

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Librarian details project costs, needs, delays

To the editor of The Herald: It is a source of bleak dismay to think that a mere librarian could have single-handedly caused the abandonment of the proposed library expansion back in 1974. I must plead not guilty to the charge leveled against me as reported in the Herald of Feb. 23 based on the interview with Councilor Booth. Mr. Booth assures me that was not his intent, nevertheless I think it is time we set the record straight.

By the time I arrived on the scene in April of 1974 the maximum dimensions and configuration of the addition had already been determined - these, fixed by the amount of space the building could legally occupy. Comparison of the 1972 feasibility study drawings and the final design stage drawings (both available for examination at the library) will demonstrate that any changes instituted by me consisted of minor rearrangements of interior space - none of which could have contributed materially to any increased costs. Further allegations that undue delays contributed to the cost escalation can only be countered by referring to the cost escalation in the detailed chronology I have prepared from Library Board minutes and Council communications. In brief, owing to the dislocations created along with the creation of Halton Hills final authorization from Council to proceed with the plans was received by the Board on May 9, 1974. Before the end of June I had completed my part in the design work and the succeeding three months until we went to tender were occupied by the preparation of working drawings, tender specifications and more detailed estimates. A Winter Works fund application prepared in August of 1974 estimated the cost of the project (unfurnished) at \$330,000. Incidentally it is not at all unusual for the tender preparation to take 3 months.

Well then, what really happened? Why WAS the project abandoned? On Oct. 23, 1974 the tenders were opened and the Board instructed the architect to negotiate with the lowest bidder to seek economies in his price of \$377,000. By eliminating ALL the rework to the old building and making other minor economies in the construction of the new, Mr. Martel managed to wring credits amounting to \$16,600 from the contractor. On November 15, 1974 Council advised the Board to let the tenders lapse and at the same time directed the treasurer to seek alternative financing to cover the difference between the \$250,000 capital authorization and the cost of the extension.

In January of 1975 the Board, desperate to salvage the project, directed the Secretary to work with the architect and the contractor to prepare revised drawings and cost estimates. The result was a butchery of the original design and arose from the contractor's contention that as long as he had to work with the fabric of the old building he couldn't build for less. He proposed an extension that stood completely separate from the old building, connected by an unutilized cord hallway. Mr. Martel prepared drawings to these demands but the result, even to the eyes of Board and Council was so unworkable and reduced in size as to be worthless (as well as ugly) and after this heart-breaking exercise in futility the Planning Board on May 6, 1975 advised the Library Board to discontinue expansion plans.

That was that. Or seemed to be. Since that time and increasingly now, comes the cry: "Resurrect the old library addition!"

Certain hard facts must be faced when considering this is an alternative. During 1975 the Board commissioned a professional report on the nature and cost of repairs to the old building. (This document is available for examination at the library.) The estimate at the end of 1975 for the necessary repairs to the exterior only, came to \$97,550.00.

No attempt has yet been made to assess the cost of repairs to the interior, but it must be borne in mind that this building contravenes numerous fire code regulations and therefore constitutes a public hazard. It is quite possible that the book load is dangerously overstressing the structure. Progressive crumbling of the vaulted plaster ceiling above the suspended ceiling must somehow be arrested. The building is completely unutilized resulting in increasingly expensive heating costs. These are some of the more obvious details. Depending on the extent to which stringent new building codes are applied renovation costs could be astronomical.

In addition other government requirements with regard to public washrooms, etc. would eat into the already limited space.

Simply resurrecting the original plans is no longer possible. The new (Jan. 1976) Ontario Building Code now requires complete reworking of the original plans, building to new, more expensive standards and of course allowing for the inevitable inflation factor. Suppose after taking all this into account the decision is still made to go ahead and build the addition. What will the community get for its money? Referring to the dimensions established pre-bureaucracy: usable space, excluding stairs, halls, washrooms, mechanical rooms, foyer, etc., would total 8,080 square feet (10,080 gross). This was broken down into the following elements: 1500 sq. ft. in the main floor of the old building which contains the bulk of the adult collection 900 sq. ft. for a multi-purpose room on the main floor of the addition 980 sq. ft. for work room and office space also on main floor of the addition 2300 sq. ft. for reference, and reading room on the top floor of the addition accessible only by stair (elevator eliminated as too costly.) 2500 sq. ft. for the Junior library sub grade floor of the addition - again accessible only by stair.

In the final design stage it transpired that when allowance was made for adequate space between shelves and for necessary seating, tables and

desks, the book stack capacity totalled 23,500 volumes (10,500 in the main floor of the old building, 7,000 in the Junior library; 6,000 in the third floor reference-reading room) a striking increase over our present capacity of approximately 24,000 volumes. How is it possible? Modern standards call for considerably more people circulation room and much space is absorbed this way. We could, of course have sacrificed the multi-purpose room or the

urgently needed work space - and defeated 50 per cent of the project's purpose. The architect also excluded the old building basement because of its perennial dampness. Suppose through sacrifices and makeshifts we could add another 10,000 volume capacity. We should still have only one half of the required 60,000 volume capacity. And, of course all of this presupposes that we can actually continue to use the old building - AT A COST THE COMMUNITY CAN AFFORD.

