

Regional report says the economy is recovering

By STEVE ARNOLD
Canada may already be on the road to economic recovery, according to Matt Fischer, business development director for Halton Region.

In his quarterly report on business activity submitted to Regional Council recently, Mr. Fischer expressed "cautious optimism" for an improvement in business conditions in Canada.

"A lot of this is speculation, but I think we have seen the bottom of the trench," he said in a recent telephone interview.

"Many of the businessmen that I talk to

feel they have their businesses in shape and weathering the storm."

In addition to material garnered from Statistics Canada and the economic forecasts of the Conference Board in Canada, Mr. Fischer also bases his feelings on local indices, including the number of building permits applied for, the number of new or expanding companies moving into the area and the number of businesses that close or go bankrupt.

He noted, for example, that since February of this year there have been no recorded business bankruptcies in

Halton. Two firms have dissolved their businesses and 83 new firms have moved in to the area.

He admitted in his report, however, that this index doesn't provide a full picture of business activity in the Region.

"We, unfortunately, have no way to monitor the numbers of firms which merely close their doors or the under-utilized capacity of existing manufacturers who have reduced their operations in an effort to combat the recession," he wrote.

For the entire Region, he reported,

building permit applications have fallen 41 per cent compared to 1981 levels.

These figures are for the second quarter of 1982 which ended June 30.

Despite the obvious effects of the recession, Mr. Fischer said Halton has been relatively insulated from the full effects of it because the Region's economy is so diverse.

"With the exception of Ford we don't have a single industry that employs more than 850 people," he said, explaining that when too many of the employees in an area are tied to a single industry there

are bound to be more problems.

"The balance of our economy here is so diversified... that we haven't felt the weight of the major layoffs and closures that other areas have," he said.

"A lot of businesses aren't making much money right now, but they are certainly hanging on and that's good, he said, adding that when the current recession does end the businesses that survive will be better able to expand.

"We were fat and sloppy in many of our businesses, but now we are fit and lean and those businesses have learned to run

efficiently," he said.

Until national forces cause the economy to turn around entirely, he said, there isn't much Halton can do, other than to keep advertising itself.

"Our natural advantages will put us in good stead when people do get the confidence back to make the major investments that they are only thinking about now."

"I'm not even sure that a change in government will help us. What we need more than anything else right now is a period of stability," he added.

newsmakers

Georgetown/Acton, Wednesday, August 11, 1982



These youngsters give the all ready sign to marshals during the Saturday night racing at the North Halton Kart Club.

Area go-kart enthusiasts hold races on Saturdays

North Halton Kart Club

by Robin Incoe
Things haven't changed much at North Halton's Go-Kart track in Limehouse over the past few years except, the racing which three years ago attracted about 40 drivers each Saturday night now attracts about 80, according to president Mike Greschuk.

Go-kart racing is one of the cheapest forms of racing one can enjoy and that alone has turned the local track into a scaled down version of Indianapolis Raceway each Saturday night from May to October.

Racers from throughout the area meet at the local track each week to test their skill and driving abilities against others in their classes. A total of 150 members of the North Halton Kart Club help offset the costs of the upkeep with a minimal registration fee. That coupled with entry fees for the races look after the improvements as well as trophies for weekly winners.

With 22 racing dates over the season the local club keeps a running point total of all competitors. Certain points are awarded depending on placing, much like the Grand Prix driving circuit. The top point getters at the end of the season will be declared the winners of their class.

The North Halton Kart Club began 26 years ago. While some years have been better than others, the sport has been increasing steadily in popular-

ity as evident by the turn-outs at this year's races.

Last season the local kart club joined the Ontario Kart Racing Association but after only one year the group of officials that ran North Halton decided that running independent was the best way to operate. President Greschuk noted that if he had his way they would remain an independent body.

The Limehouse track is about a quarter-mile in length with tight turns and a hair-pin to challenge the drivers. Lights surround the track for the night of racing. Hay bales surround trees and stumps to provide the best possible safety and St. John Ambulance attendants are on duty every racing night.

