

Town's share of taxes increase \$13.36 in Acton

The town's share of taxes is up \$13.31 in Georgetown, \$13.36 in Acton, and \$16.51 in Esquusing on an average home.

But that's not the total tax hike, an education boost of \$23 on the same average home must be added, plus the regional levy which has not yet been set.

The average assessment used is \$5,638 in Georgetown, \$4,498 in Acton and \$4,638 in Esquusing, but individual homes with varying assessments will range up or down from those tax increases.

The average total town tax will be \$109.17 in Georgetown, \$209.20 in Acton and \$181.62 in Esquusing.

Halton Hills council aimed for a maximum increase of five per cent, but instead came in at 6.8% in the towns and 9.9% in Esquusing.

The town mill rates are 37.10 in Georgetown, 46.51 in Acton and 39.16 in Esquusing.

The draft budget submitted by finance chairman Harry Levy came in at 6.6 per cent increase and a total of \$5,510,703, but after juggling by council was increased to 6.8 per cent increase and total budget to \$5,525,003.

The changes were precipitated by Councillor Mike Armstrong's argument that the Bard Lane, Charles Street and Churchill Cres. roadwork be included since it will be subsidized 50 per cent by the province.

The cost of the work is estimated at \$71,000, for the town's share.

Mayor Pete Pomeroy said he would agree only if the money could be found from other cuts in the budget. He said he was determined to keep the increase to under 7 per cent. He suggested the replacement of an intermediate planner be cut, thus saving \$16,700. He then suggested a \$25,000 cut from the reserve fund for working capital.

Councillor Russ Miller put forward a cut totalling \$15,000, for work on Yoder Steel land used as a park. He pointed out it is not town land.

Levy warned the original budget had been pared to the bone, and warned of a large increase next year for necessities if the cuts were made and the road work added.

Pomeroy argued council has to take a positive attitude to development by encouraging housing and industry to offset the costs of some of the capital

projects needed. "We can't sit and wilt on the vine and hope to come in with a positive budget. We can only get it by some growth!"

Tax score to date

Acton house assessed at \$4,498	
Town purposes	up \$13.36
Education	up \$23.00
Total so far	up \$36.36
Georgetown house assessed at \$5,638	
Town purposes	up \$13.31
Education	up \$23.
Total so far	up \$36.31
Esquusing house assessed at \$4,638	
Town purposes	up \$16.51
Education	up \$23.
Total so far	up \$39.51

Levy pointed out the fault did not entirely lie with council and reminded council of the sewage problem. He stated the town is in control of only 30 per cent of the budget, and the board of education and the region control the rest. He warned these would also go up.

Council accepted the proposed cuts, when Treasurer Ray King said there would be \$9,000 more revenue from the Bell Telephone than expected. This brought the total amount of money to \$65,700 to offset the addition of the Churchill-Bard-Charles road reconstruction.

The total roads and affiliated services budget is the highest at \$2,299,312, up 248,864 over last year.

Recreation

The next highest budget is recreation and parks at \$1,190,743, up \$84,640 over last year. A total of \$128,935 in cuts was made in the recreation budget, including a deputy recreation director, a sprinkler system at Memorial Arena, and numerous proposed playground projects.

A \$28,000 project to control ice and flooding at the paper mill dam has been cut from the budget, as well as \$27,820 toward resource recovery, and \$7,000 for upgrading street lighting in Acton.

In the budget including fire, building, plumbing and animal control there has been a drop of \$35,721 from last year, down from \$505,721 to \$470,000.

There is no provision for a raise in pay for mayor and council, but \$65,000 is budgeted for legal fees. In 1978 legal fees amounted to \$80,000.

The growth in assessment over the past year has been very low, only 1.4 per cent, said the treasurer. He pointed out the town has continued the policy of pay as they go, so the town has very little debt and resultant debt charges.

The Acton Free Press.

Five injured Ninth Line

Quick thinking and action by an Erin township woman may have saved an accident victim from more serious injury.

Randy Whitney, 19, of Erin required 100 stitches to his face after the 1978 import car he was driving was in collision with a station wagon driven by Gayle McPherson, R.R. 2, Acton, Ontario Provincial Police said.

The accident happened at about 5:10 p.m., March 14 on Erin township's Ninth Line, about two miles south of the village. Of the seven people involved in the accident, five had to be taken to hospital.

