

Riding ruthlessly
Ruth was riding in the
country on the back of her
boy friend's motorcycle - he
hit a bump at 75 miles an
hour, and kept on ruthlessly!

Financial information not coming, Actonians say

By GEORGE EVASHUK
Herald staff writer

Financial information from elected officials which would indicate whether Acton is better off under regional government is not being supplied to the Actonians for Action, the Ontario Liberal caucus on regional government was told Wednesday.

Norm Elliot, spokesman for the 18-month-old group of Acton residents, said it is not opposed to regional government but wants to make clear Acton's situation in regional government.

"We are told continuously by elected officials that financially Acton is better off and we should be happy," Mr. Elliot said. "We don't believe this is the case."

Mr. Elliot told the task force, which is touring all the regions in Ontario to gather information to develop a Liberal party policy on regional government, that a request to Darcy McKeough provincial treasurer and minister of inter-governmental affairs, to study Halton was turned down on the grounds that the province could not afford it and also lacked manpower.

The request was supported by about 2,000 names of Acton residents.

Statements by politicians on the financial benefits of regional government to Acton "Are not documents," Mr. Elliot said.

"The town of Halton Hills is on the brink of spending \$1 million on a municipal complex," Mr. Elliot said. "We see the emergence of a new empire in Halton being established before we can do anything about it."

Acton was "dragged kicking and screaming into a forced marriage with Georgetown," Mr. Elliot said. The Actonians for Action group has been criticized as being totally negative but this is not the objective of the group, he added. There are benefits from regional government but Acton "we felt was becoming increasingly overshadowed by Georgetown."

"We felt Acton was losing its identity." The town has not developed a community of interest with Georgetown or regional government. "We never felt there was a community of interest and it has failed to develop."

Mr. Elliot said there has to be some kind of accountability to monitor the regional government system.

"We fear it will go out of control and we

won't be able to do anything about it." Action is unequivocally opposed to single tier government. Input from local people seems

Three complaints found

The Ontario Liberal caucus task force which is studying regional government has found three main themes in its investigations, says Herb Epp, Waterloo MPP who chairs the task force.

Complaints have been heard Mr. Epp told The Herald in Milton Wednesday, that regional government costs too much, "but whether the cost is justified in additional services is not clear."

And combined with this finding is another indicating a "lack of incentive for economy," he said.

"The bigger the government the less incentive for economy in general," he said. An attitude is developing that in a budget of \$30 million, "What's \$10,000?"

Duplication of services at the regional and local level also are complaints the task force has heard, Mr. Epp said.

As well, "there is a feeling that regional councils are more remote from citizens than local councils," he said.

"Some people have said that regional government is good and serving them well." The task force chairman

said the recommendations of the force will be presented to the Ontario Liberal caucus in early spring.

Reception by the public of the task force has been "very good," he said. The meetings have drawn between 15 to 100 persons but the task force is more interested in getting a dialogue going between itself and the public rather than drawing large crowds, he said.

The task force will be visiting every region in Ontario with the exception of Metro Toronto and Muskoka.

to be drying up and government is going the way of supermarkets, he said.

"It's got to be big to be successful but you can't get everything in a supermarket."

On the subject of taxes, Mr. Elliot told the task force that tax increases to Acton residents have not been exorbitant "at this point" but he understood that that was due to government subsidies which if they run out could lead to taxes "skyrocketing."

Mr. Elliot criticized the chargeback system of financing capital projects in the region. The chargeback system seems "punitive," he said. Regional officials say that unless equalized assessment is instituted across the region, Halton will lose government subsidies.

The regional chairman "tells us we're better off and that a lot has been done in Acton that was subsidized by the rest of the region."

Under the chargeback system, capital projects, such as water and sewer would be paid for by the users, under equalized assessment the cost of such projects would be spread over the entire region.

Mr. Elliot agreed that under the chargeback system taxes to Acton taxpayers might

double or triple but on the other hand "we'd not have to pay for things in Oakville and Burlington."

As well, Acton residents can't discern how much of their taxes are going into recreation or other departments, he said. It is difficult to get financial statements from Halton Hills and the statements themselves can't be understood by the average layman. The statements are "computerized" and about a year and a half behind, he said.

