

# Strong, viable Halton Hills seen by Pat McKenzie

Editor of Acton Free Press, Acton, Ontario.

As the new council of Halton Hills is working to consolidate the interests, needs and concerns of the three former municipalities it has been encouraging to note the way in which you and your staff are endeavoring to keep the people informed and still give the new council an opportunity to prove itself.

The council, the committees and the staff are busy, very busy but it is not an easy matter to knit three municipalities into one cohesive unit. Enclosed are a few facts that are not readily available to your readers which may eliminate some misunderstandings.

## FOUR AREAS IN THE REGION OF HALTON:

When it became evident that Regional Government would be established in Halton County the majority of councillors in the county supported a two tier system of local government with three local areas. Bill 151 created four areas and perhaps some day this will prove a wise decision. I know the

former council in Acton favored three areas. However that is history now.

It is council's responsibility now to provide the ratepayers of Halton Hills with the most economical services.

If one felt that it was wrong to have four areas in the Region of Halton how can you justify a fifth area for Acton and vicinity? Consider for a moment the financial struggle to provide the necessary services with a small assessment and a tax rate that had already climbed to 86.5 mills.

How long will it take for all of us to realize that Acton, Esqueping and Georgetown are now wards in our new town and that council is working in the best interests of the entire area. Surely one does not expect this new council to be in mutual agreement in all the major decisions that must be made. I see no reason, given time, why Halton Hills cannot develop and grow into one strong viable area. The new council has already made considerable progress in that direction.

## INCREASED RATES FOR CEMETERY PLOTS

Previous councils were using tax dollars

## Councillor presents his explanations

to maintain our cemeteries. In 1972 we used \$2560.00 from taxes to maintain municipally owned cemeteries. In Ward I we had not revised our rates for plots or services since 1969. Therefore it was necessary, as we consolidated our former policies in Halton Hills to establish new rates. Rates that might permit us to operate without using tax dollars and protect the taxpayers from people outside the town who may wish to use our facilities. I'm sure most will agree that it was also the proper time to establish one set of rates for all municipality-owned cemeteries within the town limits.

## STAFF FOR NEW TOWN

Since Bill 151 clearly stated that all former employees must be guaranteed a position for at least one year the council placed the staff from the three former municipalities where the majority of council felt that their capabilities would best serve Halton Hills. If we have erred adjustments can and will be made as we gain more information about the needs of the new town and assess individual capabilities of staff. We did increase our

engineering department. This can be justified when you realize that wards 1 and 2 hired consulting engineers to plan and supervise their projects.

## TWO FIRE CHIEFS

Some people have expressed concern because we have a fire chief for each fire area. They would not know that originally the council planned to hire three men (a fire chief and two assistants.) When Mr. Holmes resigned as fire chief of Halton Hills, and I respect his decision, council engaged a fire chief for each fire area. In my opinion this is a good arrangement and if it continues to serve the needs of the people then we have saved the taxpayers the salary (\$12,000 - \$15,000) of one paid fireman.

## INTERIM LEVY

Recently the taxpayers received their interim levy and since the amount requested was about the same as last year in Ward I some people might think we used Acton's tax levy. In 1973 the Acton council collected 30 mills as their interim levy. This year the act stated that we could not collect more than 50 per cent of the lowest levy. Last year

the tax levies were: Acton 86.5; Georgetown 73.93 and Esqueping 60.58. This year council levied 50 per cent of the Esqueping levy for 1973 which is 30 mills. It has been mentioned earlier that the delay was caused, not by staff or council from Halton Hills, but rather from the assessment department.

Assessment for 1974: Our assessment is as follows: Ward I, \$10,247,250; Ward II, \$18,901,170; Ward III and IV, \$37,559,094; and with a small assessment from the former Oakville area our total is \$67,220,680. This means that a mill in the new town will raise \$67,220.00. Last year when Acton prepared its budget our mill would raise \$9,315.00.

