

'Slasher squad' invades council Mannell says

By PAUL DORSEY
Herald staff writer

A Halton regional councillor has described the region's administration and finance committee as a super-hero style "slasher squad" bent on controlling internal staff transfers with or without the cooperation of the officials and department heads involved.

Made up primarily of the mayors of Halton's four municipalities, the committee's "slasher squad", as depicted by Oakville Coun. Terry Mannell, clandestinely gathered to trim three \$20,000 per year planning staff positions from this year's budget without the approval of the planning committee or regional council.

A special joint meeting of the planning and administration committees is to be held at

which the fate of the three planning staffers, suggested for transfer to other departments, will be discussed.

MILD-MANNERED

According to Coun. Mannell's tongue-in-cheek view of the administration committee's efforts to control the staff transfers, the four area's "mild-mannered" mayors convened at the Oakville regional headquarters to "slash, rip and gouge" staff positions slated for review. The "slasher squad", he said, dons super-hero costumes to "decreate" the various other committees without the knowledge or consent of committee chairmen and department heads.

Budget and staff cuts, he said, are executed and then presented to council for approval without any rationale being offered for the moves. The squad's task complete, its members then return to their home municipalities to "perhaps increase their own planning staffs or ponder new budget hikes", Coun. Mannell said.

The Oakville councillors suggested that council should simply "let it drop now as the best April Fool's joke in history".

DIFFERENT VIEWS

The ensuing debate over the administration committee's recommendation revealed that members of the administration and planning committees held different views of chief administrative officer Ernie Reid's opinion on the matter. Mr. Reid was absent due to illness and could not answer conflicting reports about his stand.

Halton Hills Coun. Roy Booth, chairman of the planning committee, shared Coun. Mannell's objection to the methods used by the administration committee in attempting to control staff transfers, but his comments on the recommendation held no humor.

He called the committee "dictatorial" in trying to finalize the staff transfers, and told council that Mr. Reid was opposed to the transfers in discussion with the planning committee. Oakville Mayor Harry Barrett spoke for the administration committee when he reported that Mr. Reid had sanctioned the transfers in his presence.

GO rates going up

GO transit fares will increase by a half a cent a mile on most routes controlled by the Toronto Area Transit Operating Authority at the end of this month.

The increase, approved by the authority last week for implementation April 29, represents the annual fare adjustment required by policy to reflect increased operating costs. Also contributing to the hike is the recently signed agreement with Canadian National Railways for the operation of GO trains.

As of April 29, it will cost \$2.55, instead of \$2.35, to ride GO transit from Georgetown to Toronto.

This is the fourth annual general fare increase for GO transit.

Also to be introduced in April is the downtown bus surcharge of 35 cents on fares from Guelph and Georgetown to downtown Toronto. Passengers can avoid the surcharge by selecting convenient alternative GO services, such as the GO trains to Union Station.

The premium far on all-bus options is designed to help offset the "abnormally high cost of operating buses in the congested Toronto core".



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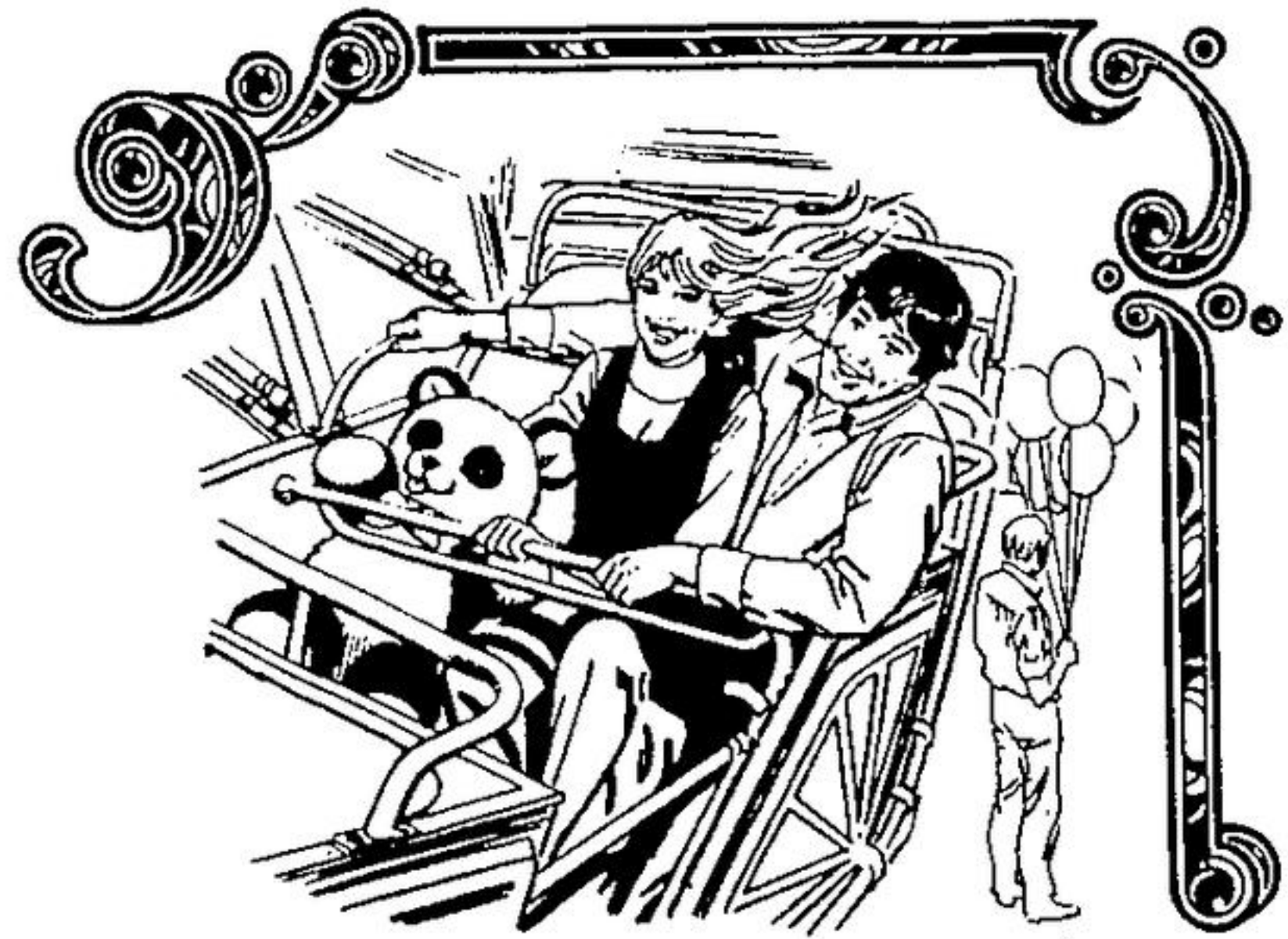
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ERIN HEIGHTS THE PRICE IS RIGHT - \$72,900.

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OPEN HOUSE APRIL 14th. 1:00 - 4:00 P.M.

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