



**Sideroad 5**  
with Jennifer Barn

There's a lot to be said about having a weekly chance to express your opinions, as in this column. This week I'm on my soap box.

My father used to call it "Quality of Workmanship". Now at 34, I'm beginning to see a lot of wisdom in the paternal words I used to roll my eyes about. Either I'm getting older very rapidly or they just don't make things like they used to.

I'm referring to the multitude of gadgets and appliances one needs to run an average household. We've never been terribly gadget conscious, (correction: I've never been so, but Mack loves anything that goes wrrr, requires its buttons pushing, and costs over a hundred dollars).

However, we do own things like fridges, stoves, sewing machines and vacuum cleaners. These things eventually break down permanently and require replacement, especially after 14 years of marriage—I'm thinking of doing that myself.

I rarely mind living with a vacuum held together by electrical tape, running on one wheel and puffing as much as it sucks. Or a stove cooking on two burners. Or a fridge that opens with a screwdriver. Or a sewing machine that gets stuck in high gear racing up seams and fingers at 60 miles an hour.

Once in a while, Mack surprises me with a new appliance, always an expensive new-fangled job with its full quota of things that go ping. Like my father, he says it never pays to buy cheap—you get what you pay for. Sure, you do.

Once upon a time that saying was so right but it ain't no more. The old appliances we got when first married, some of which were ten years older than the marriage, seem much stronger and better made than the items costing four, six, or eight times as much today. They may not have had all the wonderful add-ons, but kept running even when sick.

My ancient Inglis washer, purchased for \$40, washed two or three loads a day for five years including horse blankets, rugs, farm coats, and stuffed toys. The fancy later model, replacing the still-running Inglis, died after many illnesses in two years.

Most of the recent model machines are totally plastic—and brittle plastic at that. Have you seen a newer fridge with all its drawers and shelves in one piece lately? No, they split and break in no time. My old fridge may not have had a handle, but at twenty some years of age it had most of its heavy shelves intact and all of its drawers. And it had never stopped running!

Have you looked closely at an electric mixer these days? It'll toss its beaters across the room if you give it a stiff egg to whip. My mom had an ancient Sunbeam you could crunch bone with. It ate its share of metal spatulas (none of these weak-kneed plastic stir sticks), chewed up many a wooden spoon and never faltered. Come to think of it I still have it.

What do we do about built in obsolescence? How do you cope with the multitude of items lasting a mere fourteen hours after the guarantee expires and then requiring six weeks labour costing an arm-and-a-leg to put in running order for another three months?

If you ever find out, please let me know. In the meantime, I'll keep making do and looking for those good old wooden, steel and solid metal items mother used to have.

According to Regional Chairman Ric Morrow, Halton Regional Planning Department has been warned that future planning reports must be submitted in plain language.

During a meeting of the Bill 151 Review Committee Friday, Morrow assured the committee he had spoken to Planning Director Ed Cumming.

"I told him that if we get any more reports with the kind of verbiage we've had in the past, he can expect to have council jump on him with both feet."

Councillor Jim Watson had brought up the matter when he complained about the pages and pages of data produced concerning the aims and objectives of the planning department.

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## Review committee sees

# More power at region

Halton Regional Council should have more control over autonomous and semi-autonomous boards and commissions in the region, according to members of the council's Bill 151 Review Committee.

Regional Chairman Ric Morrow told the committee at a meeting Friday that he wanted the committee to investigate the prospect of making the Children's Aid Society a Department of the Region.

Regional Council and the autonomous Children's Aid Board of Directors seem to be headed for a confrontation over the proposed CAS budget. The budget calls for a 60 per cent increase.

Mr. Morrow said he was disturbed to learn that the CAS wanted to hire its own accountant. He felt there was duplication being created that wouldn't be necessary if the CAS was considered a department of the region instead of an independent body.

Mr. Morrow angered CAS directors and members when he used the CAS annual meeting as a forum to scold the Society for its proposed 60 per cent budget increase.

That appears to be the first in a series of confrontations

the Region and the CAS will have.

The Region's Community Service Committee has said it will hold a special in-camera meeting to deal with personnel problems at the CAS and the proposed budget.

While the CAS is the organization most often in the headlines these days, the committee reviewing Bill 151 doesn't limit its plans for greater control to that body.

The committee agreed that legislation should be changed to strip the Board of Health of its autonomy.