For staff and council alike that is a big adjustment. But I can assure you that, as we prepare our budget for 1974, the treasury department under Mr. Lloyd Peterson, the finance committee and the council of Halton Hills will have the best interests of the new town and the taxpayers when the tax rate is struck.

Can you recall the concerns of the people when the County Board of Education was established? I can as I was personally in-

involved. Yet in the past few years the School Board has been able to greatly improve the facilities for education in Halton Hills, provide a more uniform quality of learning and still reduce the tax rate for education in the Acton area. If their tax levy increases this year it will be largely due to the rapid rate of inflation in which we live today.

The council of Halton Hills is forced to establish itself under the same high inflationary measures, with only a slight increase in assessment from 1973 and an average mill rate for last year of 73.3 mills.

Mr. Editor, I am not a champion of Regional Government but with the rapid growth which is taking place in Peel and Halton Counties some changes were inevitable.

What changes? Planning, transportation, police, water and waste disposal to mention a few concerns. With strong ties to Ward I, our former town, I still maintain that we must give our new town an opportunity to develop along lines that will best provide necessary services and meet the needs of the people concerned. To this goal I pledge, along with other councillors, my full support.

Garnet W. McKenzie

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## Last mayor honored

Acton's last mayor Les Dudy is Citizen of the Year for centennial.

A Chamber of Commerce committee selected him Tuesday night and went to inform him, but couldn't find him at home. And there were no Halton Hills council meetings. Unusual!

"I'm not parochial!" said Les when they finally located him - in Georgetown.

Les and Alice Dudy, son Laurie with wife Mary Lou and their baby Tommy of St. Catharines had gone over to visit nephew Bob Dudy, wife Marcell and their new baby, Brad. They'd just decided to let the babies get to know each other.

Here Les protested in vain as the Chamber representatives assured him he was to be the guest of honor at the dinner Saturday, April 20.

In municipal life here 15 years, Les has been mayor for the past 11 and was elected area councillor for the new town of Halton Hills. Always affable and approachable, he recently has admitted he's somewhat disillusioned with the new governmental systems. He's with Beardmore, and is a particularly active member of St. Alban's church and choir.

The first of many congratulations to our former mayor today!



**NAMED Citizen of the Year Tuesday, Les Dudy is pictured happily welcoming crowds to the international hockey tourney here March 22.**

## Hold Holy Week services at Knox

Sponsored by the clergy association, non-denominational Holy Week services will be held this Sunday evening, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings of next week. Each year these services draw together Christians from all congregations, but an innovation this year is the inter-church 60-voice choir.

Three organists, Betty Oakes, George Elliott and Ted Hansen, have been involved with the choir and its

practices. It includes a good number of singers from Churchhill community church as well as from the town groups.

Guest preacher for the three services is U. of Toronto chaplain for the Christian Reformed church the Rev. Morris Greidanus. He was here as guest in 1969. He came as a teenager from Amsterdam to Edmonton, and earned his degrees at Calvin College and Seminary.

Grand Rapids, Michigan. He did post-graduate work in Holland and was pastor at Medicine Hat before becoming university chaplain for McMaster and Toronto. His subject is The Christ and the Devil - The Deep Dimensions of the Suffering and Victory of Christ.

All services are at Knox church and begin at 7.30 with an organ recital by Dr. George Elliott until 7.50. Then a hymn sing will follow, led by Ted Hansen and Les Dudy.

## Want senior citizens' apts. at downtown Legion site

Ontario Housing Corporation is very much interested in building a four or five storey senior citizens' apartment complex on the

site of the present Canadian Legion hall in Acton, it was revealed at Halton Hills council Monday night.

A Legion delegation at-

tended the meeting to further their intention of extending services to the Esqueping portion of their subdivision adjacent to the new hall off

Mill St. West in Acton, revealed they had been negotiating with officials of Ontario Housing for use of the site and property they own

behind it.

The O.H.C. is also interested in other nearby property to construct a large senior citizens' development.

The Acton Legion property is on Main St. S. in the town's main business section, close to services and shopping. It consists of the legion hall, parking lot and house fronting on Willow St.