"It's not wrong for us to question what's happening," Mr. Elliot said. "If we don't, we will let the civil servants run it because it's all we deserve otherwise."

The task force is headed by Waterloo MPP Herb Epp. It's recommendations are due to caucus by early spring at which time it will be decided whether to make them public, he said in an interview.

The major trends the task force is finding in its survey of regional governments are that the costs of regional governments are too high, although whether the cost is justified in increased services is not yet clear; a duplication of services at the local and regional tiers and remoteness of the regional tier from public.

Women's council future is in doubt

By LORI TAYLOR
Herald staff writer

After 54 years of operation, the Local Council of Women is in danger of folding.

The council met last Friday afternoon to elect a new executive, since current president Gail Rombush is stepping down for health reasons. The meeting turned into a discussion of the future of the club when it became apparent that none of the women present thought they had time enough away from the organizations they are involved in to work on the executive of the council.

Mrs. Rombush said that originally, each member of the council was supposed to be involved with another organization outside the council. Members were then able to report on the activities of the organizations to the council, allowing the groups in the community to keep in touch with each other. But this has become a disadvantage, she said, since the women are so busy with the outside organizations that they have little time left to devote to forming an executive within the council.

Council member Honey Cornfoot said the council has suffered from being identified with the Status of Women Council.

"The Local Council is supposed to be a municipal sounding board for the community," she said. She added that as far as the national and provincial provincial Councils of Women are concerned, the Local Council represents the organizations in the com-

munity.

"We're supposed to represent these groups, but they don't send anyone to our meetings," Mrs. Cornfoot said.

"I hate to see the club fold because I think there is a need," Mrs. Rombush said. "It's a sounding board for the community organizations to come and talk about what they're doing. Ideally, it's a good communications medium, but we can't get representatives from the clubs."

Membership in the council has dropped substantially over the past year or so.

"A lot of members come only when there is a speaker who interests them," Mrs. Cornfoot said.

"If you're at home with kids for even a year, going to out the front door is a major step," Mrs. Rombush said. "Going to a meeting where you know no one, and no one speaks to you can be a pretty frightening experience."

"I've lost my faith in women as women, because they're not willing to fight," Mrs. Cornfoot said. "There are effective women in this community, but they're not in our group."

Some of the members present commented on the fact that a number of new programs have been started under the auspices of the Local Council of Women. When a new program is started, the members who are interested in that particular program often branch off into a group of their own.

The future of the club will be decided at the next meeting Feb. 17.



IS SPRING FAR BEHIND?

Can Spring be far behind when the first lamb of the season has made its appearance? The Dorset Horn Lamb was born Sunday morning at the 10 acre farm of Al Siskierko near Terra Cotta. Behind the lamb stands the ewe with horns, a mark of the breed. A hobby farmer, Mr. Siskierko plans to raise a registered flock of the attractive sheep.

ewes with horns, a mark of the breed. A hobby farmer, Mr. Siskierko plans to raise a registered flock of the attractive sheep.

Policeman acquitted on appeal

Halton police Sgt. Jason Field won his appeal Monday in county court against a conviction against "unlawful or unnecessary exercise of authority" during the arrest of 20-year-old Gary Sparling of Acton last May.

Sgt. Field had been found guilty under the Police Act of striking Sparling twice in the head after apprehending him during a high-speed car chase through Georgetown.

The conviction, which carried a fine of \$150,000 and a 12-month suspension from the force, was handed down by Judge Hogg during a hearing in court on Monday.

disciplinary hearing.

In overturning Skerrett's decision against Sgt. Fields, Judge Stanton Hogg, of Toronto, said Chief Ken Skerrett had made errors in his judgment.

Judge Hogg said Chief Skerrett's judgment had been based on erroneous interpretation of evidence and a misconception that an earlier statement by Sgt. Field to Superintendent George Moore, of Burlington, corroborated Sparling's testimony.

John Greenwood, a Brampton lawyer acting for Sgt. Field told a hearing

Continued on Page 2

Region budget \$34 million, up 4.4 %

By GEORGE EVASHUK
Herald staff writer

Halton regional councillors took their first look Wednesday at a \$34,777,400 operating budget for 1978 which should have a net effect to the taxpayer of about a 4.4 per cent increase over last year.

