

Holmes rejects fire chief job Buikema - Holmes district chiefs

Mick Holmes, long-time Acton Fire Chief, turned down the job of Halton Hills Fire Chief, on January 2, it was revealed at the Halton Hills first regular meeting, Monday night.

After an hour's bristling debate, council offered Mr. Holmes the job of District Chief of Acton Fire Area and made a similar offer to Ken Buikema, past chief of Georgetown Fire Department, for the twin position with the Georgetown Fire Area.

This leaves the position of Fire Chief of Halton Hills vacant.

Over the objections of Councillors Ric Morrow and

Harry Levy, council voted later in the evening to pay Mr. Holmes, if he accepts the job, the same salary as was earned by the Georgetown Fire Chief, just over \$12,000.

The debate was touched off by an administrative committee recommendation which stated, "since Mr. W. Holmes has declined the position of Halton Hills Fire Chief, we recommend that the position be offered to Ken Buikema, and a new position of full-time Deputy Fire Chief be offered to Mr. Holmes."

A motion by councillors Len Cox and Mike Armstrong asked the recommendation be rejected by council.

Councillor Ric Morrow said he backed the administration committee recommendation, since he wanted to establish policies for one town, and there should be one over-all top man. "It would be ludicrous any other way, we could end up with two mayors with equal authority."

He said the establishment of two district chiefs would tend to divide the municipality.

"One chief would be responsible for a smaller area than the other", said Morrow. He emphasized they had advertised for a fire chief, "the man chosen declined, and asked to be con-

sidered for the position of Deputy Chief". He then asked for a recorded vote on the rejection of the committee's recommendation.

Councillor Russell Miller agreed with Morrow, saying they should not defeat the administration committee's recommendation.

Councillor Roy Booth, chairman of the General Administration committee, said the council-elect had provided for three full-time paid men, one fire chief, and two district chiefs. He said the man offered the job declined, and offered to read the letter from Mr. Holmes to make the situation clear to everyone.

Mr. Holmes thanked council for their faith in him in offering him the job, and said he was willing to do his best, but since then he had been subjected to severe criticism. "In the present circumstances I feel my acceptance would defeat the purpose of the fire department", he stated. Mr. Holmes went on to ask that he be considered for position of deputy-chief.

"To offer Mr. Buikema the job now would be an affront, and would put Mr. Holmes in a secondary position", contended Councillor Booth.

He suggested two district chiefs be hired and a committee set up to select a chief, through examinations.

Councillor Pat McKenzie

pointed out there was no such position as deputy chief established. "We have had an excellent fire protection system in years past," said Mr. McKenzie. He stated too much emphasis has been placed on written examinations, and claimed leadership was more important. "I support the volunteer brigade who have done an excellent job under Mick Holmes."

His voice rising, Mr. McKenzie said, "I deplore one councillor's actions which practically forced him to resign, and this councillor's immaturity and lack of control." Mr. McKenzie claimed Mr. Holmes' appointment was not political, but based on competence. He said in an effort to resolve the matter, he would support the amendment to hire two separate district chiefs.

Councillor Les Duby expressed regret that Mr. Holmes felt he had to decline, and blamed the situation on a premature reaction by the public. "I call it defamation of this man's character, before the whole situation could be discussed."

Mr. Duby said he would support two district chiefs, based on discussions with other fire departments. "It stands to reason that anyone who has been fire chief for 13 years and a member of the brigade for 25 years is more than comparable with



COUNCILLORS PAT MCKENZIE, Harry Levy, Les Duby and Roy Booth repeat the oath of allegiance at the inaugural meeting of Halton Hills council Thursday afternoon.

Call tenders Lions pool

After tenders are opened Jan. 29, work on the Lions centennial swimming pool will begin as soon as possible. The work should be started March 1 at the latest, according to Lion president Art Gordon, and the pool should be ready in three months, making their goal June 1.

One of the reasons for urgency is the LIP grant available and men must have started work under this scheme by Feb. 25.

The canvass will definitely begin Feb. 1, according to Mr. Gordon. The club members are hoping to have a vacant downtown store available to use as headquarters for the canvass of the whole town and area.

