

# New regional headquarters an appropriate battleground

Area taxpayers would be well-advised to take the time and visit Halton region's spacious new headquarters on Highway 25 just north of the Queen Elizabeth Way in Oakville.

All the dizzying innovations of modern architecture are there to overwhelm the unwitting spectator. Sight lines roll, surfaces soar, floor levels descend in graded asymmetry.

The whole building, from its lime green plate exterior to its carpeted concrete interior, is majestic chaos, a financial question mark to newcomers who are all too well acquainted with the operative phrase of our times: economic restraint.

You have to either love it or hate it. The vast hall allotted to regional council is a story in itself. Here, 24 council members sit along a raised, semi-circular dais like so many lords conducting some ancient European inquisition. They face an amphitheatre of tiered spectators' seats, white, high above the two ends of their lengthy bench, representatives of the media view the whole scenario from curiously elevated and depressingly isolated corner towers.

**TOTAL CONTRAST**  
The council chamber is a total contrast to the relatively small room utilized at the region's previous headquarters in a private office building in Burlington. The difference in size itself, though more accommodating for guests at the new building, poses problems for all involved. The most apparent example is perhaps the seating arrangement.

**Hinton still undecided on recount**  
Halton board of education trustee Bert Hinton, who was ousted by challenger Betty Fisher in the November 13 election, has not yet decided whether or not he will ask for a recount.

Mr. Hinton was narrowly defeated by Mrs. Fisher, by a margin of 30 votes, for the trustee's seat in Wards 1 and 2. The third candidate for the seat, Pam Sheldon, has 90 votes behind Mr. Hinton.

Candidates have fourteen days from the day the clerk declared the election to ask for a recount. If the recount does not result in a win for the person who made the request, he or she must pay a fee for the service.

**Dr. Leonard Landry** is moving to **10 Mountainview Rd. S.** Suite 203 Georgetown, Ont. **AS OF NOV. 1st 78**



**Paul Dorsey**  
Herald staff

confer across a two-foot aisle with planning committee chairman Pat McLaughlin of Burlington. Less than three feet further along from Coun. McLaughlin sat Mayor Tom Hill.

Now, assuming the seating order will remain unchanged with the incoming council, Coun. Armstrong will need binoculars to keep an eye on Coun. McLaughlin or new Halton Hills Mayor Pete Pomeroy, so far removed in his place at the council table from the opposite end.

Another Burlington councillor underlined the problem with a grin last week when the 1977-78 council met for the first and last time in the new chamber. Jack Rafis slowly waved his hand to and fro to colleagues on the far side of the table as though he were extending a long-distance farewell to friends aboard a departing ocean liner.

**SEASONED VETERANS**  
The metaphor may not be entirely unfounded. When the new council meets for an informal get-together Nov. 29, there will be 12 new members, fully half the council, including both seasoned veterans of mu-

nicipal politics returning to the scene, like Oakville's Terry Mannell, and totally untainted rookies like Ed Wood of Halton Hills' Ward 1.

Regional council is unwieldy at the best of times, as its departing chairman Ric Morrow and his predecessor Allan Masson will testify. Observers can thus expect an initial period during which learning the rules and getting acquainted with one another will take precedence over decision-making among council members.

Once procedure, personalities and political stances start to fall into place, council can get down to the business of running the region. Its first task, however, will be a formidable one: the selection of a new chairman to replace Mr. Morrow.

After five years, regional council has yet to fully dismantle the political barriers separating north and south Halton and at times dividing even the individual municipalities. Despite repeated pleas by Mr. Morrow and others to regard Halton as a single community, councillors - understandably to an extent - continue to pursue

parochial objectives on behalf of their home municipalities. The anticipated selection of a Burlington or Oakville native to fill Mr. Morrow's shoes as chairman could serve to intensify the inherent distrust of regional government shared by many north Halton citizens.

There are, of course, several south Halton councillors who sincerely keep the interests of the region as a whole foremost in their minds, but there are others who keep a pot full of reservations about regional government simmering on the back burner.

Adding fuel to the flame is the memory of council's recent decision - something of a victory for Halton Hills councillors - to implement uniform water rates across the region. Oakville councillors in particular believe the move will cost their constituents dearly and were, at least initially, prepared to appeal the decision before a higher authority.

Milton councillors, meanwhile, are reluctantly prepared to wrestle with regional officials before the Ontario Municipal Board over regional council's intention to establish a major landfill site on prime farmland in their municipality.

Together, the two issues came dangerously close to creating serious and irreparable rifts among regional councillors during the last term. Though largely removed from the new council's jurisdiction, both will undoubtedly continue to exercise an eerie kind of control over the voting process - regardless of the issue at hand - in the months to come.

The enormous size of the new council chambers may then be appropriate. Councillors will clearly need lots of room to thrash out the details of highly contentious issues if that ocean liner called regional government, to overwork the metaphor, is ever to reach home port.



Phil Sykes entertained members of the Lions Club and their guests at the Lions' annual Senior Citizens' dinner and fun night. The club provided their guests with a roast beef dinner and entertainment by its members in addition to Mr. Sykes' performance.

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