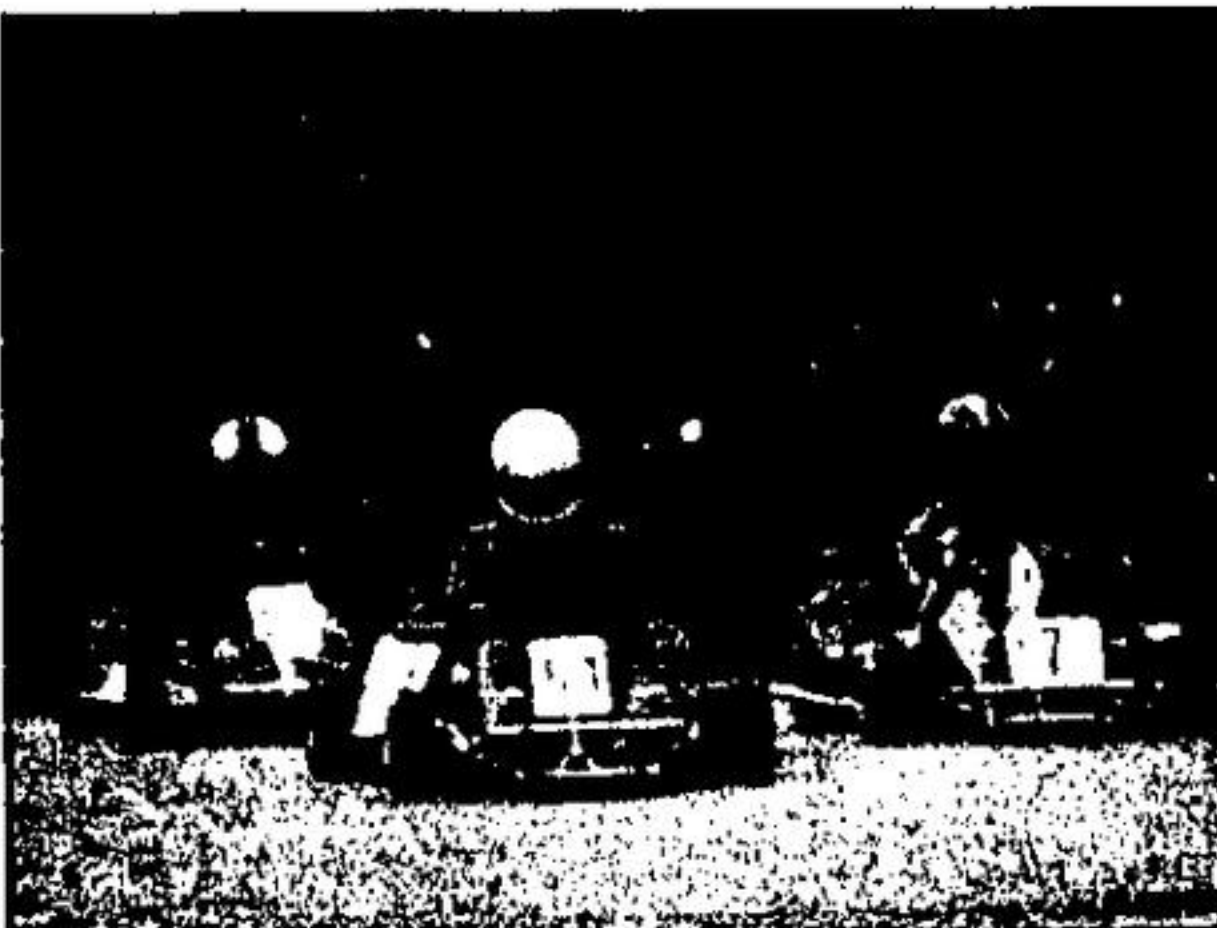
One particular St. John attendant takes in the racing every week. A kart enthusiast, he says that he gets to do a lot of watching, implying that accidents and injuries are not necessarily a common thing on the track.

Each week the North Halton Kart Club holds races for both two and four cycle engines with eight classes for drivers. Drivers range in age from nine years and up with the youngsters sometimes supplying the most exciting racing. "We're probably the largest mixed track in North America," commented Greschuk, referring to the fact North Halton is one of the few tracks that allow both two

cycle and four cycle engines. Whatever the reasons that budding Mario Andretti's take to the track at North Halton Kart Club for their weekly Saturday competitions, it seems to be a family thing with Dad, and brother and in some cases even mother, enjoying the sport together.