"We hope to dispose of the downtown property," Legion building chairman Gord McCutcheon told council, "and we have been negotiating with the O.H.C. since late last year."

Excellent place Two unsolicited offers for the property had been received but the Legion offered it to the O.H.C. for less than the lower of the two offers because they believe it would make an excellent place for senior citizens. The O.H.C. purchasing power is

limited to a maximum figure based on the number of units possible.

O.H.C. officials were delighted at the opportunity to purchase the property for a senior citizens' development. Mr. McCutcheon told this newspaper. They get few opportunities to purchase as desirable a location. If the demand is not there now for senior citizen accommodation then they would likely keep it in their hand bank until the demand is there.

Legion attempts to get involved in the project were rebuffed by the O.H.C. which pointed out they were financed by both the province and the federal government. The Legion may get involved in furnishing the apartments but that is still in the future, Mr. McCutcheon said. Officials of the Ontario Housing Corporation were not available for comment.



**NEW CAR OR \$3,000 is the choice facing Bruce Barber, top winner in the 400 Club draw at the Legion Saturday. Wife Flora and organizer Don Lindsay share the stage at the climax of the**

evening. The Barbers two days later decided they'd take the \$3,000 in cash instead of the car. Other winners were announced during the evening of draws and dancing.

## Budget in six weeks says finance chairman

Halton hills will likely have a budget within the next six weeks if all the pieces in the financial jigsaw fit together, finance committee chairman G.W. (Pat) McKenzie told this newspaper.

The auditors have almost completed their work with the 1973 budgets of the three former municipalities of Acton, Georgetown and Esqueping and should have a presentation ready for the finance committee to work with next Monday, Mr. McKenzie said. The committee needs the consolidated report to hammer out a 1974 budget.

But that doesn't solve all the problems. The committee

must then gather in all budget requests, wait for the region (the grant structure is not set up yet) and amounts of start-up grants are not yet available, before the budget can be set.

"We are progressing as rapidly as we can," the finance chairman said. They were urged to more vigorous efforts by Councillor Booth Monday.

Meanwhile Halton Hills can get by on the interim levies collected for some time. There may be two more interim levies but not more than three, the chairman thought.

Mr. McKenzie said

members of council had visited Richmond Hill this week and the treasurer there said they'd be lucky to have a budget by August if experience there during the first year of regional government was any criterion. This date was bandied around by Councillors Booth and McKenzie at Monday's meeting of council but the finance chairman is confident they can come up with a budget in six weeks.

The proposed budget must go to the committee of the whole and then to council before it can be approved. "This way everyone has the opportunity to see the budget before it is passed," he explained.

## Bruce Barber takes 400 club \$3,000

Four hundred names were drawn Saturday night from a drum in the climax of the annual 400 club draw at the Legion. A crowd filled the hall for the elimination draw which ended with Bruce Barber, Mason Blvd., the big winner of the Maverick by L. and I. Ford or the cash equivalent.

In the running with him till the very end were second last and \$100 winner Frank Pappilon, third last and \$75 richer Marg Creasey, fourth last for

\$50 John Lockery and fourth last for \$25 Ron Weldon.

Bruce Barber, who was bartending at the curling club, was phoned and came over to the Legion hall with his wife Flora for the exciting last few minutes of the draw.

Monday night the Barbers decided to take the \$3,000 cash rather than the new car. Bruce has belonged to the 400 Club since it began, and has had a bit of experience at

being the big winner. Last year he took the \$500 in the Minor Sports baseball draw. He works at Ajax.

The new car, which had been ordered through L. and I. Ford, hadn't arrived yet this week anyway.

20 winners Of the 400 in the club, 20 shared the wealth Saturday. First name drawn John Robson received \$100 to start off the night. Then every 25th name got another \$10 and

these were Arlie White, John Turkosz, Les Dudy, John Krapek, Moe Johnson, Denis Gibbons, Kevin Conroy, Rheta Goodwin, Pete Turkosz, Adele Nolan, Bill Davies, Ann Mulder, Bill Coon, Ken Marshall and Doreen Lindsay.

