

Numbers collecting unemployment benefits double

The number of people in Halton Hills collecting unemployment benefits this year has skyrocketed to 1,482—double the amount of last year. The manager of Brampton Employment Centre, Bruce Whyte, does not see any improvement in sight.

"This is the worst year we've seen by far," he stated. "We haven't seen any positive signs so far, but we're still hoping."

At the same time last year, 727 people claimed unemployment insurance benefits.

"That's been pretty steady since September," Whyte said. In April of this year, 1410 people collected unemployment. That figure rose dramatically to 1552 in August.

Whyte mentioned Brampton is even worse than Halton Hills, with its unemployment figures tripling in 1982. There are 9,505 people in Brampton claiming unemployment, while in 1981 there were 3552.

The Oakville office, which handles Milton as well, has shown a similar increase to Halton Hills. Although the manager of the office, Tom Williams stresses many of the claimants are on temporary layoffs, there are 7,300 collecting unemployment this year, up from 3,600 last year.

Whyte pointed out not all of the 1,482 are necessarily collecting unemployment benefits. "About 20 per cent are on maternity benefits, sickness or retirement."

"But it's the same all over the country," Whyte says. "There may be the odd pocket that's doing well, but that's the exception, not the rule."

He attributes the high increase to "a general slowdown in the economy."

"There are layoffs everywhere," he said. "Time will tell, I guess."

Statistics Canada has just released figures that the federal government paid \$6.8 billion in unemployment insurance benefits in the first 10 months of 1982, up 72 per cent from the same period in 1981.

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It's a girl! Judy and John deBlauw, of 290 Arthur St., are the proud parents of the Acton and area's first baby of 83. Janet May was born January 3, at 10.02 a.m. in Guelph General Hospital. Janet tipped the scales at 8 lbs., 8 ozs. She will be going home in a few days to her older sisters Kimberly and Tanya. She's the granddaughter of Wally and Edna Gordon, Acton, and David and Lammie deBlauw, RR 1, Campbellville.

Mystery why air raid siren sounded

By Gord Murray

The reason why the air raid siren went off and whailed away for over three hours late Saturday night and early Sunday morning in Acton remains a mystery.

The only explanations now for the length of time it took to have the siren turned off are communication procedure and technical breakdowns.

Lt. Col. Bev Totman, public affairs for the Department of National Defence in Toronto, said the Provincial Warning Centre for the Regional Emergency Government, Headquarters at Base Borden (that's where the Premier's bomb shelter is located and where buttons are pushed sounding the sirens in a real emergency) has confirmed there was an accidental sounding of the siren in Acton from approximately 10 p.m. January 1 to approximately 1.30 a.m. January 2.

He explained there is a procedure to be followed, but because of communication breakdowns, presumably caused by difficulty in reaching the appropriate people during the holidays, the procedure wasn't followed. He said the military hasn't determined yet where the communication breakdown occurred. Presumably it was communication breakdown which caused the siren to remain on so long.

