

## Parochial views linger at region

That household water rates for the average Halton home will rise about \$19 in 1982 comes as no surprise. Such hikes - and this one seems modest enough - have to be expected these days.

What is surprising about regional council's rate approval last week, though, is the continuing condemnation of equalized consumer rates by some representatives of Oakville and Burlington.

Though in fact "uniform" in name only, Halton's sewer and water rates are more or less equitable among the region's four municipalities, thanks to a farsighted regional policy by which all four help the cause of Halton as a whole, just like the provincial government envisioned regional government doing.

Most readers will recall lengthy and frustrating debates at the region prior to that policy's adoption, with councillors from the more populous and thus "wealthier" municipalities of Oakville and Burlington balking at a proposal that would see them helping out Halton Hills and Milton. Because so much work was needed to upgrade Halton Hills sewage treatment plants, in particular, the southern representatives knew their rates would increase dramatically even though their constituents would notice no real improvement in local situation.

As mentioned, this superficial inequity was debated at great length, with former regional chairman Ric Morrow, a Georgetown resident, and mayors Tom Hill and Pete Pomeroy enjoying the "victory" that, temporarily at least, overcame Halton's inherent parochialism.

Last week after 1982 rates were scrutinized by regional council, Oak-

ville Mayor Harry Barrett told The Herald that his city council has never actually accepted the concept of uniform rates and still believes sewer and water costs should be borne by the individual municipalities, rather than the whole region. The rate hike he'd just helped approve in council may have been dumped if an Ontario government assistance grant had not also been approved.

The Ontario grants, two of them prompted by start-up inequities in the uniform rate concept, were critical to smooth approval of the 1982 rates. With one grant yet to come, Oakville and Burlington councillors say they'll still block the uniform rates if anything goes wrong.

Maybe we've been naive, but frankly we thought the uniform rates, as painful as their introduction must be to some, were here to stay and would face no more challenges. Regional council has single-mindedly struggled to follow Ontario's blueprint for the new-style regional government, in which large, established and financially-stable municipalities assist smaller communities that might otherwise depend too much on Queen's Park. But for this one issue, it seems, council would make Bill Davis' and Darcy McKeough's dream a reality, however poorly conceived it may be.

We've never totally disagreed with Oakville's anti-uniformity stance, merely urged a trial run for the equalized rates. But what we know is needed here is a firm commitment: either Oakville and the uniform rates' other opponents should commit themselves to dismantling the regional concept of inter-municipal sharing itself, or all four Halton municipalities should commit themselves to a non-parochial regionalization.



### SMILES UPON SMILES

Craft-making, as these youngsters discovered Friday afternoon at the Georgetown library, can work up an appetite. The children crowded into the play area to make snowmen out of marshmallows, using chocolate chips for faces and buttons. After constructing one snowman each to take home, the kids added a few of the leftover chips to extra marshmallows and proved that, er, the craft is definitely an acquired taste. (Herald photo)

MORE CHRISTMAS CONCERT PHOTOS THURSDAY

## Nation's capital buzzing with newsy gossip columns



### Ottawa Report

By Stewart MacLeod

Ottawa Bureau of The Herald

The biggest thing coming out of Ottawa these days is, in one form or another, the gossip column. For reasons that escape me, all the emphasis is on those short, personalized news items that tell us everything from the Governor-General's eating habits to the color of Pierre Trudeau's socks.

Not only newspapers, but news agencies are also in on the act. And let's not forget television. National networks and individual TV stations are all promoting the "Diary" items, as are some of the bigger radio stations.

In fact, there have recently been a spate of gossip stories about the gossip columns themselves. And this, I suppose, is a gossip column about the gossip stories about the gossip columns. Or something like that.

Anyway, the point I am laboring to make is that, with this great proliferation of gossip-type stories, our Members of Parliament are facing risks that never existed when Ottawa

journalists were interested only in the more serious issues of the day. It was much easier for politicians when reporters were concerned with how they voted, not how they kept a taxi waiting 23 minutes in a snowstorm.

### NO DECORATION

Let's just look at one example: On the night that the government's constitutional resolution was finally approved in the Commons, the Liberals decided it would be appropriate for all of them to wear red carnations to mark the historic event. So as the division bells rang to summon MPs into the chamber, three secretaries, each with a box of the flowers, established themselves in the lobby, ready to pin the carnations on the happy Grits.