As it stands, there are two provincial appointees and several regional councillors on the Board of Health. While the problem has never presented itself, it is possible that the Board of Health could push a program without the majority support of the council.

While the board membership is weighted heavily in favor of the council, it does represent a minority.

Unlike the planning, public works or administration committees it does not have to report to council. It does so now as a courtesy. But legally, the council could not overrule a decision of the health board.

Mr. Morrow said that legislation should be

tightened up to give council more control over the Board of Health. Milton Councillor Jim Watson echoed Morrow's sentiment concerning the possibility of the region's expanding role.

He favored the proposal that would make the Board of Health responsible to the Council and went even further than that.

He suggested the CAS, Police Department and Conservation Authority should all be under the direct control of the region. "I can see where one is taken in and the other is not," he said.

Chairman Morrow said the province would eventually turn over its responsibility for planning control to the region.

He said he looked forward to the day when there would be no interference on planning matters from the province. "Local control is what we want and local control is what we are getting," he said.

While the prospect of more power in planning at the regional level obviously pleased Mr. Morrow, some of the Review Committee members weren't without

concern.

Oakville Councillor Laurie Mannell wondered whether or not planning should be at the area municipality level as opposed to the region. He wanted to take the responsibility one step closer to the people than the province is suggesting.

Councillor Watson said he was upset because the planners at the region had only one line of comment concerning a 650-home subdivision in Milton that council did not want, but when it came to a land severance "away up in God's country they wrote something equivalent to the New Testament."

Don Gordon, Chairman of the Review Committee said he was annoyed from time to time by the Regional Planning Department. "What right do they have to dictate?"

Chief Administrative Officer Ernie Reid defended the planners. "They are not dictating. They are professional and are stating professional opinions but the opinions aren't etched in stone," he said.

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Usually he as chairman is the only person to hear the case. Judgement is usually made the same day. Sometimes the cases proceed to higher courts, and from there to the Ontario Municipal Board.

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line with other surrounding towns such as Oakville and Brampton. He added Halton Hills' rates are far below other Halton and Peel municipalities.

"If we are really trying to attract industry we should leave the industry fee in and continue losing a little money," Serjeantson said.

Austin noted the fees haven't been changed since 1955 and certainly hasn't brought the town any extra industry in that time.

He said recently a plumber brought in a cheque to pay the fees and it was made out for over \$700 and he only had to pay a little over \$100.

The committee rejected Serjeantson's concerns and approved the new plumbing fees.

In a report to the regional Planning Committee Planner Brian Kropf said: "In arriving at his decision, C. G. Ebers of the OMB noted that the intent of the Official Plan was clearly to discourage scattered isolated development. However, the subject lands were unsuitable for agriculture and, while some consents criteria were contravened, several other criteria were not."

"He noted that the Board was not quite satisfied that the intent of The Planning Act would be observed in the severance. Further, Mr. Ebers stated that the Board feels the community as a whole is indebted to a family which has farmed lands for

generations, and that the local circumstances of the situation are best known by the Land Division Committee."

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## Industrial, commercial plumbing fees soar

Councillor Marilyn Serjeantson thinks an increase in plumbing and drainage license fees certainly won't help the town attract more industry.

Monday Halton Hills works committee approved new fees and changes to a by-law which will see drastic increases in plumbing fees for

industrial and commercial developments and a slight increase for residential construction, too. Councillor Mike Armstrong described the increases as "healthy."

Engineer Robert Austin said the hefty increase for industry and commercial, and modest increase for residential, brings Halton Hills in

line with other surrounding towns such as Oakville and Brampton. He added Halton Hills' rates are far below other Halton and Peel municipalities.

"If we are really trying to attract industry we should leave the industry fee in and continue losing a little money," Serjeantson said.

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## O.M.B. severance

The Ontario Municipal Board has approved an application for a land severance for Norman and Ruth Newman north of Speyside.

The severance application had been approved by the Region's Land Division Committee but opposed by the Regional Planning Department.

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## Keep it simple

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## Marijuana charge laid

An 18-year old man was arrested and charged in connection with the discovery by police of cigarettes in his possession which are suspected of being marijuana.

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## Assessment court sits

Bert Hinton is now presiding at spring sittings of the assessment review court of Ontario. His appointment requires him to hold courts in Burlington, Toronto, Bradford, Tottenham, Uxbridge, Victoria Harbor and Coldwater within the next few months.

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