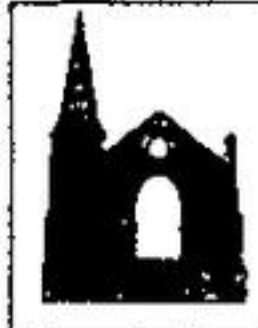


The Arts Complex, part two

TOWN OF HALTON HILLS LIBRARY AND CULTURAL CENTRE



First-year deficit may cost you \$3 extra

Owners of an average-assessment home in urban Georgetown will pay about \$3 more in taxes next year to cover the town's share of construction costs for the new arts complex, according to town treasurer Ray King. Stressing that he must rely for the moment on "ballpark figures", Mr. King told The Herald that projecting construction and operating costs for the facility has been based upon a number of available figures, as wide-ranging as estimated revenues from would-be users-groups to actual figures in Chinguacousy township's Lester B. Pearson Theatre project, in which Mr. King himself was involved.

For library board chairman Dick Howitt, the task of estimating operating costs is just beginning. The board will soon meet to prepare a proposed budget ready for submission to town council that must cover inevitably increasing costs at the

expanded library. While library staff increase is likelihood, Mr. Howitt said, the long-awaited installation of a computerized security system which will handle much of the paperwork should enable the board to keep it to a minimum.

The board as yet has no specific agreement on the terms of its tenancy with the town, he added. Although the board paid no rent for the old building, in accordance with the terms of a benefactor's

deed which donated the library to the former town of Georgetown, an exchange of funds is now required. There are, however, "no hard feelings" among board members over the new arrangement, Mr. Howitt said.

Following is the "preliminary draft" of the cultural complex's first-year operating budget, as approved by council. Mr. King calls the figures "very conservative", as is his figure for projected revenues of \$12,500 for the first year:

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Janitorial Costs at \$1.20/sq. ft. | \$31,960 |
| Heating | 7,400 |
| Light and Water | 9,500 |
| Minor Equipment | 2,500 |
| Insurance | 3,000 |
| Repairs, Cleaning Supplies, Snow Removal | 3,000 |
| Manager - 1/2 Salary charged to Centre | \$10,000 |
| General Administration, Telephone | 1,000 |
| Advertising, Tickets, etc. | 3,000 |
| Labor Costs re Theatre; Lighting, Sound, etc. | 5,000 |
| TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES | \$76,360 |
| NET COSTS | \$63,860-yr. |

While only a fraction of the town's arts-oriented groups hold serious reservations about the physical design of the new arts complex, virtually all agree that communication among the involved parties has dropped to almost nil in the months since town council's first deliberations.

The fact that town council has yet to fully determine the new facility's management structure and the lack of any indications thus far concerning rental fees for theatre and gallery use permeated discussions The Herald had recently with concerned groups and individuals.

And while most who expressed wariness acknowledged that these matters should be resolved by town officials during the first six months of 1981, many were outwardly critical of the methods by which they have been kept informed - or more correctly kept in the dark - about ongoing developments.

run this," GCS director Dale Wood commented. "That's like me asking you if I can run The Herald for awhile."

BREAK EVEN

"I know of no one on the town staff who knows anything about running a theatre," Nornic Studio administrator Enid Williams added. "If the town expects to break even on this, they'd better hire at least a semi-pro theatre manager to run it."

Nornic's artistic director, Bev Nicholas, suggested that the facility might have benefited greatly had council simply hired a theatrical consultant to help in the complex's design.

"Administration is critical to any theatre," he said. "The town needs to sell these groups, so they need someone who can understand them and their needs."

In response to such concerns, Mr. Shepard commented that he does intend to hire someone with theatrical background for the part-time position he'll propose to council. As for breaking even financially on the project, apparently nothing could be further from the town's intention. The estimated preliminary operating budget, which is as yet unapproved, anticipates total net losses of \$63,860 in the facility's inaugural year. (That figure requires some qualification; see separate story, this page.)