Not all the driving is done on the track! This racer found himself on the infield during a race. He was back at top speed in no time.



Close races aren't uncommon in go-karting as these three proved. They were on each others tails the entire 10 laps of their race.

190 rabies cases suspected

Halton's Health Department has investigated 190 suspected rabies cases since December 1981.

Records show, however, that 190 investigations is about par for Halton region. While the rest of the province is experiencing an upsurge in suspected cases, Halton's statistics remain close to last year's figures... high.

"On average, we're investigating about 20 cases per month," said Medical Officer of Health Dr. Peter Cole. The disease seems to break out in various areas throughout the region on a rotating basis, but health department officials are unable to detect any type of pattern.

Out of the 190 cases investi-

gated, four people received treatment for rabies, Cole added. The remainder of the people who were reported to have been in contact with an animal suspected of having rabies have not been treated, and as far as Dr. Cole knows, they haven't been affected by the disease either.

Province-wide, the disease is rampant. Ontario, according to Cole, has 50 percent of all rabid animals reported in North America. "There seems to be a lot of rabies in Ontario as compared with the rest of the world."

The disease attacks the central nervous system and is usually fatal in both humans and animals if left untreated.

Dr. Cole, however, suspects that the disease is not so virulent as usual in this area. "If there are so many rabid animals around, some must be biting people. Yet I don't believe we hear of every case of animal bite, and no one seems to be dying of rabies. It's peculiar."

Skunks and foxes are usually named as spreaders of rabies, although Cole adds that foxes aren't particularly plentiful in Halton. Rodents such as squirrels or chipmunks are rarely carriers of rabies, Dr. Cole said.

Domestic animals who come in contact with rabies usually do so through wildlife. Humans rarely get bitten by rabid wild

animals.

"People don't come in contact with the wild animals. If they do approach a wild animal that is sick, they're pretty silly." Incubation time for the disease to develop in a dog or cat is about six months. Even animals who have been vaccinated are susceptible to the disease. The vaccine, Dr. Cole claims, isn't 100 per cent effective.

For humans, the incubation period is about 10 days, he said. In a recent Ontario-wide survey, eastern Ontario has been shown to have a marked increase in reported cases of rabies. Throughout southern Ontario, animals reported to be infected have doubled in numbers compared to last year.

Regional Council

Committee to look into rest homes is rejected

A proposal for a special committee to look into rest homes in Acton has been rejected by Halton Regional Council.

The committee was suggested a few weeks ago by Councillor Bill Johnson to settle once and for all the dispute between the region's health department and Cher's Rest Home, a dispute which some councillors are calling a witch hunt.

Acton Councillor Dave Whiting said that with no power of subpoena, the committee would be worthless. He did, however, support the formation of a committee which would do its investigating in closed sessions.

Up to now, the problems surrounding the region's dealings with the rest home have been discussed in open council and committee meetings. "If the special committee meetings were open to the public, I don't think we'd get the same honesty that we would get in private sessions," Whiting said.

Regional Chairman Jack Raftis observed that since everything has already been discussed in open session and a temporary solution reached at a

recent Health and Social Services Committee meeting, any work done by a special committee would be redundant.

After discussions with

W. Gerald Punnett, lawyer for Cher's Rest Home, committee members agreed that henceforth all dealings with the rest home would go through the lawyer rather than directly to the nursing home.

Shortly after that,

Reed calls for provincial rest home regulations

Julian Reed MPP for Halton-Burlington this week called on provincial Health Minister Larry Grossman to introduce legislation regarding rest homes in Ontario.

"The public must be assured of the safe operation of rest homes and specific regulations must be set forth to determine exactly what is expected of rest home operators," said Reed.

Presently rest homes are regulated by the ministry of health the same as lodging houses

and group homes, under guidelines which Reed says are free-floating and do not address the real specific needs of rest homes. The guidelines are, therefore, limited in the impact they have on the operation of a rest home.

A local controversy concerning a rest home in Acton region is classic evidence that present guidelines are not sufficient enough to regulate these homes. "Rest home operators must have specific

standards within which to operate if they are to run the homes effectively and efficiently and the public must be assured that these standards are being met," said Reed.