Plans proceeded Monday at a meeting at the high school attended by principal Dave Katz, school system representatives Reg Irish and Jim Evans, and Art Gordon, Don Gordon and Don Murdy of the Lions. One of the matters discussed was the water table at the site and possible ways of counteracting it. It is possible that swimming pool bottom could lift when it's emptied for cleaning, if precautionary measures aren't taken now.

The tender call appears in today's paper as well as other district weekly and daily papers, with the deadline stated as Jan. 29 at noon.



ADDRESSING THE inaugural meeting of the new Halton Hills Council Thursday, former Acton mayor, now councillor Les Duby reviewed the progress made by members in working together over the past six to 12 weeks and called for continued effort to work together in the new organizational structure. Back of Councillor Duby are Regional Chairman Alan Masson and M.P.P. Jim Snow. In the foreground are Councillor G. W. McKenzie and Councillor Harry Levy. Deputy Clerk Delmar French is at the front of the chambers.

Winter walk for wild fowl

The swans and ducks at Fairy Lake will soon be walked over to the other side of the lake for the winter, according to Harold Townsley. The birds have been keeping a patch of water open with the heat of their bodies on the north arm of the lake beside the arena.

A bubbler is in operation at the south arm, where they'll be relocated for the cold weather. Mr. Townsley hopes to catch the swans and carry them over but the ducks will fly over, he expects. Their

wooden houses will be relocated and feeding should keep them happy at the new spot.

Safer

The open patch in the north arm will then freeze over, making the area safer for skaters and snowmobilers.

The Canada geese haven't been around lately, perhaps because the patch of water open isn't big enough for them. Mr. Townsley expects they might return to the new location, or else not make an appearance again here till spring.

Tennis club at Speyside

Residents in the Speyside area have obtained approval for the use of Speyside public school's indoor tennis facilities on Monday nights. If response warrants, it is hoped approval for another night could also be obtained.

Many new people have moved into the Acton-Esqueving area but have no means of meeting with others in an organized way. It is hoped that a mixed tennis club for beginners and seasoned tennis buffs could be arranged in one hour time slots during these winter

months. A good response will no doubt result in a successful social tennis club.

Anyone interested in further information, please call Mrs. Katherine Fee, 853-2639.

Promise law enforcement

There are "lots of complaints" about operation of snowmobiles these days, say the officers of Acton O.P.P. detachment. "And there'll be lots of enforcement, too," they warn.

Second night school term registration is 100

Close to 100 registered at the high school Tuesday evening for the next session of night school classes. The figure was considered very good, being more than half the number registered for the fall term. There is always a significant drop after Christmas.

There are five courses, which will begin soon, with one of them—yoga—completely filled already. Instructor in this popular course is again Mrs. M. Gray. Yoga begins Wed., Jan. 16.

Another repeat from the fall is the interior design and decoration class. Instructor Mrs. Alice Pokhuda of Georgetown can take more, the group meets Wednesdays.

Typing is continuing with a new instructor, Mrs. Bradley of Georgetown. Mrs. Betty Lou Bowden, the previous teacher, has moved to Toronto. This is another Wednesday class.

Fitness and recreation with Bruce Andrews begins Jan. 21 and more would be welcomed.

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HALTON HILLS Council held its inaugural meeting Thursday afternoon in the former Esqueving Council Chambers. Clerk D. Pritchard, right, administered the oath of office to new Halton Hills Mayor Tom Hill.

Keep our volunteer brigade former warden urges

When the dust had settled after the stormy debate at Halton Hills council, Monday night on the fire department positions, and Ken Buikema and Mick Holmes had been offered the positions of Dis-

trict Fire Chief for Georgetown, and District Fire Chief for Acton areas, respectively, H. I. (Bert) Hinton, former warden of Halton County and past reeve of Acton asked to address council.

He noted that the 1973 fire budget for Georgetown and Esqueving was \$100,900, and the Acton district budget was \$23,000.

He contrasted the proposed budget for 1974 for Georgetown-Esqueving, which he claimed totalled \$525,000 and called for between eight and ten fulltime men at a cost of \$100,000.

He claimed this would be a first step toward a fulltime paid brigade with a budget over a million dollars. He termed it "an unbearable tax burden".

He urged the volunteer system be kept intact, with paid district chiefs and a limit of two or three fulltime paid men.