Reporters, with gossip columns to fill, naturally counted the carnations as the Liberal MPs rose to vote for - or, occasionally, against - the resolution. And one of these reporters, writing in the Toronto Sunday Star, noted that three prominent Liberals rejected the carnations - former ministers Warren Allmand, Bryce Mackasey and John Reid. The reasons suggested involved Allmand's and Mackasey's concerns with anglophone rights in Quebec and Reid's annoyance at being dropped from the Trudeau cabinet.

For the average reader this is no big deal. So what if someone didn't wear a carnation? But in the case of John Reid it is a bit of a deal. Within 24 hours he had a half dozen phone calls from people who wanted to know why he was protesting the constitutional resolution by refusing

the flower?

The fact that he voted for the resolution was suddenly beside the point. The big question involved the flower.

### NO PROTEST

And just for the record; this is how John Reid got himself into that embarrassing spot: As he entered the chamber, a secretary eagerly decorated him with a red carnation, and Reid, who represents the Ontario riding of Kenora-Rainy River, entered the House with the flower in his lapel. He sat in his front-row seat, looking up in the galleries and he happened to spot Mary MacDonald, former executive assistant to both Lester Pearson and Pierre Trudeau. She waved warmly and Reid returned the greeting.

Then, realizing how much of the constitutional squabble Miss MacDonald had witnessed over the years, and realizing the historic nature of this occasion, Reid took the carnation from his lapel, summoned a page, and had the flower sent up to Miss MacDonald. She proudly pinned it to her dress.

And a few days after making that friendly gesture, John Reid picked up a newspaper and read how he had rejected the flower because he had been rejected for cabinet duties.

One of the problems, it seems to me, is that there simply isn't enough legitimate gossip to fill all the available gossip space. As a result, we read some items which, as John Reid said with heartfelt sincerity, "give me a pain in the butt."

## Northern environment study searching for more funding



### Queen's Park

By Derek Nelson

Queen's Park Bureau of The Herald

An attempt to "invite" Royal Commissioner on the Northern Environment Ed Fahlgren to appear before a legislative committee here founded last week.

Too bad. It would be nice to know what Fahlgren is doing with the \$1.6 million the commission has budgeted for this year, and why the Queen's Park rumor mill says he wants even more.

MPP Floyd Laughren (NDP-Nickle Belt) suggested the invitation for just that reason, but Environment Minister Keith Norton rejected the idea after seeking legal advice.

Royal commissions are deliberately divorced from the political process, so they can work in an atmosphere of independence. Asking Fahlgren to come before the committee would place him in an awkward and unfair position, he said.

Fair enough. A better alternative anyway is just to abolish the commission out-right. Fahlgren's testimony isn't required to conclude RCNE, as the commission is called, is the government's current biggest boondoggle.

### ROCKY ROAD

Created in 1977, RCNE has followed a rocky road in spending itself into history as the most expensive royal commission (\$7.6 million) ever established in Ontario.

The first commissioner, Mr. Justice Patrick Hart, quit after a year to assume the last demanding job of Indian Commissioner for the province. Fahlgren then took over - and

disappeared from the public eye.

And what is there to show for these four years?

Nothing besides an interim report from Hart that was full of pious platitudes and little else. RCNE has published nothing original since.

Moreover, more than one story has come out of the North about internal dissension and confusion in the commission ranks. Staff abandoning ship have used phrases such as a "classic case of bureaucratic paralysis" to describe RCNE.

### DUE DATE

So how long do we wait before some conclusions are released? Interestingly, the earliest date mentioned is December, 1983, two long years from now.

Remember, the theory behind RCNE (other than to diffuse political criticism of the Conservatives over the leasing of Ontario's last virgin forestland to Reed Paper) was that it would draw up a blueprint to cover both developmental and ecological concerns for the lands north of parallel 50.

Meanwhile, for the past seven years, something called SLUP, the Strategic Land Use Plan for Northern Ontario, has been ambling ahead in the Natural Resources Ministry.

It's task is almost identical, but covers a greater area.

### ONE YEAR

Now Natural Resources has never been a ministry renowned for its sense of urgency in planning matters, but the latest minister, Alan Pope, is showing a great deal more energy than his predecessors in the job.