The amount to be levied from municipalities is \$15,972,400, up 6.7 per cent over 1977, the year it increased a whopping 21 per cent. Council slashed \$552,300

from the budget to the cut the anticipated increase in spending in 1978 to 3.3 per cent from 5 per cent despite a plea from Halton Chairman Ric Morrow that the sum be placed in a reserve fund for landfill sites because provincial purses are drying up. The revenue is from existing landfill sites.

Final approval of the budget is expected late in March. Included in the budget is \$9,122,900 for police, about five

per cent more than in 1977. The police budget will fall under the scrutiny of administration committee today (Wednesday).

Taxpayers in Halton Hills must still await budgets from Halton Hills council and Halton board of education.

Cuts amounting to \$158,695 proposed by Oakville councillor Ron Planché were rejected by council. However, council did approve in principle increasing the dollars

spent on conventions, conferences and collective bargaining, a sum expected to total, when approved, about \$12,000.

Not included in the budget deliberations Wednesday were the budgets of the Grand River Conservation Authority and the Credit Valley Conservation Authority which are expected to total about \$1.5 million. However, a number of projects of both conservation authorities may be delayed.

According to budget figures released the cost of general government in 1978 is proposed at \$1,903,900, an increase of about 4.1 per cent over 1977; \$10,725,200 for public works, an increase of about 1.8 per cent; \$702,900 for community planning and development, a decrease of about 3.4 per cent; \$3,473,200 for health services, an increase of about 11 per cent; \$2,568,300 for social and family services, an increase of 5.6 per cent; \$3,958,100 for

Home for the Aged, an increase of 4.5 per cent; \$110,800 for recreation and community services, an increase of 10.8 per cent; \$10,745,300 for protection to property and persons; and \$396,200 in grants to organizations and Children's Aid Society, an increase of about 8.6 per cent.

Revenue from various government sources is down \$1,109,588 to \$12,801,200 from 1977. Also down is revenue from child welfare collections,

school debentures refund, and miscellaneous revenue to \$108,200 from \$128,045 in 1977.

Other revenue resources, which include operating subsidies from Ontario and refunds of federal sales tax, are up \$248,229 to a total of \$2,509,400.

Total sewage credits for the region are \$1,531,900, a sum made up of \$104,200 from Acton; \$300,000 from Georgetown; \$50,700 from Milton; \$225,000 Oakville; \$467,000 Burlington.

CONTRACT TALKS STALLED

Separate school strike foreseen, final vote urged

Halton separate school teachers have requested a final vote on latest contract proposals from the separate school board, a move interpreted by the board's chief negotiator as a strike vote.

Hartley Sherk, trustee for Halton Hills, disputes the position of the teachers' bargaining unit which says several other options still exist including further negotiation, arbitration and final offer selection by the Education Relations Commission.

"Why are they (the teachers) asking for a final offer vote if they don't consider this is our final offer? Why didn't they continue to negotiate?" He says the teachers will either have to return to negotiations or take a strike vote because "we won't go to arbitration or to final offer selection."

Bob Boyle, head of the teacher bargaining unit, maintains the action taken after talks broke off last week doesn't constitute a strike vote.

Teachers have been working without a contract since Aug. 31. Negotiations have been under way since last February.

The separate school board feels the latest move by the teachers clearly implies the teachers are not willing to negotiate in good faith, Mr. Sherk says.

"Bill 100 (the Schools Administration Act) defines strike as work to rule, slow down, and so on, as well as walking off the job," Mr. Sherk says. If a strike vote is taken, approved and acted upon he would "recommend the board seriously consider closing the schools."

Teachers are still seeking an 11.3 per cent increase in salary. The board's latest offer made Jan. 11 calls for an 8.06 per cent increase.

Under the expired contract teachers are earning between a minimum of \$8,299 and a maximum (including increments for up to 12 years or more of service) of \$24,437. The latest board offer would increase to a minimum of \$9,099 and a 12 year maximum of \$26,160.

Principals salaries are based on the size of the school. The latest board offer calls for no increase other than an adjustment in the teacher salary scale for principals of schools with under six rooms. Present increments of \$600 per room above the teacher rate would remain in force.

Proposed changes for principals of schools with six to 15 rooms would see an increase in the minimum salary level to \$26,339 from \$25,039. The maximum salary would increase to \$28,439 from \$27,139.