The 400 Club annually nets about \$5,000 to run six rep teams in the Acton Ontario Minor Hockey Association for a year. Best of the money goes for weekly and final cash prizes.

## Acton Billiards closes this week

Acton Billiards is closed this week. Owner Mac Jerama, his lease up, has retired and he and his wife Pearl are moving from Acton to Hamilton. They have been in business here for the past nine years.

Mr. Jerama is moving his equipment out this week.

Plans for the building are not known. It's the former Roxy theatre, and many of the young people say they'd like to have a show in town again. After the Roxy closed the building

was renovated as a restaurant for a while.

## Marijuana charge laid

An out-of-town man was charged with possession of marijuana by Acton police March 31 at 12.10 a.m. The incident occurred on Mill St. E. He will appear in court on April 10.

## Halton Hills to trim capital budget

Halton Hills Council will face some heavy slashing when it reviews the capital budget.

Halton Hills requested about \$4,400,000 to be debentured by the Region of Halton for projects in Halton Hills.

Regional Public Works Committee suggested during a budget meeting Monday that those forecasts be trimmed by \$880,000. Of the \$4,400,000 budget, about half was recreation and

"soft" services. The committee approved \$35,000 for a well development in Acton, plus \$1,250,000 for the construction of a water pollution control plant in Georgetown. Those projects are regional responsibilities.

Projects deemed to be Halton Hills responsibilities include \$100,000 for a hydro project; \$300,000 for an addition to the Georgetown Library; \$286,000 for road work; \$172,000 for storm

sewers and \$300,000 for the fire department.

Other projects include \$100,000 for an arena roof in Acton; \$500,000 for an indoor pool in Georgetown; \$150,000 for an indoor pool in Acton; \$100,000 for a mini-computer and \$1,055,000 for an arena, theatre and community hall complex.

The committee suggested Halton Hills cut out \$880,000 worth of capital work for the

year. Councillor Ernie Sykes told the committee his council was being pressured to provide a wide variety of recreation services.

He noted part of the town's problem came from the amalgamation of three areas into one under regional government.

Committee members compared the capital budget from Halton Hills to the Oakville forecast, pointing out that Oakville's budget is just

slightly higher than the Halton Hills forecast.

Committee chairman Jack Raftis of Burlington reminded Sykes that Oakville had about twice the population and four times the assessment of Halton Hills. He and others warned Sykes of the grave implications the heavy budget would have for Halton Hills.

Halton Hills council will review the capital budget and the committee's requests for cuts.

## Acton pool inches closer

A few more hurdles in the way of the Acton swimming pool were cleared Monday night, when Halton Hills council passed a bylaw to execute an agreement with Con-Dign Ltd., of Guelph, authorizing the borrowing of \$100,000 from the Main Street branch of Canadian Bank of

Commerce. Council also passed a construction bylaw for the pool.

Councillor Roy Booth pointed out the town did not intend to spend that amount. "We're still figuring on \$50,000 of the town's money, but by allowing that much we are protected," he remarked.

## Woman is principal

Barbara Rennie of Georgetown has been appointed as a principal within the Halton Board of Education system. Mrs. Rennie taught in Stewarttown and Pineview schools in Esqueping before being named vice-principal at Robert Little School in Acton last year.

She has been in Halton County since 1968 and has been involved in a wide variety of committees and study groups.

## Branch falls power off

There were five vehicle collisions in town this week, the most spectacular at noon on April Fool's Day. A truck driven by Robert Coates struck a tree on Bower Ave. and a limb crashed down on the vehicle. Power was disrupted to two houses. The hydro men used their hoist to get the big branch off the truck, owned by L. and L. Ford, and traffic was blocked for a while at noon hour.

The police report on the incident was not yet complete at press time since the investigating officer is off for a couple of days.

Two Sunday Sunday afternoon at Acton Blvd. and Peel St. a collision involved cars driven by William Finley, 176 Churchill Rd., and Sandra Palmer, 99 Main N. The Finley car had estimated \$200 damage, the Palmer car \$350.