Item: It will cost at least \$400,000 to build the 10,000 sq. ft. addition - at a price of \$37 per sq. ft. Let us be conservative and estimate that it will cost \$200,000 to renovate the old building - even if spread over several years - to obtain 3,000 sq. ft. at a price of \$66 per sq. ft. A total of \$600,000 to gain the use of 13,000 sq. ft. which by the standards applied to the present population is already inadequate and for future

growth makes no allowances at all. Further expansion of the site is impossible. A satellite branch in the plaza area which has been suggested and investigated could be expected to be prohibitively expensive in staffing and maintenance costs and would unduly strain the resources available to an already undermanned and supplied system. Item: The new library on a site selected for its central location, its high visibility and

accessibility will cost \$40 per sq. ft. and provide 18,000 sq. ft. immediately and ample room for any necessary future expansion. It ought to be completely adequate for the next 10 years and possibly, depending on the town's growth, for the foreseeable future. I regret the length of this letter but the public has never before been given the full facts on which to base their judgments. Almost nothing in the foregoing explanation is based on subjective opinion. Virtually all of it can be documented by records available at the library or the town office or from papers in the possession of the architect. I hope this will finally and forever put an end to allegations that the librarian, the library board, or Council, for that matter have been remiss or willfully negligent in their handling of this matter.

Yours truly (Mrs.) B.R. Cornwell Chief Librarian

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Citizen attacks political pay rise after only two months "work"

To the editor of The Herald: WARNING: This letter is not recommended as suitable reading material for our big dollar, municipal politicians in Georgetown or the regional white-house in Halton Region.

It is not intended to be amusing in any way shape or form. I am going to take this golden opportunity to pass a long to the thousands upon thousands of working men and women, and other people who are having trouble making ends meet, some of the views I have heard expressed since the politicians took time out from telling the voters what great guys they were just before they got elected, and then voted themselves a healthy pay increase.

As I was not born yesterday, I am well aware of the fact that most of our so-called community-spirited men and women in the hallowed halls of politics do not give a damn about being the target of public displeasure just after they have been elected.

You see they are safely in their political nest for the next two years, and as far as some of them are concerned their attitude is that the average worker can go to hell. By no stretch of the imagination do I think or pretend to be a know it all. In fact, I need a little help. I would like any citizen to let me know of a job opening in Halton Hills where you can get a pay increase of \$500-\$600 and more after only roughly two months of work, and that using the word "work" loosely.

I earnestly suspect that only politicians fall into that category. Not only were the politicians not satisfied with a pay increase on the local level but Halton regional council just voted themselves a \$495.00 and more raise.

At the rate of fishing out public funds the mayor will be earning more than the Premier of Ontario in a few years. Even now some Halton regional councillors are making more money, they like to call it remuneration than M.P.'s at Queen Park. That is pretty hard to swallow - but, apparently, not for the politicians on the local scene who are their own boss and can do anything

Yours truly Pat Hrethika

they want and do. It makes one a little angry to hear a councillor stand up and say he is voting for a pay increase not because he does not need it but because he is thinking of less fortunate colleagues. Hagwash.

For those of you who missed the names of the local councillors who did NOT vote for a raise here they are: Walter Brehl, Les Duby, Marilyn Serrettson, and Peter Morris, Councillors: George Malby, Pat Patterson, Pat McKenzie and Mike Armstrong were NOT present on the night of the great "Pay Raise" debate. The others well you know who they are and how they voted. Here are their names, which might be of assistance when the next election rolls around, or you may just want to ask them a question. Russ Miller, Roy Booth, Peter Marks, Pete Pomeroy, and Mayor Tom Hill.

It would be very informative to have a list of each member of council and ALL the remuneration they receive from the public purse. This should include various committees, boards, commissions, etc. and it should include any benefits and expense allowances. Let's have the facts and see how big the trouble is and how our pockets are being emptied. It is very unfortunate but once again it is becoming clear to

many citizens how so few politicians really care for the individual citizen, they are more interested in their own - selfish self-centred world. Promising almost anything to be elected and win votes, and not accepting the full responsibility of their own statements.

Bill Campsey Main Street South.

Audit elected officials' salaries for services

To the editor of The Herald: The question of our elected representatives' salaries should be studied very carefully, as it is a highly controversial subject, that affects not only municipal councillors but M.P.'s and M.P.'s too.

Two points of contention are that these people have the privilege, (and I might add the rare privilege) of setting their own salaries, and that they never mention salaries before an election, it is always after an election that they find (that is not all, but many of them) that they cannot manage on the salary in effect.

