



PAUL J. TAYLOR, Publisher
and General Manager

PAUL DORSEY
Editor

DAVID BEATTIE
Advertising Manager

PHONE 877-2201

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Urban playdough for our politicians

One year in the making, the Georgetown urban area review report unveiled at a gratifying well-attended public meeting Thursday is a heady mixture of ideas and options that should keep our municipal leaders and local developers busy for at least two decades to come.

It is, in effect the playdough with which our politicians will shape the community's future.

Most interesting among the study's revelations about Georgetown's future growth is its apparent readiness to accommodate the single proposal that really prompted the study in the first place: Focal Properties Ltd.'s plans to build 1,740 homes in the Hungry Hollow area just beyond what is popularly called the Delrex subdivision.

As Thursday night's meeting indicated, no one involved is ready to say what will happen next. Citizens have until April 9 to let the town know how they feel about the report, and developers and politicians alike anticipate a lengthy period of negotiation during which the final details about urban Georgetown's future will be hammered out.

It's still up to council, of course, whether Focal gets the big go-ahead, but between the report's findings and the \$27 million lawsuit filed against the town and ready to be reactivated in the courts within 60 days' notice, it's a safe bet Focal will come to some large-scale terms with the town.

We're ready to accept the town's commitment to expand its sewage treatment plant without adding to our tax burden. With that kind of reassurance and the cool, clean lines of thought apparent in the urban review report, we're confident Focal's original subdivision concept can be accommodated to the benefit of all existing residents and industries.

We do, however, have some concerns about Focal's early reaction to the new report, as premature as those reactions and our concerns might be. Contacted by The Herald, a Focal spokesman said his company will likely "completely scrap" its original plan; the size of the new subdivision proposal, he said, will be "completely different". The spokesman declined to elaborate, so we're left to presume some things about those mysterious words.

Since the report suggests council expand urban Georgetown's boundary

to include Focal lands as well as neighboring properties, we would assume there is a possibility of a blanket development proposal by which Focal would gear its concept to those of neighboring landowners.

A more efficient and much larger subdivision might be the result, and here our concern arises.

The Herald has stated previously its appreciation for Acton's and Georgetown's "smalltown atmospheres". Traffic along the Guelph Street corridor through Georgetown, as one example, is now busy enough without adding cars from future subdivisions. Clearly, preparations for such growth require even more thought than the urban review has given them.

While medical facilities and services could accommodate the new growth it anticipates, the study says, new schools and parks will be necessary, not to mention roads, sewers and emergency services. Growth to the south would bring us much closer, in terms of appearance as well as proximity, to the sprawling suburbia that Brampton has become.

It is here that long-time Georgetown residents will have the toughest decision. In terms of aesthetics alone, there is much to be lost. In terms of the quality of life, there would be a distinct move toward a more futuristic community of the kind to which all of metropolitan Toronto has now become accustomed.

Balancing the "negative" effects of large-scale growth are many obvious benefits, most notable of which are plans for servicing Stewarttown, Norval and Glen Williams. In addition, the local economy can only benefit from more commerce and more citizens, who'll create by their presence a fuller, richer community. Additional commerce, if the report is followed, will be directed downtown. And with the help of the development firms involved, Georgetown will finally make proper use of its hundreds of acres of ravine land for parks.

In short, incorporation of the report's findings could conceivably give Georgetown the means to meet its own potential, for there is much of it still to be exploited.

Let's hope for good relations and good faith between the municipality and the developers. With more of the co-operation that's guided the report's preparation, it could indeed signal the start of a new era for Halton Hills.



Letter from the editor

Paul Dorsey

It's common enough for area residents to discover an ancient copy of the old Georgetown Herald providing insulation or wrapping material in some long-forgotten part of their homes, but Mr. and Mrs. C.R. Emerson of RR4 Georgetown recently came up with a real find.

Our own full-size bound editions of the Herald date back to 1919. If you want to see what the newspaper looked like prior to that time, you have to peer into a microfilm viewer at the Georgetown library.

What the Emersons came across was something much more special: a regular issue of the Georgetown Herald dated "Wednesday evening, Dec. 17, 1913", actually a specially-printed "progress edition" which substituted the week's news and views with detailed updates on lifestyles and business practices around the community. It's printed on high quality coated paper stock, rather than newsprint, and the edition brought to us by the Emersons is in exceptionally good condition, but for a few bad tears.

The progress edition is still in stock in trade for many newspapers, and the Halton Hills Herald plans to publish its own soon for the first time. As a souvenir edition, it's quite a treat for all readers interested in "taking inventory" of their hometown; as a promotional publication for out-of-towners interested in moving their homes or businesses here, it's an invaluable guide.

