

GARA chiefs left wondering by another small turn-out

So typical of organizations which are born out of a sudden passionate need, the Georgetown and Area Ratepayers Association (GARA) is in danger of folding because of a shortage of topical issues to maintain public interest.

The 1980-81 GARA executive had hoped to attract at least its 50 paid members to a meeting held last Wednesday at the Georgetown and District High School. Despite the executive's distribution of about 5,000 pamphlets announcing GARA's annual general meeting, a disappointed GARA president, Laurie Duggan, greeted barely 16 people following brief awards presentations to The Herald, the Chamber of Commerce and the Halton Hills library-cultural centre fund-raising drive.

"GARA's not going to exist unless the people support it," Mr. Duggan said. "It's a little unfortunate that we have to have a burning issue to get people to come out."

As disenchanted as last week's response to the general meeting was, the GARA executive which is hoping to elect a successor, will try again Oct. 28.

Town residents are being a little "naive" if they think they can do without an organization like GARA, Mr. Duggan argued, adding that people who own property or pay rent need an organization to protect their rights apart from the town's political administration.

GARA was formed about four years ago as a ratepayers' reaction to Focal Properties to construct 1,740 homes on 361-acres of land in Georgetown's southeast end. Conducting their own independent study, GARA argued in October 1978, that the demand for new or expanded facilities because of sudden growth in the community's population would raise taxes in town by 19 per cent.

Instead, they suggested that the town should grow by infilling, building on empty lots located among existing subdivisions.

Most recently GARA has



Despite a low turn-out at its annual meeting last Wednesday, the Georgetown Area Ratepayers Association really had something to smile about as they honored the local Chamber of Commerce for its help in the "I Love Georgetown" campaign last summer. Receiving plaques from GARA rep Tom Ramataursigh (centre) are Rud Whiting (left) and chamber president Doug Penrice.

(Herald photo)

been in the news because of its "I Love Georgetown" campaign, an energetic community self-appreciation program staged last summer with the local chamber of commerce. Although public response to the campaign was enthusiastic (an "I Love Georgetown" bus tour handed out dozens of scrolls to residents who had done something to their homes as a token of community appreciation, many residents probably don't realize GARA's large role in the campaign.

Despite the small turn-out last week and GARA's ability to elect a new slate of officers for the new year, most of the members who attended the meeting agreed that the organization must be maintained even when faced with public apathy.

One member suggested that

GARA must stay intact because ratepayers could lose precious time responding to a municipal decision if they have to organize a new group to represent their rights.

Meanwhile, GARA has presented the town's library-cultural centre fund-raising committee with a \$1,150 cheque. Fund-raising chairman Rex Heslop praised the ability of GARA and other organizers to raise money for various causes by giving the public the opportunity to participate in their efforts beyond just reaching into their pocket books.



Library-cultural centre fund-raising efforts received another boost last week, this time from the Georgetown Area Ratepayers Association (GARA). Association president Laurie Duggan (left) presented fund-raising chairman Rex Heslop with a \$1,150 cheque during GARA's annual meeting last Wednesday night.

(Herald photo)

Bryant must wait for board's ruling

It will be another month before Barry Bryant hears the social assistance review board decision on whether he qualifies for mother's allowance. Mr. Bryant is a single parent who feels fathers should be able to stay home and raise their children. He has been denied welfare and mother's allowance. Last Wednesday he had appealed the provincial decision denying him mother's allowance to the social assistance review board.

School enrolment down by 1,600

Enrolment figures for Halton schools were released Thursday by the Halton Board of Education's area superintendent of finance.

Elementary enrolment is 27,436, a decrease of 1,018 from last year and 143 pupils less than projected.

Secondary enrolment in Halton is now 19,539, a decrease of 584 students from last year, and 341 more than the projection.

Total enrolment, including 130 trainable mentally handicapped students, is now 47,105, a decrease of 1,614 from 1980.

Enrolment in the north educational area, which includes Halton Hills, was 7,681 elementary students, only 17 students less than last year.

Secondary enrolment in Halton Hills was 2,500 students, down from 2,613 last year. Georgetown District High School lost 118 students and Acton High School gained five over last year's figures. Educators projected the change fairly closely.

Pupil-teacher ratios show there are 21 students per teacher at the elementary level, and about 17 pupils at the secondary school level as of Sept. 30 for the Halton Board.

There are 359 elementary teachers in the north educational area and 237 at the secondary level.

Leathertown may purchase condemned Acton town hall

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them," Mr. Tyler said, "but they aren't here tonight to speak for themselves and I feel I should stick up for them."

"Let's face it, they were the ones who really got the thing moving and stopped council from tearing the hall down. If anyone should have a right to be heard it's them."

Mr. Tyler said he wanted a meeting with his own committee and the restoration committee before they would give Leathertown any answer as to turning over the funds they have raised.

