STAFF COMMENT By Chris Aagaard

Two councils had varied styles during 1980

I sank my journalistic teeth into the Halton Hills and Halton regional council scene six months ago when the former was enjoying an appreciable amount of public admiration for running a tight ship.

The latter, however, was on the eye of a restless and divisive period in which it would eventually see its publie credibility dwindle before a botched operating budget and a bresome, self-destructive debate on its method of collecting revenue to pay for its sewer program.

Pleased with the past record of Mayor Pete Pomeroy's administration, the Halton Hills electorate either refused to challenge second-term bids by many of the incumbents, or re-elected veterans Nov. 10. The only sign of discord came from Acton, where, in the most surprising outcome of the election, incumbent regional councillor Ed Wood was ousted by former real estate agent Dave Whiting.

between town councillors and staff, the 1980 budget for the town enabled it to embark on an ambitious \$1.7 million library-culturat

The town's share of the endeavor, which will be raised through lot levies. debenture financing and part of the town's operating hudget, will amount to about \$900,000, while most of the remaining balance will come from a \$200,000 fund-raising drive and provincial assistance which surely would not have been available had not

the town shown financial responsibility in planning the

REDUCE HEADACHES Within the last three years, town council has also moved to reduce enormous planning headaches both in Acton and in Georgetown which, if left untreated, would certainly affect the town's ability to attract new industry and

And while some taxpayers

may anguish over the costs, the outcome of planning studies in Acton and Georgetown will enable the town to determine what sort of industries are best suited to the sewer and water services Halton Hills can offer. The town can thus accomodate industry and housing and provide the evidence badly needed to meet developers' challenges to the town's current planning policies before the Ontario Municipal

But the one thing which makes Halton Hills council click neatly-the team effort Thanks to teamwork among councillors to work for the common good and clear communications with town staff-is lacking at the regional level.

PUBLICREELED This was clearly apparent m July, when regional representatives and the public reeled at the announcement that region had incurred a \$135,000 deficit in its 1980 operating budget, largely through sloppy accounting and government money which never arrived in the amounts expected.

The deficit climbed to over Farm advisors

\$600,000 by August, and while regional administration can some coincillars maintained be more effective, providing that, out of a \$45 million operating budget, the shortnot only better service to the fall was bardly worth at councillors.

screaming about, it indicated that, somewhere along the line, communications between councillors, regional staff and the auditors who submitted their late report had broken down, Ironically enough, the region was prepared to launch a management study even before the deficit was revealed. The study was finally underway in September, and is looking

ern municipalities help pay into ways in which the for expensive works projects in the north. Since July, Burlington

Coun. Joan Allingham has public but also better headed a strong lobby of communications with regioncouncillors who wish to see their towns pay for their own Regionalized sewer and sewer works projects rather water rates, once touted as than help Halton Bills an example of how Halton can work for its member tinance its \$5.5 million municipalities, was dragged Georgelown sewage treatment plant. Under the prothrough six months of posed scheme of paying the debative sludge as a large region back for sewer bloe of Burlington and Oakservices, Halton Hills resiville councillors sought to dents would see a whopping dump the sewer surcharge increase in their mill rate. system through which south-

Nevertheless, the debate continued 's crop up at somed meetings thrombout the remainder of the year, despite a municipal consultants study which recommended keeping the sewer surcharge system

The arrival of seven new councillors around the regional table brought little change to the argument Most are content to see the surcharge method stay at least for another year while regional and inumerical staffs sit down to modify the surcharge system or come up

with a plan for collecting sewer revenue which Milton, Oakville, Halton Hills and Burhagton can swallow.

In fact, the most glowing achievement of regional connect in the last six months was the signing of Halton's official plan in August, although this, too, has been marred by recent court challenges from the region's gravel producers.

While parts of the plan are still under negotiation between regional planning staff and its objectors, the plan was drafted swiftly and

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efficiently and now sets longawaited guidelines for development in Halton's rural areas and urban

centres. As one-quarter of Halton's composition, Halton Hills has faired well under the regional structure, accounting for its strong lobby which, on three occasions has defeated a Burlington proposal to scrap the sewer surcharge

system. And perhaps it's out of respect for this kind of leadership (as well as the town's past record) that

other councillors voted Halton Hills representatives to head key decision-making regional committees for the next two years.

Perhaps those councillors who still have faith in the regional system are hoping that Mayor Pomeroy, who now chairs the region's most important decision maker, the finance and administration committee, will be able to draw upon his past success. at the local level and bring some public respect back to Halton's regional govern-

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end second year

The Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee has completed its second year, presenting the viewpoint of Halton farmers to regional council and acting as an avenue through which council can receive opinions on agricultural issues.

In 1980, a total of 13 regular meetings were held along with a few special meetings such as the farm tour, sewage plant tour and the rural forum.

Some of the topics discussed at the meetings during the past were:

- Discussion with Gerry Wade and Roy Maxwell of CBC re agricultural breadcasting. We agreed to give our comments if and when asked. - Review of "Agricultural

Section" of the Niagara Escarpment Plan and sent this to the Region to be used as part of their comments at the Niagara Escarpment hearings.

- Bruce Trail Association -Expressed the concern of the farmers along the Bruce Trail re trespassers, damage from dogs, etc.

 Rural Development Outreach Project - Mel with the Halton Community Pulse Group to decide how we can work together for the improvement of the rural community in Halton. This resulted with the sub-committee of Harold Middlebrook, Bill Allison and Henry Stanley working with Marilyn White, Bruce Wood and Val Walters of the Community Pulse Group to plan our bus trip and rural forum. These two events brought together rural farm and non-farm people, planners and politicians to discuss our future.

- Sludge - Worked with the Public Works Department and Envirosearch Limited, Regional consultants on sludge, to get the proper testing equipment and to improve the quality of our Hallon sludges in order that they can be used for future fertilizer application on our crop land. Four trials re use of sewage sludge has been set up for winter wheat.

- Dog Control in Halton Evaluating the costs of dog control in each municipality, the receipts from the sale of dog tags and possible action to cut down the losses to livestock from dog attacks.

 Viability of Farm Operations - Preparing guidelines for viability for each farming enterprise (will continue this in

- Deer Season in Halton Assisted the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Region of Halton in making

this possible. · Comments on Subdivisions and Severences - When requested by farm organizations in Halton or by the Hegion have made comments on the increasing number of subdivisions and severences.





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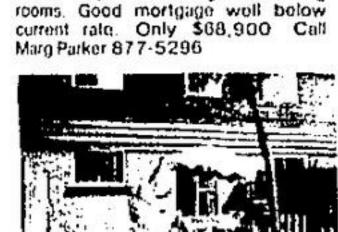
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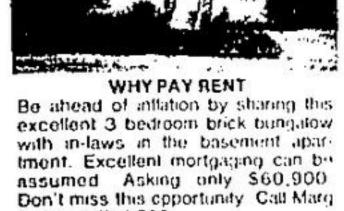
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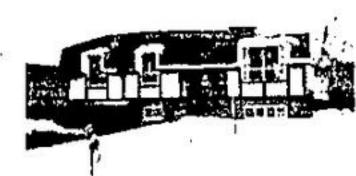
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