

Region back on right track, according to Whiting

Regional government in Halton is back on the right track but it is moving very slowly in the right direction and has a long way to go, according to Acton's freshman regional representative Dave Whiting.

In a recent interview Whiting reviewed his first eight months in office, paying particular attention to the issues he raised in the election campaign in November which resulted in his ousting one term regional councillor Ed Wood.

During the campaign he raised questions about the region deficit, regional staff, policing and water and sewer policies.

Speaking about the deficit Whiting noted it turned out to be much larger than the \$600,000 he mentioned in his campaign literature. It turned out the deficit was over \$1 million and wasn't a one year problem but the culmination of four years of budgeting errors. Also it was far greater than anyone had expected.

The deficit was ultimately solved by two methods, both of which hurt taxpayers. The water and sewer account shortfall was made up with a hefty 25 per cent increase in rates brought in by the outgoing council. Then this year, to cover the operating budget deficit and pay for the Works and other Programs shelved last year, the regional council approved huge tax hikes.

Despite the result which pinched everyone badly in the pocketbooks, Whiting still thinks the deficit problem was handled in a "responsible manner", or at least in the only way possible.



Dave Whiting

Halton roads were so bad in 1979 they were classed the second worst in the province. By 1980 we'd slipped to last place.

Work this year, paid for with steeply higher taxes, and mostly in the north, will lift Halton into fourth spot from the bottom in Ontario for the condition of our roads. The region is on the right track, but like he said it's a long track.

In his campaign literature Dave asked where the

over \$700,000 needed to complete five major projects was going to come from. The old council answered that question by debenturing the funds, something he hopes won't be repeated in the future.

The issue of regional staffing was closely tied to the region's financial woes. Whiting thinks great strides have been made in the area of regional staff.

Previously nobody was really checking on staff. Now department heads are hired by a council committee, one he has sat on, and the department heads assess their workers.

He wasn't originally in support of hiring consultants to study the region staff, but is now glad this was done and thinks the taxpayers received good value for this money.

He explained councillors simply don't have the expertise to compare Halton's staff with those working in comparable municipal operations so consultants were needed to determine if the staff was doing its jobs properly. The answer from the \$80,000 study in a number of cases was no.

Now Halton has a new treasurer, a totally revamped treasury department, new chief administrative officer, a new Halton Manor administrator, a new head of social services will be hired soon, a new Medical Officer of Health is on the job and so is a new solicitor. Another eventual result of the consultants' work will be a study and overhaul of the works department. "We got a lot for the money (spent on the study)."

Policing in Acton has come a long way because of a new attitude on the part of citizens and the

regional force.

However, despite a healthy policing budget hike this year, the force is still undermanned and understaffed, Whiting feels.

Policing, like other services, wasn't set up in Halton like it was in other areas of Ontario under regional government.

Whiting explains in other regions services were set up to operate on the big scale, despite the fact it resulted in enormous tax hikes the first couple of years. Today regions like Peel have moderate tax hikes.

However, in Halton the opposite was the case. Services like policing were slowly expanded and still aren't up to the size they should be for a regional operation. But the tax increases were moderate compared to this year's increase the first few years.

The police got enough of an increase this year to set up special squads, but not the extra men needed for patrols.

It's been the same in other region departments, Whiting observes. The region doesn't have the staff and equipment needed to lower costs so keeping the region going is costing five times more than it would have if it was set up properly in the first place. "Now we are way behind and it's a horrendous task and very costly to catch up."

Returning to the police, Dave said policing an urban-rural mix is very difficult; the RCMP has been struggling with the same problem for years in many areas of Canada and still haven't hit on the

right formula.

Regarding Acton complaints about the police not enforcing speed limits, he says a lot more men will have to be hired before police can tackle that job.

He thinks there is no question more men are needed on the streets, but that means more money for the force. What bothers Whiting is he hears from residents concerned about policing and then the same residents will later complain about the high cost of financing the force.

Another thing Whiting wants the region to do is quit spending money on rehabilitation through facilities like the Sheridan Youth Centre and give that money to the police.

During the campaign he talked a lot about water and sewer works and rates. Whiting is counting on the region retaining water and sewer operations because if it reverts to the area municipality level then it will cost Halton Hills customers a bundle to pay for previous sewage plant expansions.

He's pleased with the way the region has systematically been upgrading the sewage system in Acton, which was substantial.

He's convinced regional government can and will work, but a lot more changes are still needed.