Back in late 1913, when the threat of Kaiser Wilhelm was still some months away, Georgetown already featured many of the characteristics that have identified it through the years.

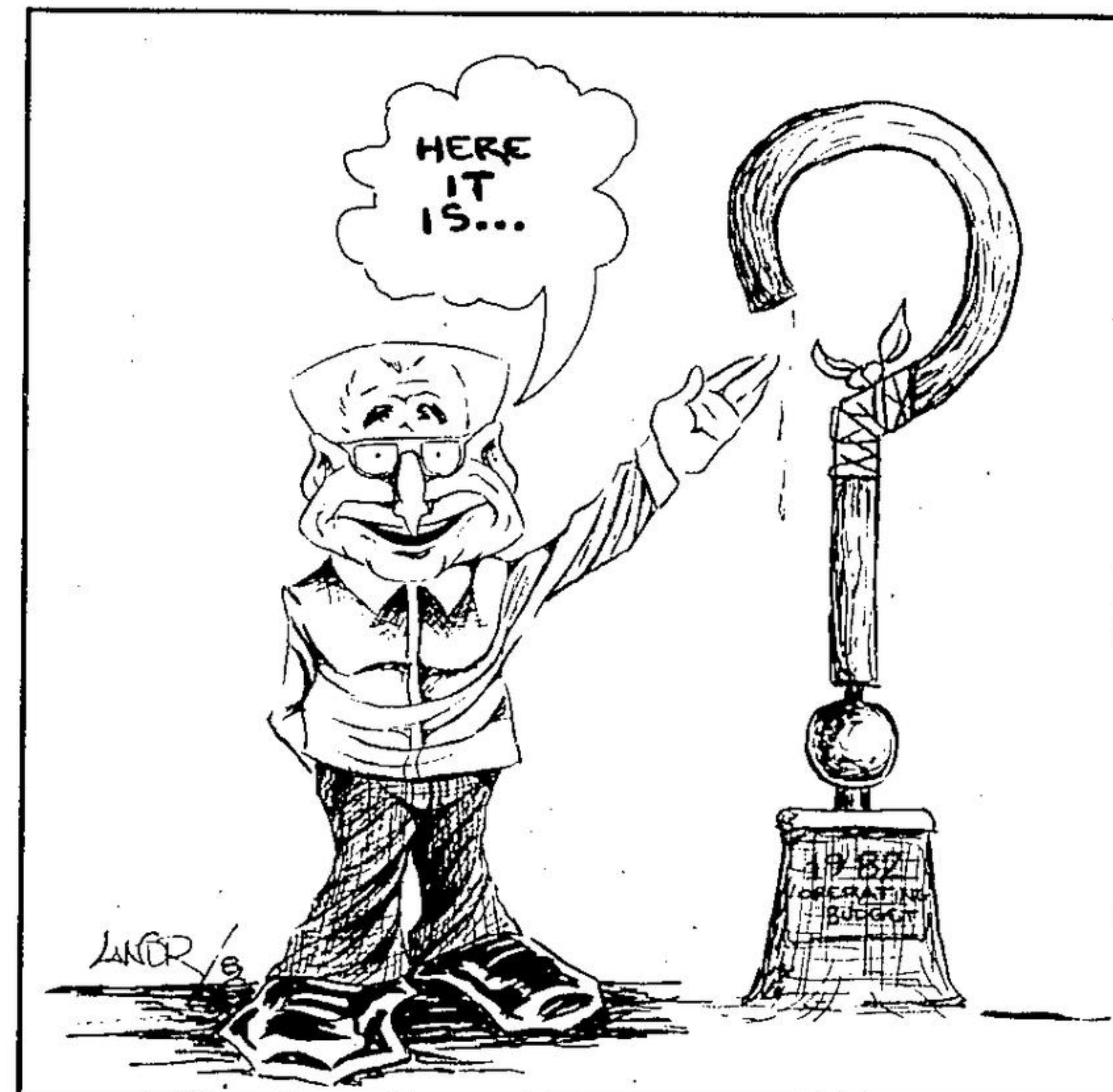
In an edition that features far more photographs than regular publications could afford in

those days, page one carries three views of Georgetown's Main Street, one of the old iron railway bridge that still spans the Credit and the Congregational Church that had just become the public library. Also on page one are shots of the town hall and the old reservoir, and portraits of some civic fathers: Reeve J.M. Moore, town clerk H.W. Kennedy and councillors H.H. Heartwell, L.E. Fleck, F.S. Near and William Barber.