Architect Keith Wagland employs his own consulting expert to co-ordinate the installation of specific theatrical equipment, including the sound and lighting. This consultant will likely be available for the project until the building is actually opened next fall.

Mr. Wagland agreed that there is some room for concern over the town's management plans. Without proper promotion for activities at the complex, he said, the community as a whole will not commit itself to making the project a long-term success.

"This should become an enormous resource for the whole town," he commented. "All three portions (theatre, gallery and multi-purpose room) should be hopping with activity."

BY DEFAULT

Library board chairman Dick Howitt is happy enough with council's decision to let the board run the library, but admitted last week that responsibility for the gallery portion fell to the board "almost by default".

"Control over the gallery is not something we particularly wanted," he said, "but it became obvious in our meetings (over financing the complex through provincial grants) that the gallery just wasn't going to pay off. I would personally prefer to see the board run the library, but no one else would take it over."

Mr. Howitt conceded that library board control over the gallery might be considered a radical extension of the board's long-standing practice of renting space (on a much smaller scale) to exhibiting artists and demonstrating artisans.

Like its management, the issue of rental rates at the new complex are a source of concern for would-be user-groups, but again the problem boils down to a lack of information. Tom Shepard himself has no idea how high rates will be; that's another council decision to be based on the information he'll gather next year both inside and outside town.

Anxiety over the possibility of high rental rates subsidizing greater-than-expected operating costs is, however, widespread.

Admitting he shares the "wait and see" attitude of others in the arts community, GCS director Dale Wood said he nevertheless expects high rental rates at the new complex. For the smaller-scale concerns the GCS will be presenting there, he said, admission prices will probably rise correspondingly.

Approximately 90 per cent of the funds raised annually through the Christmas Seal Campaign remain in the community in which they are contributed, to support research, medical and public health education and programs to prevent and control lung disease.

Nornic Studio's Enid Williams and Bev Nicholas also stressed the need for an administrative body at some level to co-ordinate joint promotions for the full range of activities at the complex, something along the lines of printed theatre brochures circulated by other performing arts centres. As far as Tom Shepard is currently concerned, however, groups using the complex are on their own when it comes to promotion.

"Sure we'll help publicize coming events in our (recreation department) flyers, but we wouldn't promote any individual groups' activities any more than we promote the Raider (hockey games at Alcott arena)," he said. "There are exceptions made when the town receives a share of the gate."

Mr. Shepard noted that the projected operating budget includes \$1,000 for his department's promotion of its own programs at the complex, some forms of which will be new to Halton Hills simply because the town has had no proper facility in which to present them. Royal Ontario Museum touring shows and film festivals are two examples of the activities Mr. Shepard's department will consider bringing to town. As is the case with Halton Hills'



GRETCHEN DAY

three arenas, he stressed, town-sponsored programs at the complex would be chosen and scheduled to fill in gaps between private bookings.

Derek Joyes admitted he had perceived large gaps in communication between town officials and the involved groups, noting that he and others have recently sought further meetings so they can be brought up to date. Like John Ollivier at Halton Cable TV, he expressed a strong desire to be part of forthcoming meetings on the final interior design, which he said has still to be approved by council.

"I realize they're having weekly site meetings," Mr. Joyes said, "but I don't think it was ever the intention to have the rest of the building committee (of which I was part) to attend. Ours was an advisory committee, and the onus is on the town to keep everyone informed of what's going on. It was by accident I found out about the foundation problem, so it seems the town sees the building committee as having completed the function."

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PAT JOYNES

Representatives of the Georgetown Little Theatre (GLT), Georgetown Choral Society (GCS), Halton Cable Systems Ltd., the Nornic Studio for Performing Arts and the Halton Hills Arts Council itself expressed aggravation in turn over the total lack of any new information since June, when council formally accepted revised construction cost estimates and involved groups had a chance to view final designs.