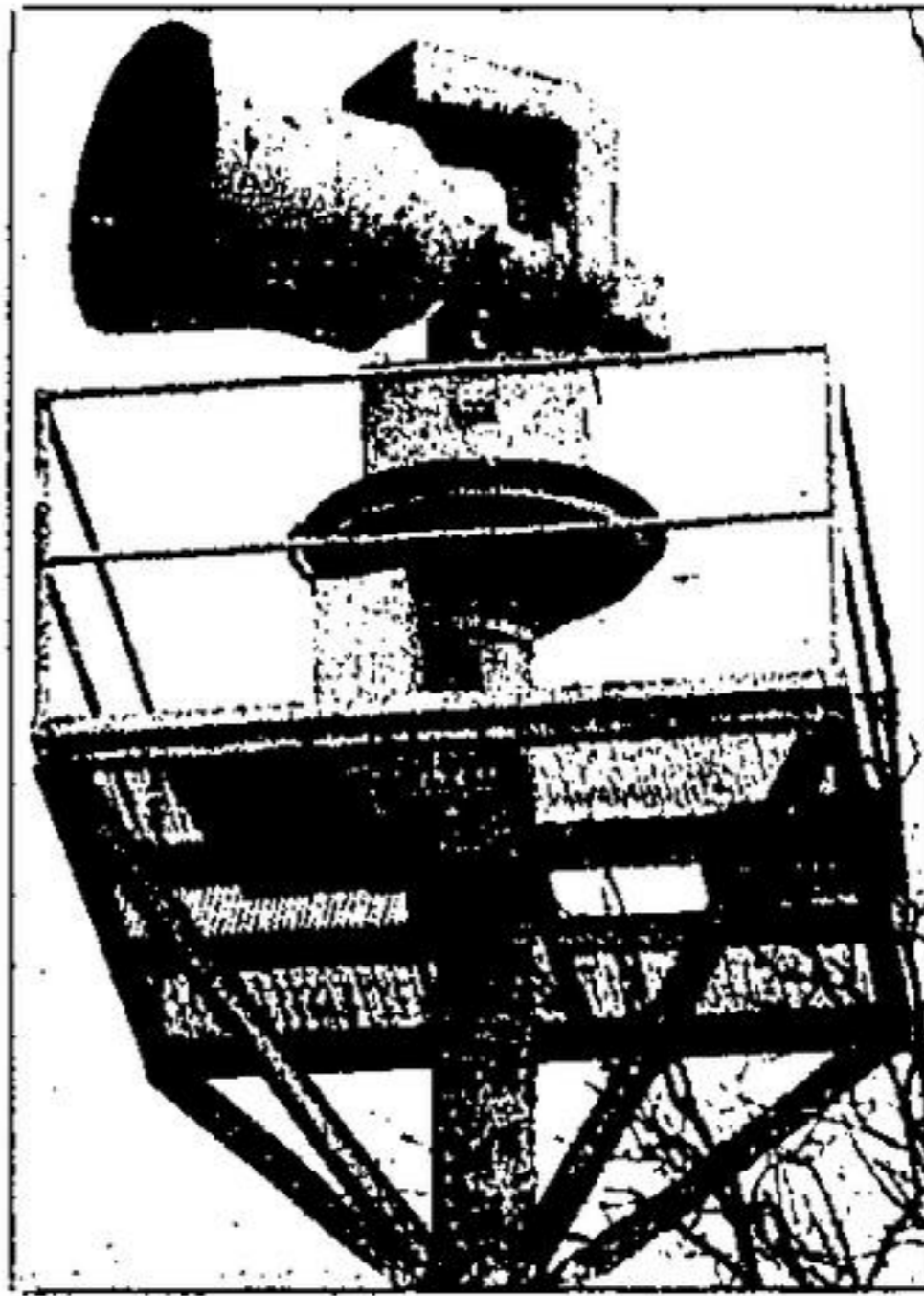
He said normally the Halton Regional Police would contact Bell Canada, the commercial carrier for the signals going to the sirens, and Bell would have it turned off.

Totman said Bell has checked its system and found nothing the matter and so now the Department of National Defence is checking its system to see if that's where the cause of the accidental sounding lies.

Mayor Peter Pomeroy, who said he received numerous calls about the siren, is also a member of Police Commission and is checking out why the siren sounded and why it took so long to get it turned off, but allowed he is having difficulty piecing it all together.

As he understands the situation from talking to the police, they followed procedure and contacted Bell. However, the person on duty didn't know the procedure and that caused a delay.

Then, Pomeroy explained, Bell has a control panel and flipping a switch on this panel should have turned off the siren in Acton. However, when the switch was flipped nothing happened, the siren



just kept on going.

The Provincial Warning Centre for the Regional Emergency Government Headquarters at Borden was contacted for clearance to cut the power to the siren. Pomeroy noted obtaining the clearance took more time.

Once clearance was given the police contacted Halton Hills Hydro who turned off the power. Hydro spokesman Hugh Campbell said they were asked to turn off the power early Sunday morning and they disconnected the power supply and it

hasn't been reconnected as far as he knows. The military will have to "come back to us" to have the power supply reconnected.

The mayor said if the same thing happened again this weekend it would be dealt with more effectively and quickly because everyone knows now how to get it shut off, however "you just don't go around turning off air raid sirens without proper clearances."

Pomeroy noted, he has been told, the siren was heard as far away from Acton as Glen Williams. He added the sirens have gone off in Halton Hills before.

Lt. Col. Totman noted the sirens are usually turned off quite quickly when they sound accidentally and there were only eight accidental air raid siren soundings in all of Ontario in 1982.

Sonia Skil, assistant regional director for Ontario for Emergency Planning Canada, said when the siren went off citizens who wondered if it was a malfunction or an actual emergency should have turned on their radios. If it was an actual emergency the Emergency Broadcast System would be on giving people information. Those who bothered to turn on their radios found regular programming, so of course there was no emergency.

She referred to the siren as an attention getting device, a warning or notice, to people to turn on their radios for information and instructions. The siren sounding doesn't mean that there are planes carrying atomic bombs flying overhead. She noted "in their minds people associate the siren with the air raid sirens of World War II."

She said there are a number of "probable" causes for sirens accidentally going off, including human error by Bell, an accident during maintenance, cable damage, "foreign voltage," lightning strikes and vandalism or the problem might have been something else altogether. Her department had no idea either why the Acton siren sounded.

