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Unhappy MDs meet to plan strategy

By SANDY CAMPBELL
and ANI FEDERIAN
Herald Staff

About 20 Georgetown doctors were to meet last night (Tuesday) with a member of the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) to discuss whether or not they will support the OMA.

"The doctors are unhappy and want to do something," Dr. Boyd Hoddinott, a Georgetown Medical Associates member said.

The OMA is urging members to disobey the law if the province goes ahead with proposed legislation that bans extra-billing. The Association wants its doctors to opt out of the Ontario Health Insurance Plan

(OHIP), which means doctors would bill patients directly and it would be up to patients to seek reimbursement from OHIP.

Just how far local doctors will go to demonstrate opposition to the provincial proposal wasn't known by press time, but feelings are strong on the issue.

"I would go to jail to protect freedom in my office," Dr. Hoddinott declared.

Dr. Elliott Halparin, also a Georgetown Medical Associates member, thinks most local doctors will stand behind the OMA. Five doctors who spoke to The Herald said they do. On the executive of the 3,400

member Ontario branch of the College of Family Physicians, Dr. Halparin said the College is supporting the OMA.

In neighboring Peel, 75 to 80 per cent of doctors recently turned out for a vote on whether they would support the Ontario Medical Association and the result was a unanimous yes, Dr. Hoddinott said.

Doctors Hoddinott and Halparin see extra-billing as a "smoke-screen" clouding the real issue in this controversy, which they say is declining health care in Ontario.

Georgetown District Memorial Hospital's President of the medical staff, Dr. Donald Trant, agrees. He says the government is underfunding health care and that is the issue, in a letter to The Herald this week.

"If people want a first-rate system they have to understand they will have to pay for it and that doesn't mean paying more money to physicians," Dr. Halparin said.

He sees banning extra-billing as the first of many steps to control doctors, which will hurt the health care system.

Even the title of the proposed legislation is a smoke-screen, Dr. Halparin said. Called the Health Care Accessibility Act, it implies health care is not accessible now, the doctor said.

"The truth is, it will be less accessible when the government bans extra-billing and standards decline," Dr. Halparin said. Dr. Alex Ashenhurst of Georgetown is concerned that banning extra-billing will lead to more restrictions on doctors, like "capping". Capping means doctors will be allowed to earn only so much, after which taxes increase drastically. The doctor said capping is practised in Quebec.

Where doctors can set up their practice will be another control Dr. Ashenhurst anticipates will be proposed by the government. Doctors participating in OHIP won't be able to choose where they want to work, he said.

Doctors may also have the number of X-rays and lab tests per patient limited in future, Dr. Ashenhurst said.

Psychiatrist Dr. Brian Jordan supports the OMA's cause on principle, he said. He said he doesn't agree with government interference in doctors' freedom.

"I don't extra-bill," Dr. Jordan said, adding doctors who do, rarely refuse patients who can't afford their services.

If they are refused by one doctor, there is always another who doesn't extra-bill, Dr. Jordan said.

White Cane Week

The week of Feb. 2 to 9 has been declared White Cane Week by Halton Hills councillors. Co-sponsored by the Canadian Council of the Blind and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, activities and information designed to heighten public awareness about blindness and visual impairment will be featured across Canada.

When push comes to shove...



There's a new rink in town for outdoor skaters. Saturday afternoon, the ice was great at the homemade rink at the Glen Williams ball diamond, as Couns. Joe Hewitt and Pam Sheldon and five-year-old Matthew Rowe found out. (Herald photo)

Closure committee debate big decision

The number of school closures being recommended to the Halton Board of Education by its Halton Hills School Consolidation Committee was to be decided Tuesday night, after The Herald went to press.

Expected to be between two and four schools, this difficult decision was to be made at last night's Committee meeting. The school closures are anticipated to take effect in September as a measure to handle declining enrolments and keep school programs operating.

Yesterday, Halton Hills Trustee and Board Chairman Arlene Bruce said the Committee's recommendations are scheduled to go before the board Feb. 27. When the public will be made aware of the Committee's decision isn't known, and Trustee Bruce refused to comment on it.

Last night's meeting was to decide when parents should know which schools are to close.

It's anticipated the Committee recommendations will be accepted without too much difficulty by the board.

"The Halton board of education has never overturned a consolidation report," Chairman Bruce said. The final vote comes at the board's March 20 meeting.

Then, an integration committee will be formed to put the closures into effect as "smoothly and comfortably as possible" for children and parents, Chairman Bruce said.

Public meetings will be held between Feb. 27 and March 20 at local schools to discuss the closure recommendations, she said.

This study is the largest ever attempted by the Halton board, and has involved 31 people in a year of meetings. It was prompted by the declining enrolments at schools in the north.

IN THE HILLS

Housing debate

A meeting of the housing needs group will be held tomorrow (Thursday) at 12 noon at the Community Services Centre on Georgetown's Guelph Street (next to Barrager's Cleaners).

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss available options in the north for meeting the housing demands of low income families, troubled youth, the disabled and the elderly. Emergency and long-term housing needs will be examined. Anyone interested is welcome to attend. Call 877-7643 for more information.

The 'know-how'

The Halton Hills Recreation Department is holding a leadership development program starting Wednesday Feb. 12, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. at MacKenzie Smith Middle School in Acton.

Get the know-how and confidence to lead activities in crafts, sports, games, campfire programs and more. This program offers you an excellent opportunity to build your qualifications for any future job. For more information call 877-5185 ext. 261.

