



**SEND-OFF FOR A FRIEND**

There was lots of sweet pink icing for Helen Ritchie Ezeard. The Smith and Stone Inc. employee retired Friday as forlady from the company's assembly department where she has worked since 1935. About 100 fellow employees gathered to present her with a lounge chair to make retirement comfortable and of course, lots of cake. A newlywed as of Dec. 28, Mrs. Ezeard and her husband Murray plan travelling to Vermont and Florida.

(Herald photo)

**Dominion Hotel murder trial continues**

**Owner going broke - accountant**

By MAGGIE HANNAH  
Herald Special  
There is no doubt the Dominion Hotel in Acton was making money, it just wasn't making it fast enough to meet long-term debts, a chartered accountant testified Thursday.

Bruce Armstrong, an investigative accountant appearing before the second degree murder trial of hotel owner Cosimo Mercuri and two hotel employees, Michael McCrystal and Leonard Cripps,

said that at the rate Mr. Mercuri was going he would have been broke sometime during the summer of 1979. The hotel was destroyed in an early morning fire Aug. 19, 1979. One resident, Howard Gibbons, 58, died in the blaze.

Mr. Armstrong said interest payments on loans and mortgages were eating up the hotel's working capital. The accountant carefully differentiated between the Dominion Hotel, Acton, Ltd. and Cosimo Mercuri as the sole shareholder.

Shareholder Mercuri loaned the hotel a sum of money known as part of the hotel's equity. Mr. Mercuri would legitimately be entitled to write off payments on the money he borrowed to loan to the hotel from hotel funds.

However, Mr. Armstrong said, when Mr. Mercuri went to the Federal Business Development Bank in April, 1979, seeking refinancing, the bank assigned or froze the money in the shareholder's loan account as part of the security for a \$200,000 mortgage.

**'Nasty remarks' made to employees?**

Dominion Hotel owner, Cosimo Mercuri, often made nasty remarks about his employees and co-defendants in a murder trial, the Ontario Supreme Court was told Friday by Mr. Mercuri's one-time girlfriend.

reason for dropping them. Mrs. Eckstein said one evening in June, 1979, when she visited the hotel, Mr. Mercuri spoke about feeling the best thing that could happen to the hotel would be for it to burn down.

Mrs. Eckstein said Mr. Mercuri told her there were people who could be hired to do things like burn buildings and suggested they knew how to rig fuse boxes among other things in such a way that a fire resulted.

Eckstein denied it. "He saw you as nothing but a pest and a nuisance," Mr. Muldaver said, "and at that time you're the last person he'd have perceived as someone to be trusted, aren't you?"

noon, he said he heard people coming and going from the north end of the second floor hallway.

Halton Regional Police Constable Joseph Watson testified Thursday about the location of an object in photographs taken following the fire.

Gloria Eckstein, a divorcee who began an intimate affair with Mr. Mercuri in October, 1977, said Leonard Cripps and Michael McCrystal did "Joe Jobs" around the hotel.

Getting in Mr. Mercuri's car in the parking lot behind the hotel later that night, she recalled looking up at the third floor lights and saying if the hotel ever did catch fire "those old guys up there wouldn't stand a chance" of escaping.

When Mr. Mercuri's lawyer Michael Muldaver characterized her as a trouble-maker who liked to stick her nose in Mr. Mercuri's business, Mrs.

Mrs. Eckstein said she didn't know. She also admitted to wearing a body pack tape recording device provided by Halton Regional Police the night she met Mr. Mercuri's brother to discuss the fire and the charges against Mr. Mercuri.

He said he fell asleep during the evening and awoke because someone was beating on his door. The door flew open then and Len Cripps stood there telling him the hotel was on fire and he should leave.

Earlier Const. Watson testified that a piece of charred wood under the north wall under Mr. Cripps' room appeared to be the balance. Const. Watson identified the burned upright Thursday as being located beneath the south window of Mr. Cripps' room.

**School board trustees balk at tax refund**

The Halton board of education Thursday night refused a refund requested by Halton Hills as part of the board's portion of an assessment error.

"The town chose to grant Mr. Chatten a rebate," Mrs. Moore said. "It isn't the board's responsibility to make adjustments or give rebates."

back the money. "We don't have a moral responsibility because our bill would have been the same no matter what Chatten was charged in mill rates," trustee Betty Fisher explained.

**Scouters discuss importance of emblem**

By JEAN LAYMAN  
Herald Special  
North Halton District Scouters Club was held last Wednesday night (March 17) in the Limehouse Memorial Hall.

progressive stages. The requirements differ in each faith and denominations and are prepared nationally by the churches or religious bodies to suit their particular needs.

Discussing a Mini Olympic Day May 29. The Beavers and parents will adopt a tree and plant it for Trees for Canada.

**Ballinafad's Kyle a design ace**

Cub Kyle Pinkerton of the First Ballinafad pack won top honors in a design competition for Cub Kars at a rally held in Milton March 13.

The sections broke up into groups with the Beavers discussing a Mini Olympic Day May 29.

Members of Scouters Club extended sincere and heartfelt sympathy to D.C. John Sharples in the loss of his father, Arthur Sharples of Liverpool, England.

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**About the Hills Levy hits school budget**

More than a little miffed at the Halton board of education's budget increase for 1982 (which will show up as a 19 per cent increase in the region's mill rate), town budget chief Harry Levy stressed Monday night that the town has no control over the board's budget-making process and is not responsible for any increases in it.

**Music Hall returns**  
Following the success of last year's Music Hall (held in conjunction with Summerfest and Pioneer Days), Halton Hills Arts Council is inviting the trio of Director Ron Hill, Musical Director Ralph Ursel and Producer Dorothy Hunt to once again combine their efforts in launching another exciting evening of dinner and entertainment June 19 at 7 p.m. in Saxe Coeur Hall.

**Pay up, or else!**

Halton region plans to get tough on residents and businesses who have not paid bills for regional services. In a recent announcement, officials said that Halton has been intensifying "its pursuit of overdue accounts", adding that individuals who have not paid fees for such things as water are more likely to receive a call from the region's collection officer, Dian Casselman.

**Globe dinner-dance**  
Globe Productions will hold its first annual dinner-dance May 1 at the North Halton Golf and Country Club in Georgetown. Buoyed by the success of its first musical-theatrical production, "Anything Goes", and planning a production of Roger's and Hammerstein's "Oklahoma" next year, Globe has announced that this fund-raising event will feature a special "May Madness" cabaret and a disc jockey will provide music for dancing later in the evening.

**Ring stolen from home**  
Perhaps in search of matrimonial bliss, a thief entering through a rear window of a John Street home Thursday during the day stole a wedding band, a radio and pop. Total value of stolen goods came to \$300.

**PROCLAMATION**  
The Town of Halton Hills has proclaimed the Month of April as Cancer Month in our community.

**APRIL is CANCER MONTH**

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