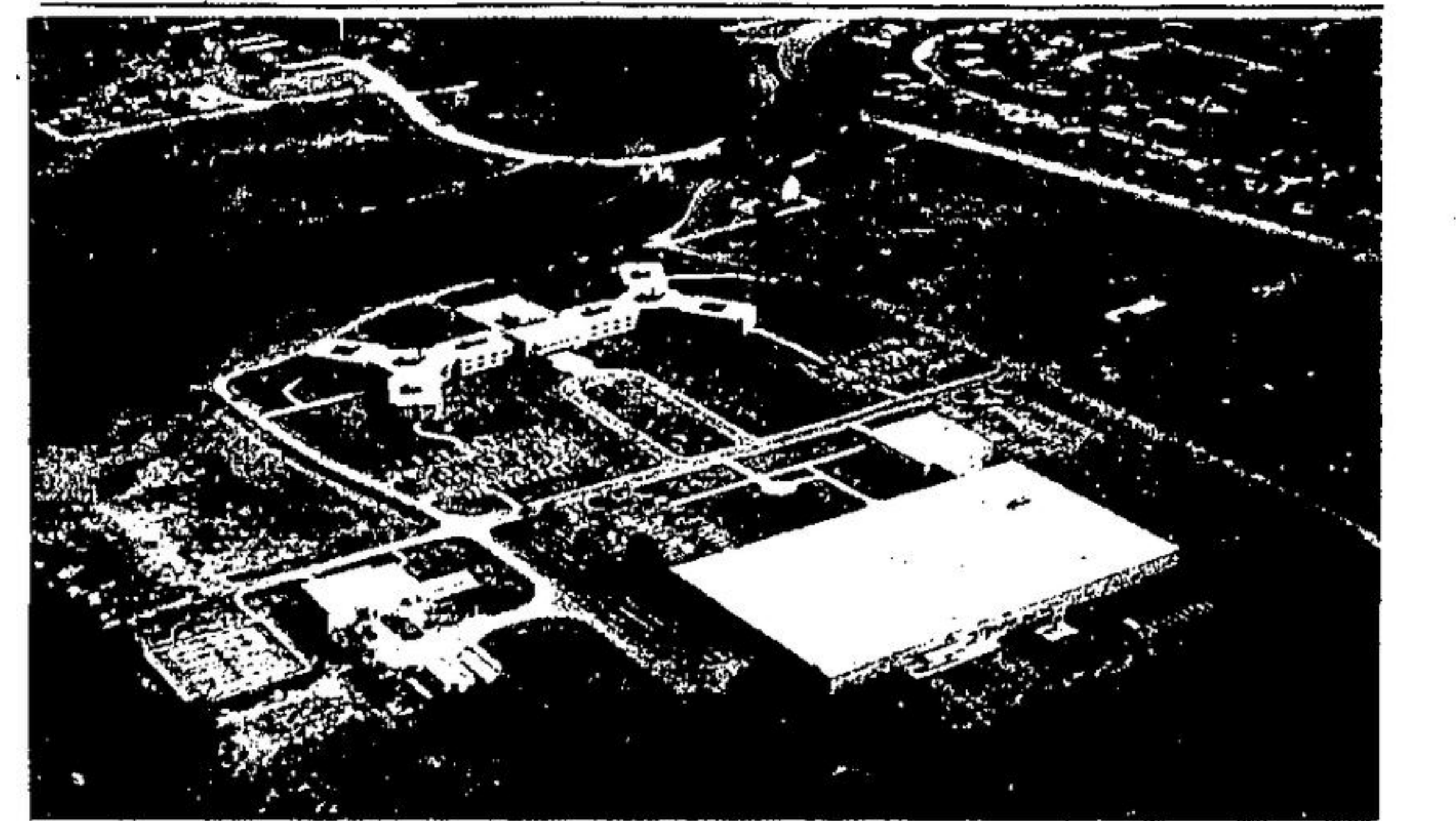
They have a \$38,000 trust of public money, he said, and he wasn't in favor of handing it over until everyone was very sure the project would go ahead, not fall apart halfway through.

Coun. Ross Knechtel warned Mr. Petrillo against going to council unless he had the full support of both the restoration and the Actario people.

If a split appeared to have developed between the groups in Acton, the rest of the councillors might feel Actonians didn't know what they wanted and the best course of action would be just to tear the thing down and end the whole discussion, he said.

He said also that if Wintario found out the project was not going to be a council project when it was done, it could wipe out all possibility of grants even before a decision had been made to apply for them.

Mr. Petrillo said the association members had originally planned to approach council with their proposal after the consultant's study was finished in November. However, at the urging of Ward 1 councillor Terry Grubbe last Friday, he attended Monday's council meeting to put the proposal forward then. At the last minute it was decided not to make the proposal and the study deferral was requested instead.



LATEST POSTCARD FROM GEORGETOWN

This aerial photo of the Watchtower complex established on Highway 7 this year by the Jehovah's Witnesses is the latest postcard showing Georgetown and its environs. In the foreground is the large printing plant churning out copies of the Witnesses' pamphlets "Awake!" and "The Watchtower" in 106 different

languages. The administrative offices are adjacent to it, and opposite is Bethel House, a residence for the complex's 150 volunteer workers. The complex is one of five in the world where material for the pamphlets is actually composed and collated. (Photo courtesy Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society)

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