In the five months since, the GLT's seat plaque fund-raising campaign has garnered the only publicity attached to the arts complex, a fact that many of those involved see as a serious shortcoming on the town's part.

Town recreation director Tom Shepard attempted to soothe anxieties over the lack of information concerning the management and rental rates last week by assuring The Herald that he will be personally arranging series of meetings in the new year to better assess the groups' various needs and plans for booking portions of the new complex.

PREPARE JOB

Information gathered through these meetings with local user-groups, as well as statistics from similar cultural centres in other towns, will enable Mr. Shepard to prepare a job definition for a new part-time position he hopes to create within his department. Given council's blessings, the new recreation department employee will - at least initially - devote roughly 20 hours a week (the town's tentative operating budget for the facility includes a \$10,000 salary for the position, also yet to be approved) to arranging bookings for the new theatre and multi-purpose room.



RALPH URSELE

Mr. Shepard stressed that the proposed employee is not intended to be a theatre "administrator", a position most arts groups in town nevertheless feel is crucial to the complex's successful operation. While those contacted by The Herald conceded that an administrator need not be hired for the job immediately, all predicted the position would soon require a full-time commitment from someone with theatrical background.

Mr. Shepard pointed out that his proposed management structure (see diagram) is subject to revision as council and the groups involved see fit. Derek Joyes of the GLT reported that his and other groups will ask council to appoint a special committee of citizens to manage the theatre under the auspices of the recreation department.

Clearly unimpressed by the department's lack of artistic credentials, some group spokesmen laughed at the prospect of the theatre being administered on a "part-time" basis.

"I'm scared about the fact the recreation department will

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Nornic Studio head challenges statements

To the editor of The Herald: Your article on the progress of the new Arts Complex was informative in most areas to this date, as well as being a chronicle of early history leading up to the conception of a library-theatre-art gallery complex.

However, I beg to differ with Mr. Wagland, architect of the Arts complex, who stated that the Oakville Centre for the arts "is too big for the city's current needs" and "it has this big, massive stage and everything".

He further stated, "people just won't use it; it's too intimidating".

In response to these remarks, I would like readers to know the Oakville Centre has 50 groups using the theatre facility. Three local amateur groups amalgamated their season of plays to offer a drama series on subscription, which has had an 80 per cent response. An independent theatre group runs a drama series subscription, which also has experienced 80 per cent sales. The Oakville Centre has five music groups that use the theatre twice a year, two professional theatre bookings a month, a sell out professional Children's Series on Sundays

from October to April, as well as the aforementioned drama groups. The Oakville Centre "is used 49 weeks of the year" assistant manager Brian Hogarth stated.

Technically, the Oakville Centre is acclaimed to have one of "the most sophisticated lighting and sound operations in Ontario", a quote from a professional company having used the facility. The only minus Oakville Centre has to my knowledge is the physical approach to the centre and the disagreeable parking facilities.

The Oakville Centre has a manager, assistant manager on full-time staff, technician and assistant on hourly staff as needed, a box office manager, part-time front of house staff and two secretaries part-time. "A service by management to the various groups is offered by way of a production package which includes layout of programme, advertising layouts, publicity and use of the media," said Mr. Hogarth. "This elevates the standard of production to a more professional level."

With the projected escalation of real estate, I fail to see how Mr. Joyes remark "Within 10 or 15 years, we may

well need a bigger theatre but when that time comes, I would hope we can afford to build one", can be substantiated. Surely, 10 years down the road, after a decade of expected suppressed economy, this town or most others will not be able to build a second theatre. In any case, where is the land allocated for such a venture?

To have any type of theatre with proper facilities in this town is progress, but let it be known all facets of community use in this regard have not been well considered. Choral groups, theatrical stage productions normally scheduled for two performances, will have to run twice as long to bring in necessary revenue to meet their costs, which in turn pushes ticket prices up and concerts and theatre presentations will no longer be offered at \$3 per ticket and I hope the public realizes this step of cultural progress and the establishing of an Arts Complex in this community, must be paid for like everything else.