"I think Halton's on the right track. But we have to run the system with the changes we've made for a while and see how it works before making more changes."

He maintains regional government is seven years behind the times as far as evolving into an effective (Continued on Page 2)

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Town hall consultants to ask if citizens want building saved

Citizens will be asked, during the upcoming feasibility study for the restoration of the old town hall, if they want the building saved.

In an interview following his brief presentation to Halton Hills council last week recreation director Tom Shepard said the study terms of reference, which haven't been finalized yet with the Ministry of Culture and Recreation, include "a public participation component."

Shepard said how this is handled will be up to the consulting firm which is hired for the study, but he expects the citizens, interest groups (ie. the Restoration Committee and Actario), groups which might use hall facilities and municipal officials will all be asked for their input.

They (the consultants) will want to get a feel of

why the community wants the town hall saved and what uses the residents envision, Shepard said.

How this input will be gathered will be determined by the consulting firm, but Shepard said he expects there will be some public meetings and possibly on-the-street interviews, too.

The deadline for the municipality finalizing its application for a Wintario capital grant for restoration of the hall was August 1.

While the town has received nothing in writing yet from the province, Shepard said he has received a verbal assurance from the ministry that the deadline is being extended to December 31, 1981.

He had written out terms of reference as well as background material on the restoration project and phoned it in to the regional representative of the

ministry. However, when that official passed the information on to others at Queen's Park he failed to include the background information.

Shepard is now providing that information to the province as well as changing the wording of some parts of the terms of reference, as requested by the ministry. He said he expects the terms of reference will be nailed down this week. Then a special meeting of council's town hall committee meeting will be held to finalize matters.

No consultants have been selected yet for the study because the terms of reference aren't final. Shepard has contracted 12 qualified firms which will make proposals to carry out the study once they have reviewed them.

The study will delve into many areas. The consultants will determine if there is a need for more community facilities in Acton and do an inventory of existing halls and rooms available for use by groups.

They'll find out which groups in the community might like to hold meetings and functions in a restored town hall.

Viability of the building for recreational uses will be examined, as well as what other possible uses there are for a restored town hall, such as commercial.

Programming and operation of the building will also be examined, Shepard said.

Conceptual drawings of both the interior and exterior following restoration will be made up.

Besides determining the capital or restoration costs for both the interior and exterior of the town hall, they'll also investigate maintenance and upkeep costs. Initial operating costs must be established as well as a projection of operating costs and revenues for the building for five years.

Once restoration costs are established the consultants will look for ways to pay for the project, such as grants and fund raising.

The drawings and study will address the question of blending the restored town hall with the fire hall so it will be easier to secure heritage grants.



Former Acton residents Wilma and Cecil Hardy recently celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary. The couple was married here and moved to Brampton about 10 years ago. The Hardys have five children, eight grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

Photo courtesy The Brampton Guardian

It's Kawasaki, Japan time for Denise Dilbey

by Helen Murray

When Denise Dilbey says goodbye to her parents and sister on August 21, she'll be off on a year's adventure equal to none other for the rest of her life. The 16-year-old Acton High School graduate will be spending the next year in Japan.

Denise was chosen by the Acton Rotary Club to represent Acton on a student exchange program, in any of the participating countries in the world. Her first three choices were Sweden, Belgium and Japan, and out of those three she finally selected Japan.

She explained that the program is a cultural exchange, and she felt Japan would be the most different culture. She also surmised that she may one day travel to Sweden or Belgium, but probably never to Japan. This was a good chance to see the most exotic place.

Denise just found out recently that she will be spending the year in Kawasaki, just outside of Tokyo. She will be living with four different families, just as Jenny Nunan, Acton's exchange student from Australia, has been. Denise explained, this is so the student does not get too attached to one family.

Since she found out she was chosen, Denise has been studying up on the Japanese geography and history. She has been having difficulty however, finding an English-Japanese dictionary. She will be learning the language, and hopes to be fluent by the time she returns next August. However, she had hoped to get a bit of a head start, but so far has met with a dead end. A trip to the University of Toronto library next week should help her though.

The mail strike has really put a damper on Denise's planning however. She explains she has

had to go to the Japanese consulate in Toronto to arrange her visa, but it won't be ready until the day she leaves. She will also not have her airplane ticket until August 21 either.

Information concerning her schooling, which is mandatory, what she needs to take and the homes she will be living in is also held up in the mail. A package was to be mailed to Buffalo and sent by courier to her two weeks ago, but she still hasn't received it. All these complications because of the strike have sort of taken the excitement out of leaving for her says Denise.