Lt. Col. Totman said there will likely be more information forthcoming on why the siren went off and why there were communication breakdowns once all the checks of systems has been completed.

Besides calling municipal officials annoyed citizens were also calling firefighters and hydro workers to get the siren turned off.

Town staff prepare terms of reference, will tender municipal complex studies

By Gord Murray

Terms of reference for the municipal complex studies announced by Halton Hills council last month should be presented to council next Monday for approval.

Thursday the new building committee met to discuss what they want to find out from the studies and how to select the consulting firm which will conduct them. They reviewed some study guidelines framed by staff also. In interviews this week committee members Mayor Peter Pomeroy and Councillors Dave Whiting, Pam Sheldon and Finn Poulstrup discussed the committee's plans. Councillor Russ Miller also attended the meeting, though he isn't a member of the committee, and Councillor Marilyn Serjeantson, who is on the committee, couldn't attend because she was out of town.

Following are the contents of the staff suggested "guidelines" for the studies: "To study and report on the space requirements necessary to provide municipal services for a town population which will grow from 35,000 to 60,000 people. 1. To indicate the kinds of municipal services which may be necessary to provide as the municipality grows. 2. To analyze the space requirements of municipal government and related functions. 3. To comment on the feasibility of staged construction in relationship to growth patterns. Suggested study procedure—1. Study reports and pertinent documents to project growth patterns. 2. Interview key personnel. 3. Review present occupancy and comment upon adequacy. 4. Study special use areas, ie. council chambers. 5. Centralization of facilities and personnel to be used in common by several departments. 6. Facility parking needs.

Councillors will also be reviewing the studies and reports from 1976 when the Town previously considered building a municipal complex. Whiting noted the present central administration building on Trafalgar Rd. was built for Esqueung Township with a view to expansion, but expansion was envisioned for a Township, not a larger, growing urban-rural municipality.

The ward one representative on the committee explained the staff contacted other municipalities which have built or are building municipal centres, such as Mississauga, to find out how they did their studies. What they learned from other municipalities however didn't prove to be too useful to what Halton Hills has in mind.

All of the councillors reported once terms of reference for the studies are approved by council the studies will be advertised to obtain proposals. As well a few firms will be invited to submit proposals.

Whiting explained the municipality is aware of some firms which do this kind of work, but they also believe there are other firms which might be

able to do the studies. Also they figure there may be some local residents who work for firms which might want to do the work. By advertising the studies and having tenders submitted the process will be wide open.

Poulstrup explained once space needs are pro-

jected for the future, the successful consulting firm will be looking at the cost savings of consolidation as well as which departments should be in a municipal centre. For example, he said, probably the fire department shouldn't be housed in a

(Continued on page 2)

\$116,300 allotted

New job program hindered by rules

Halton Hills has been allotted \$116,300 for a new employment program by the federal and provincial governments, but because of the program's complex and strict rules, it is uncertain when that money will be seen or if the Town will even participate in the program.

Recently, the two levels of government indicated \$50 million has been slated for the Canada-Ontario Joint Employment Program, designed for unemployed people whose benefits have ended.

"It's got a lot of merit," stated Mayor Pete Pomeroy, who said he was uncertain about parts of the program. "But there are clauses in the program that are unclear and are of some concern to me personally."

The fact municipalities are required to put up about 20 per cent of the cost of any local projects, the project has to be labor-intensive, it has to be one that has not been budgetted in 1983 and the funds have a time limit are some of the "strings attached" Pomeroy is worried about.

The long process of approval of the projects is another problem. The Town has to fill out an application, identify a project and await approval by the government. The application goes to the

Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, then to Employment and Immigration which gives it to local field offices. Then a joint committee under the Canada Ontario Employment Development Program will look at the proposals and see if the program is worthy.

"It means we have to have a brand new project that would create employment," the mayor explained.

"An example of a labor intensive project would be the building of a soccer field, but that's only an example," said Pomeroy.

Pomeroy is most concerned about a stipulation that the municipality has to "guarantee" the employment will continue after the project has ended. Projects are supposed to last about three months.

"With the economic situation the way it is, we're finding it difficult to guarantee any existing employment," he stated.

"It is not as easy to implement as it sounds," he added.

Once a project is approved, according to the mayor, the workers are chosen from Canada Manpower Centres.

inside today's Free Press



Plans to sell 'half off'. Get them here... only half one leg.

A Ballinfaad family is homeless following a \$35,000 fire in their mobile home. Details on page 3.

Police beat is on page 5.

We take a look at the news of 1982 with a month by month review and photos on pages 11 and 12.

Local auto dealer and gas station owner Les Pelits made big news Monday when he took a tanker truck to Toronto to buy cheaper gas. See page 3.

AHS students are busy working on their play already even though the curtain doesn't go up until April. See story page 57.