According to an OPP investigator, Karen Heslop, a registered nurse, happened to be standing in her drive at the time of the accident and rendered first aid to the victims.

"I did what anybody would do in the same situation," Mrs. Heslop told this paper in a telephone interview.

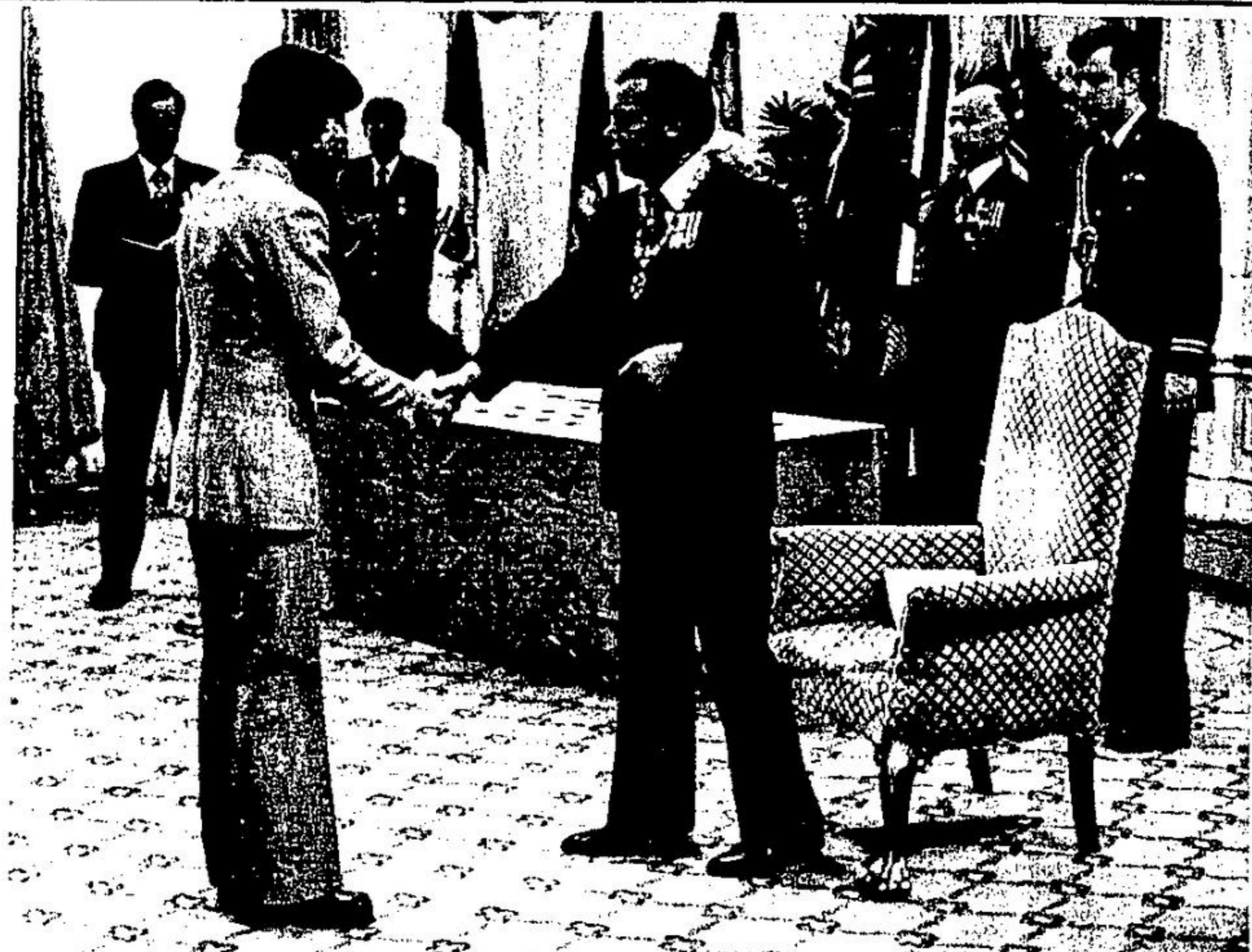
She said there are not many houses close by in that part of the township, so everyone helps out when called upon.

She called an ambulance and received a first aid kit from a school bus operated by Denny's Bus Line which happened to pass the scene.