Inside the edition are dozens of marvellous photos of our former centres of commerce and worship and the men who ran them. The "Georgetown Foundry" is still quite recognizable, as is Sacre Coeur Church (then Holy Cross) and the home of Col. John Barber (Berwick Hall at Main and Park). There's an early version of the Exchange Hotel (Tavern), the McLeod residence (still standing above Main Street), the Near residence (still on Queen Street) and of course the Hotel McGibbon.

But for a one-column article entitled "British Amazons - Women who could pull an oar with the best of men", the edition's back page is devoted to "The pretty village of Glen Williams".

With the Emersons' blessings, the progress edition will be at our office for any interested readers to browse in. Take a walk through history when you've got a few spare moments. Trace your roots to "Georgetown - a busy manufacturing community..."



Balancing party rhetoric after Parliament's stalemate



Ottawa Report

By Stewart MacLeod

Ottawa Bureau of The Herald

Shortly after Parliament became mired in the current stalemate, and Grit and Tory MPs began popping off in all verbal directions, I offered the unsolicited view that both sides should cool the rhetoric before things get out of hand.

And, as usual, no one paid the slightest attention.

Far from restraining the rhetoric, both sides have escalated their war of words until now, they seem to have lost sight of what this messy little business is all about. The energy bill, which sits at the nub of the disagreement is talked about by the two warring House leaders - Yvon Pinard and Erik Nielsen - but other spokesmen for the two parties have bigger issues in mind. They prefer to talk about the defence, or destruction of our parliamentary system, and they'll go to any length to

emphasize their points. The latest to jump into the fray is Prime Minister Trudeau who, after a couple of weeks of judicious silence, has decided to compare the Tories to fascists and dictators in other countries.

SAVING DEMOCRACY
"It happened to the Polish government after the war, in Franco's Spain, in Portugal, and in Italy at the time of the Fascists," he told a Toronto audience. "The way in which democracy was destroyed was by closing down Parliament."

"Some of you from other lands have seen it," he said, as he painted a picture of the valiant Liberals desperately trying to save democracy from the dictatorial ambitions of Joe Clark.

And a few days before this, Justice Minister Jean Chretien got into the act by comparing the Tories to the FLQ terrorists who terrified Quebec 12 years ago. No, explained an aide, Chretien was not saying the Tories were terrorists, he was just making a general comparison - or something like that.

Meanwhile, every time one side raises the temperature of the rhetoric, the other side seems to respond in kind. And in fairness to the prime minister, I suppose it should be pointed out that many of the initial over-statements came from the Tory side. It was Clark

himself who, in explaining the need to "Stop Trudeau" over this energy legislation talked about the wanton destruction of democracy by the Grits.

WILD CLAIMS
"We have become a country where citizens have been thrown into jail without charge, where rail services are abandoned without hearings, where internment camps can be established without any parliamentary authority..."

At another point he said that "this is from a government which, with the War Measures Act, threw more than four hundred Canadians in jail without charge." He could have added - but didn't - that the Conservatives of the day were almost unanimous in their support of the War Measures Act being proclaimed.

But that's not the point. What is important is the fact that, with this rampaging war of words, divisions are deepening, the battle is becoming more bitter, and parliamentary peace more elusive. In the last couple of Houses, I heard Liberals talk about Joe Clark's "rape of Parliament" to save his own political skin, and I heard Tories talk of Trudeau's systematic efforts to turn Canada into a banana republic and lead underdeveloped countries in a socialist attack on the United States.

And to think it all began over an energy bill, and whether it should be broken into several pieces of legislation...

Disillusioned Tory voters pose threat at ballot box



Queen's Park

By Derek Nelson

Queen's Park Bureau of The Herald

The rarest bird in the political flock is one who publicly worries about winning an election. It is almost an unwritten rule that a politician is always optimistic about his or her chances.

But MPP Bob Runciman (PC-Leeds) is not your average politician. He demonstrated it again here in a speech to a group of campus Tories. No meek backbencher he.

Runciman talked about the "growing menace of the missing voter" which could make for a "fragile Tory position" next election, with the "potential for bad results" at the polls.

Now Runciman isn't speaking personally, of course. His riding has only voted something other than Conservative once since Confederation. Winning the Leeds PC nomination is tantamount to winning the election.

But he is talking about a trend that others have noticed and commented upon, noticeably the candidates who vied for the leadership of the Liberals and New Democratic Party this winter.