Even though she is finished high school in Canada, Denise has to attend either high school or college while in Japan. Had she not graduated from school, she would not have received credits towards graduation while in Japan.

Adopting the Japanese culture means there will be no Christmas for Denise, although she hopes her parents will call that day. She plans to take a lot of western world clothes, but she explains, even in China, blue jeans have invaded the country and she feels she will fit right in.

She's also being on the safe side by taking a year's supply of toothpaste, make-up etc., just in case they aren't as readily available in Japanese stores.

While a messenger of good-will in Japan, Denise will be giving gifts to those she meets. She is taking extra blue jeans, maple sugar, Canadian Cheddar Cheese, and small plastic Maple Leaf flags, courtesy of Halton MP Otto Jelinek. Ray Nellis of the Acton Rotary Club arranged for the flags.

Denise first flies to Vancouver, and then on to Tokyo. She spends the night there before going on to Kawasaki and her first family.

Denise was surprised to learn recently there is a girl from Toronto who will be heading to Japan, also on an exchange program, on the same flight as her. Unfortunately, she will not know who she is until they reach Vancouver. All exchange students heading to the various countries will be taking the same flight out of Toronto, to Vancouver, so it will not be until she is on the plane to Tokyo that she will find out who the other girls is.

A Milton youth returns soon from the same exchange in Japan and Denise is hoping to have a chance to talk with him before she heads out.

Before she was accepted for the exchange program, Denise was accepted to three community colleges, in the Retl Co-op courses. She had planned to enter Humber in the fall, but postponed her plans for a year. When she returns to Canada next August, she will only be back a few days when she starts school.

It's a busy life ahead of her, and Denise knows she is bound to change, seeing the different ways of life and learning a new language. She admits she is going to be lonely at times, and hopes all her friends write to her. She will be looking forward to the mail—in English.



Denise Dilbey



Raindrops are falling on my... sunflowers? Fred New of Elmora Drive protects his prize 14 bloom sunflower from recent rains. The impressive plant grows amid Fred's poppies courtesy of a passing bird who, Fred surmises, dropped his sunflower seed lunch.

Wintario here, question is when

The Wintario Lottery draw will definitely be coming to Acton. When is the question.

Chip Petrillo, chairman of the Leathertown committee and a director of the Acton Chamber of Commerce, has been working on bringing the draw here for several weeks now.

He said in an interview this week the draw will definitely be coming here but he doesn't know if it will be before the end of this year, or in 1982.

Ontario Lottery Corporation officials are expected to come to Acton next month to look the town over as well as inspect the Acton High School cafeteria, where the draw would be held.

Petrillo said he spoke to Joanne Ring of the Lottery Corporation last week and she couldn't say for sure when the Thursday evening draw on Global TV Network, will be held in Acton.

Petrillo said he was told there are 177 applications for draw sites. While the fall agenda is set Wintario hasn't nailed down its November and December schedule yet, the time Acton could be host.

Lottery officials have reviewed information about Acton and the Leathertown project, mostly clippings on Leathertown from The Acton Free Press. Technical information such as size and voltage capacity about the high school auditorium has also been provided to Wintario.

The Halton Board of Education has also been contacted about having the draw at the school. Petrillo noted the official he dealt with gave permission, but wasn't enthusiastic. Leathertown would have to rent the building and would later discuss the financial arrangements with Wintario.

"If it costs us (Leathertown) a few hundred dollars that's no problem; it will be worth it to the town," Petrillo declared.

Leathertown will be seeking the aid of Halton-Burlington MPP Julian Reed, Mayor Peter Pomeroy and Halton MP Otto Jelinek to persuade Wintario to hold the draw here in late fall or early winter. Wintario favors a draw here in winter; wishing to stay close to Toronto during the winter months in case of unfavourable conditions.

Since officials found the school satisfactory and Wintario wants to help promote Acton as Leathertown, Petrillo says "it sounds good for the draw being held here."

Cheques in mail today

Regardless of the month-long postal strike, the mail will get through.

All government cheques are being delivered by letter carrier this week. Acton residents will receive their social security, family allowance and other government cheques today, Wednesday July 29.

Box holders and those residents served by general delivery may pick up their cheques at the Royal Canadian Legion, 15 Wright Street—just off Mill Street West—July 30 and 31 between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Identification such as driver's licence, social insurance or credit card is necessary. Cheques for rural routes will also be delivered to mail boxes Wednesday.