Modest, Mrs. Heslop said she didn't think much of her actions at the time of the accident. "When you are there, you do it at the time."

Also injured in the accident was Connie Bolmer, 17, of Erin who suffered facial lacerations and bruising. She was a passenger in the front seat with Whitney and they both were taken by ambulance to Georgetown.

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Denny Andrews shakes hands with Governor General Edward Schreyer after receiving the Star of Courage bravery decoration during a recent ceremony at Ottawa. Mr. Andrews, Ransom Street, received the award because he saved two cousins from drowning in freezing Newfoundland waters last year. Mr. Andrews was one of eight honored with the Star of Courage at Government House. The Star of Courage is awarded for acts of conspicuous courage in circumstances of great peril. The decoration consists of a silver four point star and maple leaf which is suspended from a ribbon of red with two blue stripes. The Acton Free Press carried the full story of Mr. Andrews' bravery in its January 3 edition. Photo by ALEX LAW

It's Spring!

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Halton Police launch anti-vandalism project

by George Evastuk

An experimental program designed to fight vandalism in Halton Hills and Milton is to be launched by the Halton police force.

Halton police chief Kenneth Skerrett told the police commission Thursday that "we are experiencing a considerable amount of vandalism" in North Halton.

The vandalism is most serious around the schools and in various small areas in the two towns, Chief Skerrett said. In 1978 there were 922 reported cases of wilful damage in the area.

"Vandalism, of course, is a problem in the rest of the region but tackling the problem on an experimental basis would appear to have the better chance of succeeding if we concentrate our efforts in these areas of relatively small communities" he said.

The police commission gave its approval for the project plus two others to be operated in conjunction with the Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada. The other projects are water safety and Operation Identification in Oakville and Operation Provident in Burlington.

John Rabeau, a social worker with the police, is the project supervisor for all three programs. He said in an interview that there is still a fair bit of work to do in designing the specifics of the program which is to begin May 21 and run to Sept. 3.

The program is funded by the Solicitor General's office which will pay the salaries of a project leader and six students while the police are to provide office space, telephones, transportation and the necessary literature for the project.

Two of the students will work in Georgetown, two in Acton and two in Milton.

Rabeau said the program, called Neighbourhood Watch, has to be developed with the school board, the towns' recreation departments, independent insurance agents and service clubs.

Rabeau noted that a program developed last year by the Halton police, Operation Identification, is being used by the federal solicitor general's office as a model across Canada and hoped that the Neighbourhood Watch program would have the same kind of success.

According to an outline of the project presented to the police commission, there are three main goals and objectives:

- *To increase the awareness of the community on the whole as to the cost of vandalism and their responsibility to assist in its control;
- *To focus on specific high risk areas by alerting the neighborhood residents
- *Identify groups of young persons who are potential vandals in co-operation with other groups, attempt to divert them to more appropriate behaviour.

Neighbourhood Watch will attack vandalism on five fronts.

The higher grades of school will be blitzed with a presentation of vandalism with an eye to prevention; residents in high risk areas will be approached with information packages and encouraged to participate by being "eyes" for the community; small deals with the police number to be attached to a telephone will be provided to encourage individuals to report vandalism or suspicious persons.

The program will also approach groups of young people to assist them in finding appropriate places to "hang out" and use local newspapers and community groups to give the message of the need for community involvement.

Council wants town in one directory

Acton and Georgetown should be in the same telephone directory.

That was the feeling of Halton Hills council Monday evening when they passed a resolution to have Bell Canada further investigate ways of getting the two communities in the same book.

In a letter to council, W.C. Barnes, manager of the Oakville-Trafalgar office of Bell Canada, pointed out a survey had been conducted in 1974, with 59 per cent of the residence customers and 49 per cent of the business customers wanting in the Halton book.

"In our opinion," the letter stated, "these results did not indicate a substantial majority favoring the transfer."

Mr. Barnes went on to say he had talked to the manager of the Guelph office, who agreed with him that "this is not a critical issue in Acton."

Councillor Russ Miller wondered why the Acton listings could not also be included in the Brampton book. He pointed out there are only a few pages.

"Let's face it, Acton is oriented to the west, and will want to stay in the Guelph book. Why not have them in both places?"