With a positive view to what is "on the boards", it is everyone's responsibility to make the theatre-library-complex work and to help build it into an arts focal point of outstanding cultural achievement.

My eyes and ears are still waiting to have my questions answered in regard to the administration of this Arts complex: Are we going to be booking space through the recreation department, with no assurance of adequate management of the theatre, box office, front of house staff versed in public relations and technical staff responsible for protecting theatre sound and lighting equipment? Are we going to have knowledgeable theatrical administration? Are we to have an art gallery run to draw artwork from all over as well as the local artists? Who of knowledge is to be employed in these areas? Are we going to have a board of directors formed to include a representative from each area of the arts in the community as well as from the library, a councillor, lawyer and business executive? When is council going to answer these questions and make them known to the public?

Good administration means the difference between a success story or a "white elephant" which the tax payers will have to carry. Enid Williams-Nicholas Georgetown.

Baines heads new campaign

Georgetown's Fran Baines has been enlisted by the Halton Hills Library and Cultural Centre fund-raising committee to direct the all-important and long-awaited door-to-door canvass of area homes. Mrs. Baines told The Herald Tuesday she is arranging a meeting for next week at which campaign captains will be appointed to supervise the canvass in various sections of town. Anyone interested in helping this pivotal part of the arts complex fund-raising effort, expected to begin in January, can contact Mrs. Baines at home (877-6475) or at work at H.H. West Insurance in Milton (878-1616).



FRAN BAINES



\$2,000 DONATION FROM HIGHLANDERS

Ab Tennant, a member of the arts complex fund-raising committee, accepted a cheque for \$2,000 from Dr. Alastair MacIntosh of the Speyside Highland Games Committee, which in the past has made donations to such local groups as the Georgetown Girls' Pipe Band, the Legion Pipe Band and the Milton Pipe Band, and this year decided unanimously to make a donation to the arts complex.

(Herald photo)

WHO'S IN CHARGE?

With the town clerk's department (telephone 877-5185) acting as a watershed for all incoming donations, the fund-raising committee set up by council to co-ordinate all such efforts has appointed a number of individuals to approach select groups and areas of interest. They are:

For Arts Council members and other arts-related groups - Theresa Millenaar
For business and industry - Bert Arnold
For sports organizations - Dave Kentner
For miscellaneous groups - Pomeroy and Rud Whiting
Mayor Pete