People are turning off the electoral system in droves.

MANY FEWER
In 1971 only 77 per cent sat out the provincial election that year. In 1975 the number rose to 33 per cent, in 1977 to 37 per cent, and last March peaked at 43 per cent.

Runciman noted that of those who actually voted, the Tories took between 36 per cent and 41 per cent over those years - but more important, the percentage of eligible voters casting ballots for the party continued to drop.

Only one in four voted Tory in 1981.

And it is no consolation that even fewer voted Liberal or NDP.

"We have an electorate to which the franchise is increasingly unimportant," Runciman said, and that "worries me."

Now Runciman is a conservative as well as a PC, who speaks for attitudes and ideals often derided as irrelevant by the "pragmatic" establishment who run the Progressive Conservative Party.

WHAT MEANS?
The implication of what Runciman says is that to some degree the apathy is a result of "big C" Conservatism's abandonment of the values represented by "small c" conservatism.

Or, as he put it, government is going to have to be more aware of the concerns of the majority, who are increasingly alienated by the actions of this country's political leadership.

The pragmatists respond, of course, that if you don't win the election in the first place all the values in the world don't mean anything. Which is true.

However, it ignores the fundamen-

tal problem Runciman is underlining.

TORY EDGE
In 1981 the Conservatives had a very popular leader, Premier Bill Davis, most of the money, and 10 times the organization of their opponents. The two opposition leaders irked many people, and ran poor campaigns to boot.

Yet the Tories still drew 50,000 fewer actual votes than they did a decade earlier - and with a much bigger electorate to draw from, one million more to be precise.

That's a reality the Conservatives face. If either opposition party can ever find the key to unlocking the electoral door of the stay-at-homes, the PCs will discover deep trouble.

Now it may not be, as Runciman suspects, that drifting from conservative values has helped fuel the reluctance to cast a ballot. But among those who do vote is it any accident that a Libertarian can draw 1,200 votes in a riding like Durham West? Those must be Tory protest ballots.

Runciman's fears are something the "pragmatists" are going to have to face.

POET'S CORNER

Song for Spring

I heard a robin singing her love song to the dawn,
And, Oh! she sang so sweetly
As the day was nearly born,
I whispered, "Please keep singing,
For just a little while",
As your song ascends to Heaven
I'm sure the angels smile.
You have travelled many hours
Through winds and sun and rain
To rest upon that leafless bough
And sing your sweet refrain.
You're so very faithful

Your plumage is divine
You bring joy and pleasure
May your visit be sublime.
Hurry, Spring! Get busy,
Dress the naked trees
Come on golden sunshine
Warm that chilly breeze.
Wake the sleeping woodlands
Yea slumbering flowers appear.
The Robin says it's springtime
Bless you, Robin, dear.
—By Margaret King,
Georgetown

Halton's History

From our files

THIRTY YEARS AGO—Georgetown taxpayers will not have to dig any deeper into their pocketbooks this year. Council, at Monday's meeting set the 1953 tax rate at 43 mills, the same as last year. A slightly over \$20,000 increase in the cost of running the town has been offset by an increase in assessments. Last year the town spent \$137,000 while this year expenses are budgeted at \$157,000. Education costs are up sharply—\$5,500 for public school and \$2,500 for high school. One mill is equivalent to \$3,672.

Auditor H.A. Lever reviewed the town's financial position before the budget debate and pointed out that a \$14,000 deficit of the previous year had been converted to a \$12,000 surplus. The town had been greatly helped financially, he said, by the sale of 70 wartime houses which had given an unexpected revenue of \$8,400. He suggested the cemetery board consider rates in light of present costs. The board cannot break even on a charge of \$10 to open a grave when it takes ten hours to dig one, he said.

The annual high school commencement will be held next Wednesday in the St. Johns United Church auditorium. Three one-act plays will highlight the entertainment for the night. Miss Rose Piercy is directing a play by the grade nine girls and Principal J.L. Lambert is directing the other two plays. The high school girl's choir will sing several numbers also.

A big musical show featuring members of the Legion W.A. and other local people will be presented in the Legion Hall two days next week. "Shooting Star" produced by the same company which directed the Lions Club "It's a date" show two years ago, uses a television show as a background and features impersonations of well-known stars like Kate Smith, Fred Waring and Milton Berle, as well as Queen for a Day show. The production is under the direction of Miss Nyja Jester.