Councillor George Maltby said he had spoken to the manager in Guelph who explained it is not that simple a matter to put Georgetown in the Acton book, or vice versa. The Esquusing councillor said the present system of two books is creating a problem for him as half of his constituents are in the Georgetown pages, and half in Acton. Those in Georgetown cannot find his name and usually end up calling relatives of Mr. Maltby's.

Maltby pointed out he had little difficulty in obtaining a Georgetown book when he put in a request for one. He said Bell felt it was cheaper to hand out additional books than to spend thousands of dollars transferring the names.

Councillor Ross Knechtel said he asked Bell for a Georgetown book and was sent one with Stratford listings.

Councillor Roy Booth pointed out if everyone in Georgetown asked for an Acton book, and everyone in Acton asked for a Georgetown book, the thousands they are trying to save would be spent in supplying books. He agreed with the listings being duplicated in both books.

Mayor Pete Pomeroy stated "Like it or not, we are one town and we should be in one book. It is not fair to the businessman who has to advertise in two books' yellow pages to reach one market."

Architect tells BIA

Act quickly on downtown

Acton's downtown has had "cosmetic restoration" but members of the Business Improvement Area (BIA) will have to do actual surgery now, Lloyd Sankey told the annual meeting of the BIA last Wednesday evening.

Sankey, a Toronto architect who lives at Speyside and has shown a special interest in Acton's downtown, told the BIA they were fortunate to have "another kick at the cat" but they had better get busy and do something about downtown development. Acton can still be saved from the problems Georgetown and Milton have encountered with strip plazas, he told BIA members.

Using drawings to illustrate his theme, Sankey unravelled a plan for Acton's downtown which suggested revitalization of the downtown core at both ends, (anchors) behind the Dominion hotel and the IGA food store and/or along the CN railway tracks and the former Force Electric plant where Foodland and Canadian Tire are located.

Redevelopment in the former would have pedestrian access to recreation areas in Prospect park and Fairy Lake, he emphasized and make use of available parking space. He personally thought it would be easier to start at the railway tracks.

He said the BIA is at the turning point now. A plaza in the east end has been stopped now—a victory for the downtown and the BIA but Sankey felt they must move now before developer Jerry Sprackman appeals his case to the Ontario Municipal Board. Planning Board turned down his proposal for a plaza in Acton's east end by an 8-0 vote and the developer vowed he would take the case to the OMB, using the popular support he gathered for a plaza as ammunition. Sankey said this could pull a lot of weight with the OMB.

Sankey suggested it would be wise to have a plan of action ready and working before the case came before the OMB.

The plan should not create another study, Sankey said, and gather dust until there's another plaza scare. He said he was not against developers but felt they should be working within a framework profitable to both themselves and the public.

In his opinion strip developments such as the plaza proposed for the east end destroyed the downtown core. He said issues at the public meeting over the plaza showed people wanted a food store, more shopping variety and better parking facilities. The developer could answer these needs outside the town. "We've got to answer them downtown," he said.

The BIA needs assistance from politicians, planners and people to achieve success with the downtown. Public input is critical, he emphasized. "Revitalization works best when the private sector shows the public sector they are behind them," he explained.

He said there are government programs available now for towns of less than 30,000 which make up to \$180,000 available for revitalization of downtown. Although some people said it couldn't be done, he pointed to towns such as Collingwood and Lindsay where it had been done successfully.

His firm plotted a plan for Collingwood which saw a Loblaw's store and Woodworths built downtown, employing 60 people.

The tax base happens whether they are downtown or in a plaza, he noted and building downtown assists the existing fabric and avoids problems caused by strip plazas.

Mr. Sankey told merchants the future of the downtown was in their hands. "Treat it well and it will serve us for many years," he concluded.

The speaker was introduced by broadcaster Jack Carpenter and thanked by Larry Greaves.



A large framed photograph of former Mayor Tom Hill, the first mayor of Halton Hills, will hang in the municipal building. It was unveiled Monday night at a gathering to honor the former mayor. Mayor Pete Pomeroy also presented Hill with a smaller framed color portrait. The reception turned into a roast, with mayor and councillors taking jibes at the former mayor and each other. Hill scotched any rumors he would be returning to the political scene saying "It took too much out of me but now my health is coming back and I'm going to keep it that way." He said he was proud of being part of both the township of Esquusing and Halton Hills.