Principals of schools with greater than 15 rooms would receive a minimum of \$27,339, up from \$26,039 to a maximum of \$31,339, up from \$30,039.

ments for up to 12 years or more of service) of \$24,437. The latest board offer would increase to a minimum of \$9,099 and a 12 year maximum of \$26,160.

Principals salaries are based on the size of the school. The latest board offer calls for no increase other than an adjustment in the teacher salary scale for principals of schools with under six rooms. Present increments of \$600 per room above the teacher rate would remain in force.

Proposed changes for principals of schools with six to 15 rooms would see an increase in the minimum salary level to \$26,339 from \$25,039. The maximum salary would increase to \$28,439 from \$27,139.

Principals of schools with greater than 15 rooms would receive a minimum of \$27,339, up from \$26,039 to a maximum of \$31,339, up from \$30,039.

IT'S A GAS

Police cruisers used by Halton Regional Police in Halton Hills won't be switching over to unleaded gasoline just yet.

William Hourigan, chairman of the Halton Police Commission, said present zoning regulations won't allow the force to have its own gasoline tanks installed in Acton and Georgetown. The

new tanks would be used to supply unleaded gasoline to the police cruisers in Halton Hills.

The cruisers are currently being fueled from the municipal tanks, using regular gasoline. All of the new cars being tendered for by the commission can run on regular and unleaded gasoline.

Sub-committees set to study hostel plan

Attempts to set up a hostel for battered wives in Halton moved a step forward last week with the setting up of sub-committees to define the exact function of the proposed hostel and the extent of the need for it, as well as a means of funding it.

A steering committee of approximately 15 people met in the Milton Health Unit offices last Thursday to take action on the apparent need for a hostel to shelter abused women with or without children which was discussed at a similar meeting two weeks ago.

Chairman for the steering committee is Gloria Hinks of Burlington, herself a battered

wife. Other executive positions are still open.

Members of the sub-committee to define the purpose of the hostel and name the steering committee are Carolyn Altea, an Oakville lawyer, Betty Hill a Georgetown family counsellor and Elaine Klehn of Burlington.

The sub-committee which will be gathering statistics on the number of cases of abuse in Halton and looking into ways of funding the hostel is made up of Gloria Hinks, Sandy Moshenko, a Children's Aid Society worker from Burlington and Debbie Taylor from Acton.

The next meeting is scheduled for Feb. 14.

Picked Up in Passing

Parents meeting tonight

Holy Cross Parents' Association will be holding a general meeting of all parents tonight (Jan. 25) at the Holy Cross School library. The topic of the meeting will be "Creative Playground". There will be a slide presentation by Barry Gowan and Jack O'Sullivan, and a display model, as well as discussions and refreshments. All parents are invited to attend the meeting which will begin at 7:30 p.m.

Adelines recruit

The Credit Valley chapter of the Sweet Adelines is actively recruiting members. Any woman who can carry a tune is welcome to join. It isn't necessary for members to be able to read music. The group will be holding an open house for those interested in joining. There will be a "mini-show" tonight, Jan. 25, at Grace United Church, 156 Main St. N. in Brampton. Regular meetings are on Wednesday evenings.

McLaughlin speaks

S.B. McLaughlin, president of S.B. McLaughlin Associates Ltd. which owns Focal Properties Ltd will be addressing the Georgetown Jaycees at a dinner meeting Jan. 31. Mr. McLaughlin will be speaking on the topic "Let's Free Enterprise," and how it is affecting his company. The dinner will be held at the Neptune Restaurant, and the program will begin at 8 p.m.

Woman cleric speaks

Rev. Beverley Shanley, one of the first women to be ordained into the Anglican priesthood, will be guest speaker at the annual dinner meeting of the University Women's Club Feb. 7. The dinner gets under way at 7:30 p.m.

Camp expands

Wildwood Manor Outdoors Camp is expanding its operation, and facilities at Wildwood Acres will now be open on a year-round basis. The camp has been providing a day and residential program for children for the past eight years, and the expansion will allow groups and families to take part in activities such as horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snow-shoeing, hiking and bird-watching. For registration, or further information, those interested are invited to call Geoff Pantling at 853-0477 or Annette Milne at 877-6852.