He's put a December 1, 1982, deadline on SLUP - one year earlier than we're going to hear anything from RCNE. And what about the commission and its relation to SLUP?

"We would appreciate guidance from the commission but...the deadline stands," Pope said when asked.

That's politely put, but still a brush-off.

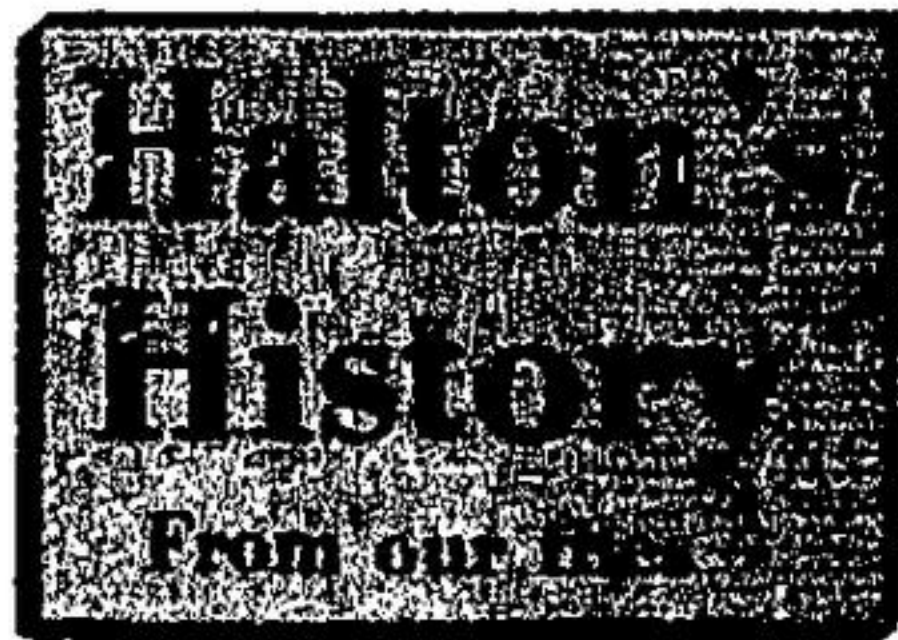
Laughren shouldn't have asked for a chat. He should have called for an axe.



### PARK PINATA PRANKS

Waving a long stick, a student at Park Street School in Georgetown tried to break open a pinata hanging from the school ceiling. Learning about the Mexican way of celebrating Christmas, these Grades 3 and 4 students dressed up in sombrero and took turns being blind-folded and stretching the stick in the air. Made of paper mache to resemble fish, roosters and other animals, the pinatas contain candies.

(Herald photo)



THIRTY YEARS AGO-Illness has forced the resignation of Acton's new mayor Thomas Salmon. Shortly after the election in which he defeated mayor Ted Tyler, Mr. Salmon suffered a severe heart attack and on his doctor's advice he has tendered his resignation.

New Year's in Acton will be broadcast to all Canadians. The broadcast will be from 11:30 p.m. to 12:15 a.m. on the CBC trans-Canada network with Don Fairbairn of Neighbourly News fame as master of ceremonies. Tenor George Murray who is also known as Bill Evans in the Craig Family broadcasts will also be featured and Russ Gerow and his orchestra will play for dancing in Acton town hall. Acton Y's Men's Club is sponsoring the show.

A new year's "Frolic" is being planned in the Georgetown arena rose room, featuring dancing with the "Modern Aires" and vocals by Peggy Richards. "Favors-prizes-noisemakes-\$1 per person."

Proving their superiority to Woodbridge, Georgetown 120 Club, sponsored by the local Legion Branch, won their second juvenile hockey game last Friday in Woodbridge. The team, managed by Alf Sykes and Marek Timbers and coached by Scotty Patterson defeated Woodbridge here 10 to 3 and in Woodbridge they won 12 to 1. The high scoring forward line of Bud Haines, Blake Inglis and Carl Schenk accounted for a good share of the goals and George Webster was also prominent, getting two goals and an assist.

TWENTY YEARS AGO-Long distance charges between Georgetown and Acton were eliminated Sunday coinciding with the introduction of dial telephones in Acton. Mayor John Goy made the first call from the platform of Georgetown High School's gymnasium so that all the students could hear and years later recall the moment which made communications history in Acton. The address was taped and played over the public address system of the town's two public schools.