"There should be specific regulations laid down so that the public, rest home operators and medical officers of health know what is expected of them and also to ensure standardization of rest homes across the province."

however, the rest home received communication from the region's health department, delivered directly to the home by courier, stating if the home did not co-operate with health department officials it would be closed in accordance with regulations under the Public Health Act.

Councillor Johnson said later that although operators of the rest home were aware that all correspondence from the region was supposed to be delivered to the lawyer, they accepted the envelope when the courier claimed it was from Councillor Bill Johnson.

The dispute between the region and the rest home stems from incidents which occurred during a surprise inspection of the premises by the medical officer of health in June, 1981. Since then, operators claim, they have been the subject of harassment by the region's health authorities.

Escarpment plan is just about complete

The Niagara Escarpment Commission has nearly completed its 10-year assignment to draw up a plan for the Niagara Escarpment.

With the release of the plan proposal in 1979 and public hearings up to last June, escarpment commission officials estimate they have a year to go before the plan is in place.

"At the moment we're waiting for a hearing officer's report," information officer Pat Soper explained. The report is expected to come down in January, 1983, encompassing a

summary of concerns raised during the 10 recent public hearings and recommendations based on the hearing findings.

The commission includes these recommendations with the proposed plan, and submits it to the Ontario Cabinet by June, 1983, Ms. Soper said.

The commission was formed in 1973 to put together a plan for the escarpment. The proposed plan covers a 742-square-mile (1,923 square kilometre) area from the Niagara Peninsula to Tobornory, a

63-per cent reduction from the original planning area of nearly 2,000 square miles. In Halton Region, the plan governs 53,725 acres of land, including 19,100 acres in Halton Hills.

The provincial Cabinet will have final say in whether the plan is accepted, modified or rejected.

The future of the commission itself is another matter. "The commission could be disbanded, or it could be kept on as an implementation body to oversee the plan being put into effect," Soper said.

Another deer hunt is approved

Milton Councillor Bill Johnson will seek volunteers in another sign-posting campaign for this year's third annual controlled deer hunt in Halton Region.

Halton Council has approved the four-day controlled hunt again this year. The hunt is aimed at cutting down

the deer population in the rural areas of Halton where the animals are said to damage farm crops. Johnson, however, was against the approval of another hunt. He told council he questioned the idea of allowing people to "run all over hell's half-acre, shooting at random."

In past years, Johnson and local volunteers have distributed "No Hunting" signs to private property owners to aid them in keeping hunters off private property. Last year a group opposed to the hunt presented a petition with 900 signatures at a public meeting in Milton, as opposed to 200 signatures of Halton residents on a petition favoring the hunt.

Johnson said he is opposed to hunting in Halton Region because there are too many people and domestic animals at risk. "If the deer are eating the apple crops, then have the hunt restricted to those properties," Johnson said. "It's only logical, if the deer have to be thinned out, to hunt them in the areas

where they congregate, rather than have people trampling all over the region with guns, popping off at anything that moves."

He added that no self-

respecting hunter would hunt deer in this area.

Last year, Burlington area councillors voted approval of the hunt along with their rural counterparts, "thinking

their city bylaw against discharging firearms would get them off the hook," Johnson said. "But they were wrong."

This year, Burlington Councillor Joan Little voiced her objections, questioning the legality of allowing a deer hunt in an area in which a bylaw prohibiting the discharge of firearms exists.

The hunt, announced by the Ministry's Cambridge district office, will take place Nov. 1 to 4 throughout most of Halton Region. In addition to farmers and landowners in Halton, 475 people will be allowed to participate in the hunt, with 75 per cent of the permits allocated to residents.

Meanderings

by Mabel Barkman



A midsummer night's dream

Fairy Tales

We attended an afternoon performance of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at Stratford last week on a perfect midsummer day.

The picnic on the banks of the Avon was almost dream-like. It seemed as if we floated through the whole day on gossamer wings. Contrary to some critics who said the play was not well performed, we enjoyed every minute of it as did the rest of the audience. We browsed through the art exhibits after the play and even they seemed to have a dreamy texture.

We finally had to get down to earth, get in the car and return home. But the memories of that day will not be soon forgotten.

New Town facilities super See Page B5