

THE GEMINI

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Chief gets one new firefighter

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
The Georgetown Gemini

An impassioned plea for more fire fighting staff convinced Town councillors to approve the hiring of one of two requested fire prevention officers-firefighters proposed in this year's operating budget.

Although staff recommended no additional staff be hired for any department, Fire Chief Bill Cunningham was allowed to make his pitch at Thursday's budget meeting.

Cunningham told councillors he was "concerned about our ability to provide adequate fire protection from a staffing point of view, and every year I become more concerned about it."

To back up his request for the extra staff, Cunningham pointed to an Ontario Fire Marshal Office survey which led to a Master Fire Plan recommending full-time firefighters for the day shift by 2000.

In the last five years, dealing with only the Maple Avenue fire station, there has been a 22 per cent decrease in the number of part-time firefighters that respond in the day time, a 17 per cent increase in the number of fire calls and a 20 per cent increase in population.

Only two additional firefighters have been hired since the survey was done in 1989. The Town currently has five full-time firefighters whose primary job is fire preven-

tion, 35 volunteer firefighters in Acton and 45 in Georgetown.

Cunningham also noted that because of the economy, one company that used to allow four employees to leave work to fight fires, now only allows one employee to answer daytime fire calls.

Although several councillors wanted to defer the budget request until additional information was available, the budget committee voted to hire one additional staff person, which will add \$12,000 to this year's budget and result in an annualized cost of \$40,700.

That addition and several other minor changes, means councillors are now looking at a 1.72 per cent mill rate increase - an increase of \$8.36 for an average residential property which paid \$485.95 in Town taxes last year.

Budget talks continue this week.



SPEEDSTERS: Cub Scouts from around Georgetown gathered Saturday morning for their annual Cub Car rally, at St. Andrew's United Church. Jordan Cadllwar, 8, and Brett Kirton, 8, both of Limehouse, hold the cars they made for the race which involved most Cubs from the Georgetown area. (Jamie Harrison photo)

Gold for school bands

The Centennial Middle School Concert and Stage Bands reached for the golden ring and came back victorious last weekend, from the Southeastern Ontario Regional competitions of Music Fest Canada.

Paul Brisley, director of the bands, was extremely proud of his young charges, who now have a shot at competing on a national level at the Music Fest finals in Ottawa-Hull in May.

The 90 member Concert Band and 28 member Stage Band won gold at the St. Catherine's competition, which saw participants play three contrasting songs, all to standard; either gold, silver or bronze.

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Neilson to close Georgetown plant

One hundred full-time and approximately 35 part-time employees of Neilson Dairy were shocked to learn on Monday that they will lose their jobs as the company ceases milk production at its Guelph Street facility.

The jobs of 60 office staff and those of Neilson drivers will not be affected by the plant closing, which will begin with layoffs starting in May and continue until production ceases totally by March 1998.

Neilson Dairy is a major player in the billion dollar Ontario fluid milk market. The Georgetown facility, built in 1993 and

dubbed "The Superplant" by the Dairy Record, is a state-of-the-art plant with world-class technological features and advanced computer automation. It serves Metro Toronto and Southern Ontario, produces approximately 200 million litres of milk annually.

In an interview on Tuesday, Company President Robert Burch said the employees - members of the Teamsters Union - were shocked by the news because there had been no hint of the corporate decision, made approximately two weeks

See NEILSON'S, Page 3

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