In the present gas price war now raging in town, the price has dropped to 36.9 cents a gallon. Some dealers feel that the oil companies themselves started the price skid. However, the majority of dealers feel it's the individual dealers who have the biggest hand in it.

At the final meeting of Esqueping Township Council Wednesday, various appointments were made to high school area boards: to Acton, Wallace Swackhammer; to Georgetown, Clarence Anderson and Keith Webb.

First to announce himself a candidate in the 1982 elections is retiring mayor Eric Hyde. He has been mayor for two terms. "It has been my pleasure to serve on council with him for four years and I'm sorry to see him go," said deputy reeve John Elliott. Which state has a town named Santa Claus? Indiana. Legend says that the crown of thorns was planted from which Christmas plant? Holly. For how long has Christmas been observed on Dec. 25? Since 354 AD. Which U.S. president forbade use of Christmas trees in the White House? Teddy Roosevelt, who later relented when convinced selective cutting would not destroy forests.

TEN YEARS AGO-Just in time for Christmas, the five-month long hydro strike by local 1766, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers was settled Tuesday. They will be back on the job no later than Jan. 3. The linemen will receive \$4.75 an hour till March 1972, with a jump to \$5.15 an hour starting in April, while the office staff won a six per cent hike till March 1972 and another six per cent in April. This is the first contract for the office staff. The settlement came after a meeting Friday with mediator officer J.W. McGuire of the Labour Relations Board.

Upper Base Line is now Steeles Avenue for its entire length in Halton County. Judge Alan Sprague consented to the name change. Steeles Avenue runs through five Halton municipalities because of curves in the road.

A notice in the Herald, taking up two full pages, announces the municipality of the corporation of the town of Georgetown is having a poll Jan. 15, 1972 asking "Are you in favor of the sale of liquor under a dining lounge licence for consumption on licensed premises with food available?" And, "Are you in favor of the sale of liquor under a lounge licence for consumption on licensed premises?"

Serious devaluation of private property and other economic hardships are reported by Terra Cotta property owners as a result of flood control legislation. Complaints were heard Friday at a meeting of the Terra Cotta and District Prevention Committee held in the home of co-chairman W.E. Doole. Chairman John Agg stressed that the committee is not opposed to the conservation objectives of the Credit Valley Conservation Authority, nor in this case to the intent of the Order-in-Council to save lives and property from any future Hurricane Hazel. However, long-time residents were shocked to see what is now officially delineated as the new potential flood plain. They couldn't recall the Credit River ever overflowing its banks to anywhere near the newly designated danger level. Many homes and landmarks such as the Terra Cotta Inn, the Old Forge, the general store and new housing are shown to be potential hurricane targets.

ONE YEAR AGO-Acton will get 12 police officers to call its own, as well as an opportunity to meet key members of the Halton regional police force at a meeting set for next month. The Acton meeting is Chief James Harding's effort to attempt to bridge the communication gap some residents have noted, as expressed in a letter to the chief from Acton businessman Lorne Doherty last month.

The list of charges of union busting practices facing Maple Lodge Farms Ltd. of Norval is said to be one of the longest ever brought to the Ontario Labor Relations Board. The union alleges the company has systematically harassed employees who took part in the month long strike that ended Oct. 15, in an effort to break the union. There are complaints that over 80 employees who struck haven't been recalled although the company has hired new employees.

Last time the Raiders played Orillia, they trounced their blue and white opponents 6-2. But Friday night's away game was a different story as the Raiders had to come from two ties late in the third period to win 5-4. The much improved Terrier team skated well against the Raiders who were missing several teammates.

A Chinguacousy hockey coach was fired last week for making his players wear yellow helmets. The coach, Jim Nofall, was relieved of his duties as a Central AAA Collegiate Sports pee-wees by the Chinguacousy Minor Hockey Association when he defied their orders to take the helmets off. It seems the hockey association prohibits yellow helmets because their constitution calls for all teams to wear only the traditional blue and white colors. The new yellow helmets were bought three weeks ago through funds raised by the players' parents.

THE HERALD'S  
Christmas issue  
this Thursday

CHRISTMAS MESSAGES  
CHRISTMAS SERVICES  
CHRISTMAS FEATURES