He suggested council do not appoint a "registered fire chief" at this time, and the present chiefs carry on under a committee of Halton Hills council.

He said council should advertise and review applications for a fire chief, with applicants to write examinations in order to meet the standards of the Ontario Fire Marshal's office. He said they should qualify in personality and physical fitness.

Mr. Hinton urged the candidates be given time to prepare themselves for the tests.

Eric Balkind spoke to council and commented "You've had a hard time tonight". He said since council had a letter of his signed by nine other residents he would not read the whole letter.

He said he was interested in having a technically qualified person as fire chief, who has the ability to speak out directly. "We don't want a yes man on a job like this", he remarked.

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It's the week for inaugurals

Inaugural meetings of Halton Hills, Milton, Eramosa and Erin townships were attended by reporters for this paper during the week. Free Press coverage now extends to include the Milton meetings since Nassagaweya township is included.

Monday nights will be a regular date for reporters. Halton Hills committee meetings and regular meetings will alternate on Monday. Three committee meetings will be held at the same time, requiring three of the staff to be there to record the decision-making process for the public.

Start up again at Legion site

Work at the new Legion hall, delayed by weather and holidays, started up again this week. Most of the required materials are on order and will be arriving soon, the Legion committee members expect.

Four collisions, thefts in weekly OPP report

There were four car collisions investigated by Acton O.P.P. in town this week and three thefts.

Jan. 2 Edgar-Le Blanc, R. R. 1, Acton, reported theft of a car stereo and 12 tapes, valued at \$220, from his car in the Dominion Hotel parking lot.

Jan. 3 the theft of three sweaters from a locker in the arena was reported.

A local man was charged with impaired driving Jan. 6.

Jan. 7 John Price, Main N., reported the theft of a throttle cable from a snowmobile.

The first of the week's accidents happened Jan. 3 at 12:25 p.m. on Bower Ave. The car driven by Walter McEachern, R.R. 2, Rockwood, struck a tree while westbound on Bower. He had minor injuries and damage to the car was estimated at \$200.

On Jan. 5 at 12:45 a.m. a hit and run accident occurred at the Dominion Hotel lot. The

car owned by Darlene Cuthbert, Glen Williams, had estimated \$100 damage.

Also Jan. 5 at 7 p.m. another hit and run occurred at Church and Elgin when David Papillon's car received \$125 estimated damage.

There was a two-car collision Jan. 6 on Arthur St. The car owned by Jim Higgins, Arthur St., had \$250 estimated damage and the car owned by Gordon Flewelling, Belwood, \$200.



ACTON'S FIRST BABY for '74 is beautiful, angelic Ann Marie Lucas who checked in at the Guelph General hospital on Jan. 3 at 2:29 a.m. as the first offspring of Elmer and Grace Lucas of 192 Churchill Rd. S. The couple have lived in Acton for two and one-half years and Elmer is employed at Ajax Engineers Ltd.

Ann Marie Lucas New Year baby

Did Grace and Elmer Lucas of 192 Churchill Road anticipate being the parents of Acton's first '74 offspring?

Not according to mother Grace who said they had never even thought about it. The young mother said she and her husband were just as surprised as anyone and it hadn't occurred to them until Sunday night when Elmer was in conversation with another new pater at the waiting room of the Guelph General Hospital, maternity section.

Walter Holbiski of 79

Churchill Road was the other proud father who raised the question of competition in the race for '74 supremacy. His wife Susan had her baby a few hours later at the same hospital at 8:30 a.m. on the same date of Thursday, January 3. Ann Marie Lucas had checked in at 2:29 a.m., six hours earlier, weighing 7 pounds, 8 ounces.

Girl wanted

The Lucas's have lived in Acton for two and one-half years and, according to Grace, their little daughter will be a welcomed addition to both sets of grandparents

as there has already been an overabundance of boys in the families.

The happy grandparents of Ann Marie are Mr. and Mrs. Fred Gillespie of Orangeville who have eight grandchildren and Mr. and Mrs. Carl Lucas of Marsville, who boast fourteen.

Dr. Moore was the local doctor in charge of production and, although her new baby is the first for her and her husband, Grace Lucas, with all her nieces and nephews has the required experience to handle the position of motherhood efficiently.