GLT Christmas show is favorite kids' fantasy

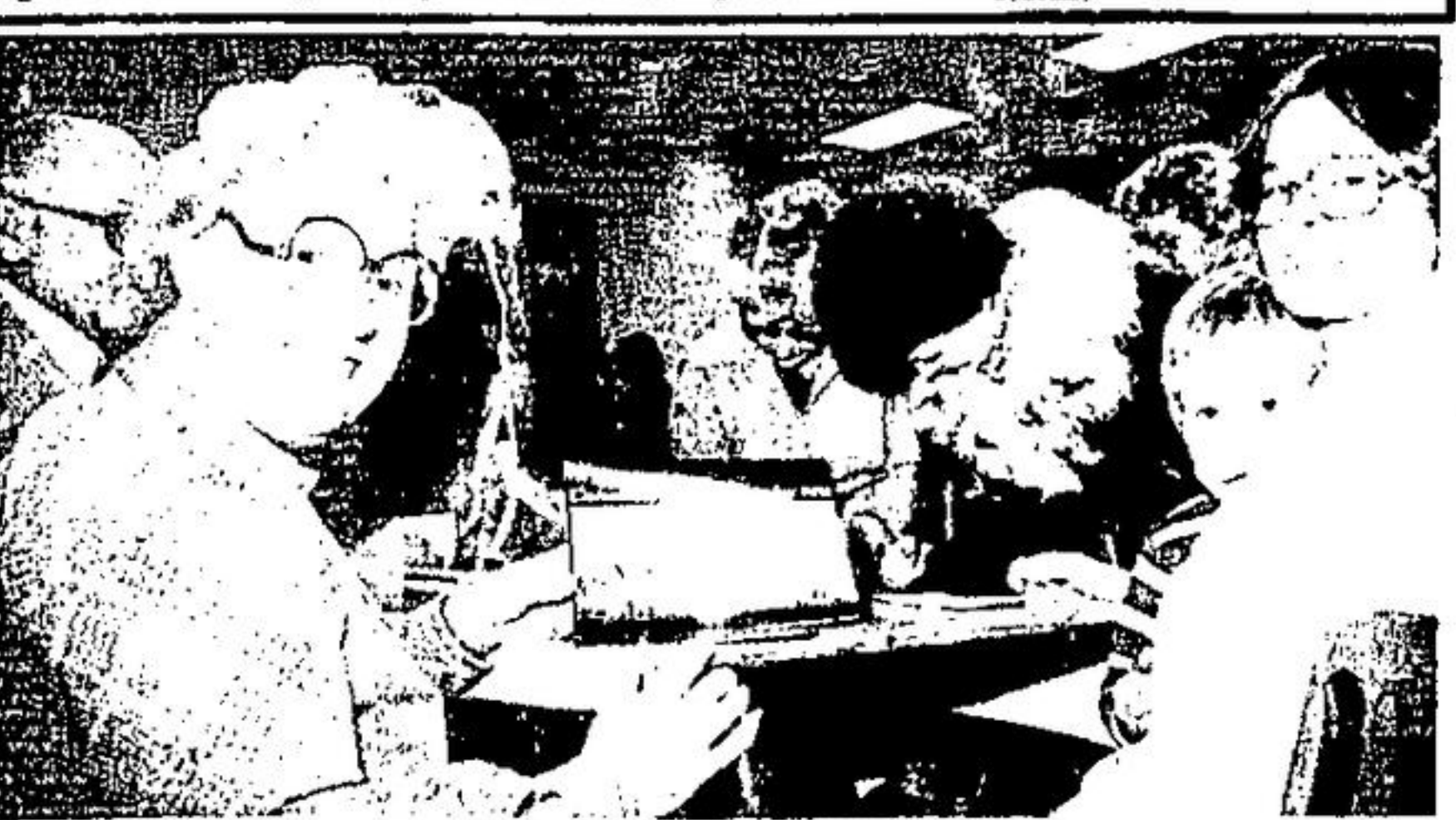
Local children of all ages are due for a treat when Georgetown Little Theatre presents "Hans, the Witch and the Gobbler" Dec. 12, 13, 14 at 7:30 p.m. plus matinee performances Saturday and Sunday (Dec. 13, 14).

This well-known British play has entertained many children since it was first produced in 1958 and is guaranteed to delight many

more. How could children fail to enjoy a play which combines all the essential ingredients for laughter, merriment, surprise and wonder provided by such characters as the Gobbler, Hans, Scratch, Mrs. Crabtree, Daisy the Witch, Princess Alicia, King Rufus, Castor Senna Sylvester, the pigs Hank and Hunk and of course the Queen of the

Forest? Director Bev Nicholas has a warm and lasting association with this play, since he appeared in it in 1970 in the role of King Rufus.

Mr. Nicholas is happy with the cast he has chosen which includes John Roe as Castor, Pat Joynes as Mrs. Crabtree, Gord Hunt as Senna and Joe DelGuidice as King Rufus.



DAILY REMINDER

St. George's Anglican church was bursting with activity Saturday as crowds gleaned over tables filled with baked goods, homecrafts, and white elephant pickings during the church's annual Christmas Bazaar. Gladys Allard (left) was joined by Yolanda Allard and her son Michael to help sell church calendars.

(Herald photo)

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