TWENTY YEARS AGO—A measure which would release undeveloped portions of the Delrex subdivision for house building received majority approval of council Monday when an amendment was ordered prepared to allow a developer to execute a new subdivision agreement. Debated for almost two hours, opinion was far from unanimous, with the proposal passing by a 5-4 split. To encourage new industry, the town must have a surplus labor force and to have this it must have medium priced homes, said Coun. Rex Cook.

Two local firms, Varian Associates and the Howard Smith Alliance Paper Mill contributed \$1,000 each to the building fund for the North Halton School for Retarded Children. The Royal Bank added their gift of \$250, bringing Georgetown's total to \$7,000 so far. Construction of Sunshine School will be started immediately.

The "goose" decidedly did not lay an egg when the Little Theatre group presented their largest audience to date, capacity houses two out of three nights, enjoyed every minute. With the success of this production it is hoped that the Georgetown Little Theatre established itself as a permanent part of the local scene. Producer Pat Barkhouse and director Ron Hill are to be congratulated. Edith Baumgartner played the ingenue lead with complete naturalness. Edith, as Louise, falls in love with a swabduckling sailor Peter Macdonald.

Georgetown's team of salesmen, the Industrial Commission, organized their forces in their inaugural meeting Friday when they named Roger Wade as chairman, Alex Blackwell, vice-chairman, and Peter Berry, secretary-treasurer. Making up the 1982 commission are Berry, Roger Wade, Alex Blackwell, Mayor Doug Sargent, Harold Fobert, W. Nagorsen, Bill Breckenridge, Gord Simpson, Harold Garston and B. Glocking.

TEN YEARS AGO—At midnight, Monday night, Aler Investments won a round in their two-year battle to erect two apartment buildings on the north side of Highway 7 at the eastern town limits, when council, on a 5-3 vote, passed the first reading of the by-law to change the site from industrial to apartment use. Earlier in the evening, the motor hotel, the other project planned by Al Pilutti on the same site, was passed with no opposition or discussion.

A long list of industries considered obnoxious were banned from town when council passed a by-law Monday night. The list includes abattoirs, or slaughter houses, cattle, poultry or animal sheds, ash or refuse dumps, asphalt plants, auto wrecking yards, blast furnaces, blood boiling plants, casting foundries, chemical or gaseous manufacturing, corrugated metal manufacturing, crematoriums, distillation of bones, coal, wood, vegetable or animal products or by-products, and many others.

The report of the Ontario Police Commission investigating Georgetown Police Department which was expected Monday is still not in the hands of the Georgetown Commission. The investigation started in late January. The preliminary investigation was undertaken to determine if internal problems warranted a full-scale investigation.

Georgetown Memorial Arena resembles a beehive this week. It's buzzing with hundreds of young Bantam hockey players. This is the 12th consecutive year that Georgetown has played host to what is now recognized as the best Bantam hockey tournament in Canada, tourney chairman Harry Levy said.

ONE YEAR AGO—Half of the trustees present at last Wednesday night's Halton board of education meeting successfully defended the board's new \$115.7 million budget for 1981 against a \$2.5 million cut proposed by Oakville rep Bill Herd. The approved budget will bring an average mill rate increase of 9.7 per cent across the region. Although each town's share of the budget will vary as adjustments are made according to local needs, the result could be a \$44 tax hike for an average assessment of \$7,000. "The time has long passed," Mr. Herd warned fellow trustees, "when taxpayers will support rising education costs in the face of declining enrollment." "Less than one-half of them have children in the system."

A second appeal for funding has earned the fledgling North Halton Social Planning Council \$5,000 to start programs in Milton and Halton Hills promoting volunteerism in the area. Although the group, formed in November, originally asked the region's health and social services committee for \$21,000, only \$7,000 was recommended to regional council for approval. Georgetown District High School vice-principal and president of the group, Bill Thom warned councillors that not getting more money would dampen enthusiasm among board members.

The Georgetown Chrysler Raiders proved they are indeed made of championship material when they rebounded from a 7-3 drumming by Owen Sound last week to defeat their rivals over the weekend by scores of 5-4 and 10-3. In their home game last March 17, the Raiders got caught sleeping by Owen Sound. The Greys whipped five goals past Peter McDuffie in the second period. Georgetown tallied only two during that period.

Georgetown's Branch 120 of the Royal Canadian Legion went down to defeat in the provincial senior curling championships this weekend, finishing second behind their arch rivals from Guelph, once. The local Legion team has only beaten Guelph once. Branch 120 of Georgetown were the provincial defending champions after winning last year and placing third at the Canadian finals. The local rink of Ken Taplin, Pat Chamberlain, Gord Campbell and Harvey Campbell have defended the provincial title for two years in a row.