



Halton Board of Education's youngest trustee, Dick Howitt (Esqueping), turned 12 years old today (Wednesday) February 29. The Leap Year baby was victim of a brief surprise party during last week's board meeting. Board chairman (and Georgetown trustee) Betty Fisher, left, and Acton's Arlene Bruce contributed to the fun.

Vision may be disability cause

Vision problems may be the cause of learning disabilities in many children and may also contribute to juvenile delinquency according to an optometrist speaking at the Georgetown Library, February 15.

While talking about children's vision June Robertson noted that a U.S. study provided juvenile delinquents with visual therapy along with educational opportunities and found that after two years there was a 50 per cent drop in repeat criminal offenses.

Vision problems can hamper other senses, especially hearing, she noted and she pointed out that medical data shows that they can cause physical and mental stress. "Vision is a significant part of the body," said Robertson. It plays a great role in the development of co-ordination and spatial judgement. It also is vital for the development of communication since much of our language comes to us in writing.

Teachers are often the first to spot signs of vision problems since they spend so much time with the children in a learning environment. Signs of difficulty include squinting, watery eyes, blinking, frustration and an inability to copy off the board.

Robertson advised parents that other physical ailments can affect vision, so there are many potential sources of visual impairment.



Optometrist June Robertson, left, checks the vision of Margaret Mitchell with a pair of glasses and a 3-D image.

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Julie Namlik, left, and Christine Brenckmann mix up a batch of muffins at Georgetown Christian School. They were taking part in a baking workshop, just one of the many programs offered at the school over the past month.

Christian School

Workshops boost spirits

February is the time of year when dreary winter days in the classroom lead students to thoughts of summer vacation and adventure.

The teachers at Georgetown District Christian School know their students pretty well and this year decided to head the mid-winter doldrums off at the pass.

For the past three weeks Tuesday afternoons have been reserved for activities such as downhill skiing, macrame, pottery, cook-

ing, painting and drama, and the whole school, teachers and pupils, are humming with activity.

Principal George Petrusma said children in Grades 1-8 are taking part and are "quite enthused" from this practical break from their studies.

"It gives them quite a lift," he explained.

Mr. Petrusma said the workshops are very good for students who prefer practical experiences to academic studies. For those who have difficulty with book studies, they

are given a chance to excel at something else and "it helps better their self image," he explained.

There are 17 workshops in all and students were asked to give their top three preferences from which one was chosen for them to participate in.

Mr. Petrusma said the school is indebted to 25 parents who have helped teachers supervise the workshops and drive students to their outdoor activities.

Parentage tests hike welfare cost

by Vic MacBourne

Despite declining welfare rolls the region's welfare budget continues to grow.

The problem, according to David Szwarc, manager of Halton's income maintenance department, is new social welfare programs introduced by the provincial government.

One of the major increases in this year's welfare assistance budget is the cost of tests performed on men who deny being the father of a child. The tests are used by the courts to determine if the man should pay paternity for his children.

The expensive tests which can cost as much as \$600, are increasing, Szwarc said. And although the tests could save the region from paying out a lot of money in welfare cheques to the single mother, they are still costing the region a bundle of money.

Szwarc said the region had 40 cases last year and had to pick up approximately 50 per cent of the bill. The province paid the other 50 per cent.

Szwarc told the members of the region's social services committee that original welfare predictions were overestimated last year by six per cent adding that he expected this year's rate to fall even further.

In addition, the region also has to pick up costs related to the early discharge of psychiatric and mentally retarded patients from institutions. Szwarc told committee members that a grant of \$350 is given to some of the patients being deinstitutionalized. The region is responsible for 20 per cent of the grant which is given to the patients to assist them back into the community. It is often used to pay the first month's rent, he explained.

In addition to the \$350 grant, the patients are also putting additional demands on the community dentistry program and other

regionally funded welfare assistance programs.

Szwarc said the patients were provided with dental care while they were in the institutions but once they move out they go to the regionally run facilities.

Burlington councillor Joyce Savoline attacked the provincial government for introducing programs and making regions pick up some of the bills.

"If they are deinstitutionalized people and saving dollars we should not have to pay anything," she said.

In an attempt to fight additional demands placed on the region by the province, committee members decided to chop \$13,000 from the general welfare assistance budget.

Szwarc said the budget decrease would mean immediate restrictions to various welfare programs including community dental.

Expansion

No objection to clay pit

The Town has no objection to the expansion of the Amos C. Martin Ltd. clay pit, the Niagara Escarpment Commission was told last week.

Martin owns 40 acres of land in Lot 23, Concession 8, fronting on the north side of 22 Sideroad. Eight acres has been licensed for clay extraction since 1972, and now the owner wants the remainder of the property licensed.

