and eliminate many incompatibility problems the Town now has with staff using different models and software.

Part of the leasing plan includes disposal of the Town's existing computers, and although the leasing company offered the Town \$35,000 to take them away, Town officials are confident they will be able to get more for the surplus equipment if it is offered to the public.

### Forcible confinement charge

A 32-year-old Norval man faces a variety of charges following an incident in his Norval home.

Police report that they were called to the home after a female resident complained that she was forcibly detained by the man, threatened with death, an assaulted, between 2-4 am, Nov. 22.

The man faces charges of forcible confinement, assault, uttering death threats, cruelty to animals and mischief.

He was held for bail.



**BLEAK OUTLOOK:** Local farmer Ross Britton of Dublin Line sits on his tractor, accompanied by his two dogs. Consecutive bad growing seasons have left area farmers 'frustrated but optimistic.' (Eve Martin photo)

## Crop concerns continue for area farmers

Three seasons of bad weather have left area farmers "frustrated but optimistic" according to a crop and soil adviser with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

"It's not a happy picture and I hate to be a whiner and complainer," Richard Hendry recently.

"Farmers are farmers because they like to run their own business, work for themselves, work outdoors and grow crops but this has certainly not been a great year to brag about — it's one we would like to forget about."

Last year's long, cold and hard winter led to a late, wet

and cool spring and that led to late planting. Hendry said for many crops that has meant low yields, pests and damaged fields.

"We had a lot of corn and soya beans going in very late and consequently we've got corn that didn't reach physiological maturity before the first killing frost," Hendry said, noting that the corn has been very slow to dry down after harvest with farmers using a high amount of energy to dry the corn before storing it.

"We've got bushel weights of corn that are down significantly and we expect lower

than normal weight for soya beans still to be harvested," Hendry said, adding that some farmers struggling to get the crop off are "mudding it out" and causing damage to the fields with harvesting equipment.

Hendry said they are also expecting lower-than-average yields for mixed grains and the number of acres planted in winter wheat is down significantly, partly due to the fact that the wheat is planted after the soya beans, which in many cases haven't yet been harvested.

Hendry said last year's long, cold winter and Janu-

ary thaw resulted in severe winter kill in alfalfa and winter wheat.

"We didn't have any spring and the hay crop was delayed because of the wet weather and at the same time feed supplies in the barn were at an all-time low and the weather wouldn't let us get into the field and get the wheat off."

Hendry said that was compounded by problems getting corn and soya into the ground. When the wheat was harvested it was diseased and graded lower than normal which meant lower prices.

See *FRUSTRATING*, Page 3

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