When salaries are mentioned, particularly new salaries, there is seldom ever any mention of the extras such as reimbursement for sitting on various committees, etc. I strongly believe that at the end of each fiscal year an audit sheet should be published naming each of our elected representatives, showing the basic salary, and any increment they received for sitting on a second level of government (such as a Regional Councillor) or any Commissions, Committees, etc. that they served on. Such a statement would show the electorate who was sitting on what, and how much they were receiving.

Some of us may be shocked, some of us may be surprised, but the air would certainly be cleared.

William A. Johnson

Reader objects to library plan

Mr. Mayor and Councillors. I strongly object to the building of a new public library for, in my opinion, obvious reasons. The public does not want it, and it is not needed.

The numerous times I have been to the library, I have seen no evidence of a need for more room. Although, I must admit, when six or more fiction readers are looking for books, these people could be in each other's way. But, that is the result of bad planning. The fiction section is too small when you compare it to the percentage of people using it. In fact some people do not go to the library because of the small fiction section.

I suggest that, if more non-fiction books are required the Library Board should arrange with the education authorities for use of all Georgetown schools' most complete libraries, and thereby eliminating duplicated service.

I repeat, it is NOT the public that wants a new building. Unfortunately, it is a fact that the public would have to pay for it. If this project is allowed to go through, surely we the public, should be given valid reasons!

If for some reason unknown to me, more space is required, what better use could Chapel St. School be put to.

Yours sincerely, Charles Crimes, Ratepayer.

Can we afford farmland dump site?

Dear Regional Councillor: I am very pleased that you support the concept of preserving farmland in Halton. Because of inflated production costs and depressed markets, farmers are having a difficult time competing with low cost foreign imports. After little return, even losses on high investments and hard work, many are selling to speculators. U.S. became dependent on foreign oil. I do hope Canada never becomes dependent on food imports. Can we really afford prime farmland for a dump site?

Primitive man dug a hole and buried his garbage. Have we progressed? Fortunately, our ancestors did not have our bulk of garbage or we would not be here to-day.

Present garbage sites will soon be full. Could that time not be lengthened if we all work to cut down garbage at the source? Last year, I kept count of our garbage. We had 3 small bags for a family of 7. In approximately 5 minutes a day garbage can be sorted and cleaned for recycling. Only a few articles can not be salvaged, composted or burnt (e.g. light bulbs, batteries, china and aerosol cans but the nearest depot is 10 miles away).

Some suggestions for extending present garbage sites are:

1. Encourage government action to standardize containers and make them returnable as the breweries did.
2. Limit garbage per household.
3. House-to-house pick-up of recyclables only, on a regular basis in colour coded bags if necessary.
4. Make funds available to locate and man depots for recyclables in more accessible locations. It may become a source of income.
5. Make limited funds available for re-education.
6. Open up garbage sites to the public. With high energy costs, it might surprise you how much garbage would disappear. Place all wood in one location. One man's garbage is another man's treasure!
7. Implement plans in the new regional building for an incinerator for auxiliary heating purposes.

We grow apples adjacent to Site F. We have one of the future prized possession - pure clean water. Can you guarantee it will remain that way?

Site F is located to the south of one of the few remaining picturesque natural landscapes in Ontario as anyone who has visited Rattlesnake Point can testify - so beautiful that the Ontario Government would not deface it with hydro lines. It should be preserved for future generations.

Let's do something constructive not destructive!

Yours truly Mrs. Eleanor Bousfield

cc Mr. George Kerr, MPP

Library 'handicapped' in providing services

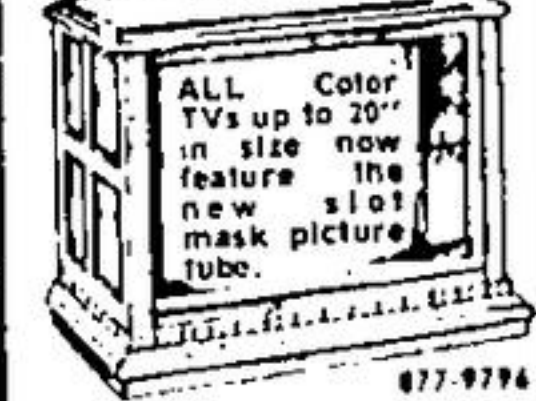
To the editor of The Herald: I moved to Georgetown in 1969. Since then, I have been a regular user of the Georgetown Library services. At that time the library seemed small and cramped for the population that it was serving. Since then, I have frequently read or heard of plans for expansion or rebuilding.

It is now 1977 and Councillor Roy Booth has been quoted in last week's Herald as saying "We shouldn't rush this library proposal." Well, if this is an

example of local government rushing things, I would hate to see them dragging their feet. Given decent facilities, a library can be a very important part of any community and provide many specialized services. Under the present conditions, the Georgetown Library is severely handicapped in providing even the essential library service of a large and varied selection of reading material.

Yours truly Pat Hrethika

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