Amos C. Martin Ltd. manufactures clay

Volunteers still needed

The Volunteer Centre has been receiving regular requests from various community agencies for help in their programs. These requests include many, many areas of volunteering. Listed below are a few areas that might interest you to say "Hey, I can do that!"

1. Men between the ages of 20 and 30 are needed to establish a relationship with fatherless boys on an ongoing basis. You can do that.
 2. Honey Pot Nursery needs people to assist in the Nursery School Program. You can do that.
 3. People with good listening skills and who are non-judgemental are needed to handle telephone distress and information calls. You can do that.
 4. A board member is required to help an organization that deals with those leaving Ontario Correctional Institutions and moving into the community. It requires one meeting a month. You can do that.
 5. Help in helping handicapped people, friendly person to help seniors with shopping and visiting. You can do that.
- For further information call the North Halton Volunteer Centre at 677-3373.

Cultural grants create dispute

Regional Council had a bucket full of cash to spread around in cultural grants Wednesday but not everyone was happy with the way the pot was divided up.

The Hamilton Philharmonic Society was granted \$12,000 with little debate and the Royal Botanical Gardens received \$174,600 in the same fashion.

But the modest demands of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce (\$1,000), Oakville Symphony Orchestra (\$1,500) and Lorne Scots Regiment (\$2,000) received long and detailed scrutiny that left some councillors muttering about the spending priorities of their colleagues.

All were eventually approved except the Chamber of Commerce application. Some councillors argued that its BIG celebration was not primarily a cultural event, while others said it was a cultural event that only the town of Halton Hills and provincial Bicentennial funds should support.

But just prior to denying this grant, over

\$28,000 was given to the Halton Region Safety Council in a cultural grant even though many councillors agreed the money was to be spent, not on cultural events but on safety promotion campaigns.

Regional Chairman Pete Pomeroy said it was included under cultural grant because there didn't seem to be any other suitable classification for it.

A number of councillors from Oakville were upset at the attention Oakville Symphony Orchestra's request received when council was eager to give the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra (HPO) a vastly greater sum. Others had argued that the Oakville symphony should get its support from the town of Oakville.

After the HPO got its grant it was revealed that it has about 10,000 Halton subscribers, including 9,000 from Burlington and 1,000 from Oakville. In the past the HPO has only made appearances in Oakville.

The Oakville Symphony says it has performers from around the region.

'Nothing to celebrate,' region ignores birthday

Halton Region may be 10 years old this year but not even regional council thinks a celebration is in order.

A motion was killed Wednesday that called for the appointment of a committee to plan birthday festivities in conjunction with Ontario's bicentennial celebration.

Said Regional Councillor Walter Mulke- wick, "Why should we celebrate 10 years of government that has yet to be proven?"

Added Burlington Mayor Roly BIRD, a strong critic of regional government, "I

haven't run across anyone who thinks (a celebration) is a good idea."

Mulke wick said the province's bicentennial was a time to celebrate 200 years of history and citizen achievement, and it shouldn't be used to mark the founding of a political body like regional council.

Even veteran regional politician Pat McLaughlin was against any birthday plans.

He suggested that a 25th or 50th anniversary was a more appropriate event to celebrate.

Planners question sewage allocation

When land approved for development lies vacant for a few years, should the sewage capacity allocated to that development be retained indefinitely?

That question is being discussed by planning and works department staffs at the region and town levels.

The outcome could affect 55 development applications in various stages of approval in Town, since all committed developments are included in total sewage plant capacity.

The question was voiced by Planning Director Ian Keith when two development applications with draft approval, sought an extension of that approval this week.

Marport Development Corporation, whose proposal calls for 126 street townhouses or link homes, behind the plaza, was approved originally in 1976, and has had several extensions of draft approvals since then. The most recent approval would have lapsed on March 20, of this year, but council agreed to a further six month's extension.

Marport blamed the delay in building on

economic conditions when seeking extensions in the past. This time Marport claims a sale of the land is being negotiated and hopes the new owner will proceed with the subdivision agreement.

Sharmont Investments Ltd. who plan 14 single family homes between Hillside Crescent and the CNR line, near the hospital, also were given a six month extension. In both cases a year long extension had been requested.

The planning director, in a report to council, pointed out developments which show no evidence of progress could hold up development of proposed development to the south and west of Town, since the sewage capacity is allocated and not being used.

Keith said this report is simply a warning that sewage capacity rights should not go on forever, and the subject re-examined. "We should keep such applicants on a short rope," he commented as he recommended the six month's extension rather than the year.

Council agreed to the six month extension.



Fam Sheldon, right, presented Mille and John DeVries with gifts at a surprise party at the Acton Legion Friday. The DeVrieses owned and operated Speyside General Store for almost six years and recently sold the business, planning to move to Milton. Almost 200 friends and neighbors gathered at the party to wish them well.