

Town future: cost up, service down

By CHRIS AAGAARD
Herald Staff Writer

Anticipating a campaign built upon his past performance, Pete Pomeroy announced Monday that he'll seek a third term as mayor of Halton Hills in this year's municipal election.

He told The Herald the decision was made long before council incumbents and aspiring municipal politicians recently started to get restless with election fever.

When he sold his Main Street, Georgetown, sports store two years ago, Mayor Pomeroy said, he made a big commitment to a future in municipal politics.

"There's a lot going on right now that I want to see finished," he said, citing, as an example, the town's new official plan unveiled this year and currently being revived by local reps before it is sent to the provincial government.

Mayor Pomeroy began his political career in 1978 representing Ward 3 (Georgetown).

TWO YEARS

Two years later, he plunged into the mayor's race and regional politics, ousting incumbent Tom Hill. He was acclaimed for a second term as mayor in November, 1980 and as of presstime Thursday, remains unopposed in this year's bid for office.

"The learning experience never ends," Mayor Pomeroy said. "It's a very complicated job now, especially in dealing with other governments, considering that municipalities now rely heavily on provincial subsidies."

With the growth of new assessment in town slowed to a trickle, responding to a sluggish economy across Canada, Mayor Pomeroy said regional and local governments now face perhaps one of the toughest terms in recent history.

Demands for increased levels of service will continue, he noted, but politicians must be prepared to cut back, cancel and defer some projects.

"One of the things we'll probably have to deal with very early in the term is the transfer of payments from the province to the municipalities."

KEPT PACE

Councillors, he noted, have not witnessed areas where provincial funds haven't kept pace with the rate of inflation and municipal governments have

had to increase taxes to make up funding shortfalls.

Governments may choose to follow the federal government's "six and five per cent" solution to help wrestle information, Mayor Pomeroy acknowledged, but it may be some time before municipal costs drop that low.

THEY CONCUR

Meanwhile, he maintained, the town's budget committee may "realistically" consider priority changes and cutbacks in the capital projects forecast and residents could see taxes rise, regional and local governments services dwindle.

"We'll have to be very astute when it comes to budgeting next year," he said. "But I think that council has done a good job of keeping the town in a good financial position, especially in the dollars-owned side of the ledger."

"There's no question in my mind that the biggest problems governments — and people — face is the amount of interest they have to pay on large deficits. Our policy has been to spend only what we can raise and avoid borrowing money."

Halton Hills regional councillors Mike Arms-

strong, Dave Whiting and Russ Miller (Roy Booth could not be reached as of presstime) concur with Mayor Pomeroy's view that there must be serious belt-tightening at the region.

He described Halton as "reacting slowly" to the economic change and expects cutbacks in public works, health and social services programs, although demand for these services is expected to increase.

However, the relation-

ship between the town and the region "has improved dramatically," Mayor Pomeroy noted, pointing to Halton's swift action in

getting its public works department to quickly repair Maple Avenue after the culvert was washed out in a June rainstorm.

APLACE

"Regional staff have come to realize there's a place for the northern municipalities in the region's administration," he said. "A lot of credit for this has to go (regional chairman) Jack Rafila."

Locally, council works well as a team, he stressed.

"We have a very good senior administrative staff and we listen to all the opinions," he said. "When

you do that, there's a good chance the decision which comes out at the end will be the right one."

Although council's past term boasted major triumphs, like the construction of a library-theatre complex and the presentation of planning policies which will guide the municipality into the 21st century, there have been some divisive moments.

There was a strong push last year from council's Acton contingent to adopt the Section 86 tax reform,

which sought to equalize the town's various assessment rates. Georgetown and Esqueving councillors maintained it would do more harm than good, particularly to senior citizens living in older homes with substantially lower assessments than found in newer subdivisions.

BETTER FORM

"What we really need is

for the province to come up with a better form of tax reform," Mayor Pomeroy argued. "I don't think we should change from one bad system to another."

Acton councillors were also disappointed when council declined to help restore the community's century-old former town hall. On the verge of

having its historical designation stripped, readying the building for demolition, its fate will be discussed by a special judicial panel established under the province's Heritage Act.

Mayor Pomeroy supported a plan to restore the building and acknowledged that he "feels bad" about the outcome, al-

though he respects council's decision.

Despite emotion surrounding the hall's future, the issue will likely be overshadowed by effects of the recession on future town and regional policies.

"The primary issue next term will be costs," Mayor Pomeroy predicted. "It's now a more critical issue than it ever was."



PETE POMEROY

Historic Baha'i conference attended by 12 delegates

By MARY LAMON
Herald Special

Twelve Baha'is from Halton Hills have just returned from Montreal, where they attended the first International Baha'i conference to be held in Canada.

Ten thousand Baha'is from all over the world gathered in Montreal Sept. 2 to 5 to attend this conference in response to the challenge of building a unified, international community that demonstrates the oneness of all the world's races, peoples and religions.

Davina Barber, Yvette and Sylvie Bourassa, Patsy Irving and her daughter Shaelan, Isabel and Don Weaver and son's Craig and Ryan, and Mary, Barbara and Jennifer Lamon were there. The conference was dedicated to the greatest woman of Baha'i history, Bahiyih Khanum, and highlighted the importance of the Baha'i principle of equality of men and women, and the crucial role women have to play as a civilizing force in the emergence of a unified, peaceful world.

The first International Children's Conference, one of three auxiliary conferences, was held concurrently in the Pierre Charbonneau centre at the Olympic site. One thousand and children age 5-14 attended the children's conf-

ference, and with the assistance of many dedicated volunteers, enjoyed an extensive programme of speakers, musicians and dancers.

The Children's Conference focused on the Baha'i ideal of raising a generation of world-minded children, by helping them gain

a better understanding of the oneness of mankind and their vital role as part of the Baha'i community in achieving world unity.

This is gradually taking place through a vital, growing world-wide membership of over three million people, who come from all racial, religious, ethnic and educational back-

grounds, including 50 of North America's native tribes.

The 20,000 Canadian Baha'is live in 1500 localities across Canada, and are part of a Faith that teaches the elimination of all forms of prejudice and superstition; obedience to government and avoidance of involvement in any form of partisan politics; equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities for men and women; the independent investigation of truth as the right and responsibility of each individual.

The Halton Hills Baha'is were indeed proud to be part of this historic, International Conference, and to serve as volunteers during this memorable occasion.

Town hall art show

The Glen Williams town hall is playing host Sept. 18 and 19 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. to a display of paintings by Ian Bibby and prints by Robert Murray. The two Bramalea artists have their studio next door to the town hall and call their style expressionist. "Our works are concerned with the psychological and spiritual rather than the realistic approach," artist Murray said.

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