7 last words

"Seven Last Words", a powerful musical passion play written by Lorraine Tadman of Georgetown will be performed March 21 and 22 at 8 p.m. at the John Elliott Theatre. This theatrical production ran in Toronto for five consecutive years

Gas dealer fights back in price war

If you didn't buy your gas as MacPherson's Esso on the crest of the Norval hill sometime between Monday afternoon and Tuesday noon, you paid too much.

The first station along Highway 7 as you enter Georgetown had the lowest rates for miles around early this week, attracting long lineups of customers as well as media coverage.

The price was down to 39.9 cents per litre for regular gas, a bargain when neighboring stations were selling it upwards of 45 cents a litre.

Manager at the station, Marie Kaiser said the price was dropped as a protest against the station's supplier Imperial Oil. It was a first for the 15-year old business which wants to remain competitive.

"We're usually within 2 or 4 cents above the self-serves and the unbranded (stations), which is fair and we have no objections to that," Mrs. Kaiser said. "It's when we can't even compete that we object."

For two weeks, MacPherson's Esso was charging far above the gas prices available at other Georgetown gas stations.

"Monday, we called Imperial to let them know our price was too high (51.9 cents per litre) compared to the rest of the town, and asked what we could do about it," Mrs. Kaiser said.

When there was no direction given, the Georgetown station took matters into its own hands and dropped the price.

Although the station paid 48.1 cents per litre for the gas it had stored in the ground feeding the pumps, MacPherson's Esso decided to give its customers a break. For 11 hours Monday and Tuesday, it advertised regular gasoline at 39.9 cents, selling about 17,000 litres as a result.

"Business was fantastic, and there were long line-ups all over the lot, so that it was even dangerous for the gas attendants to go out the door," Mrs. Kaiser laughed. "Even when I laid the sign down to give the attendants a rest, people were coming."

She estimated the volume sold was a record for the station. In financial terms, it worked out to be a \$1,273 loss for MacPherson's Esso, and that doesn't include the salaries for the three extra attendants hired to handle the crush at the pumps.

"It is a lot, but everybody else in town is supported by their oil company, but we're not," Mrs. Kaiser said. "We're hoping the oil company will step in and decide to do something to assist us."

She noted the selling price assigned the Georgetown Station by Imperial's head office was, at the very least, three cents above what local stations were charging.

"You could be out of business that way," Mrs. Kaiser said. "We can't base our price on Toronto or some other place."

A truckload of gasoline is expected to be delivered today (Wednesday) at MacPherson's Esso, and Mrs. Kaiser will be waiting to see what the price per litre will be.

Hamming it up nothing new for Globe's latest star

By LOIS FRASER
Herald Special

Jan Hillier has found herself an unusual pet for the run of Globe Productions' *Li'l Abner*. The script calls for her to carry a young pig since she is playing Moonbeam McSwine, one of Dogpatch's tackiest residents.

She is a far cry from the sweet young girl Hope, Jan played in *Globe's*

first show, *Anything Goes*. One of Jan's lines in a song is "But I smells alright when the wind blows the other way." She is taking a lot of ribbing from the cast. One of the guys has proposed and says he doesn't mind if she brings the pig along with her.

Of course, Hamlet doesn't realize he is the subject of all this controversy. He is only interested in furthering his career by getting maximum exposure. His stage name was chosen by the cast of *Li'l Abner* and it was a toss up between Hamlet or Pork Chop. Hamlet was chosen because of the name's theatrical connection and he has every intention of living up to his name.

Hamlet is eight weeks old and has wanted to be on stage ever since he was born. He is on contract with *Globe* for the 11 night run of *Li'l Abner*, which opens Jan. 30 at the John Elliott Theatre. His agent, Alan Hardy of Rockwood, has arranged for accommodations befitting a star of Hamlet's status. He will be residing at the farm of Ralph Cunningham, *Li'l Abner's* assistant stage manager.

Hamlet will have a star painted on his stall and will be available for hoofprints by appointment only. For a chance to see Canada's fastest rising piglet during his limited engagement in Georgetown, call *Globe's* box office at 877-4323.



Hogging the limelight is nothing new to *Globe's* animal star aptly named Hamlet.

Complex a 'high priority'

Long lingering in the minds of councillors, the idea of a central municipal administration building was put down in writing and designated "high priority" recently.

Members of the town's Municipally Owned Property Committee voted in favor of housing all the town departments in one central building, at their Jan. 14 meeting.

They also stated achievement of this goal be given a high priority and that a review be made of how it can

be done. Right now, town staff are spread across the town, in a number of rented and town-owned offices.

New accommodation for them should serve not only the present but the future needs and residents of the town, the committee said.

At the committee's next meeting town staff will be reporting back on the cost and efficiency of buying portables for these departments.

Task force to decide on hunt ban

With the unanimous support of 17 speakers representing pro and anti-hunting groups, Halton regional councillors voted in favor of setting up a task force to study whether the current ban on hunting in the agreement forests should stay.

The ban on the discharge of

firearms and hunting was passed by Halton region shortly before the fall deer hunt, angering many local hunting organizations and farmers who objected to not being asked their opinion before the ban was put into place.

Last week, councillors supported

the earlier decision by the region's planning and public works committee to set up a task force.

Membership on the task force will be one person each from: the hunting community, the agricultural community, the Halton Regional Police Force, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the regional council. There will be two people representing the "public-at-large" as well on this task force.

Regional staff are to set up the guidelines for the group's work and how the membership should be selected.

Although the task force has been given a deadline of April end to come up with its report, councillors acknowledged that that may not be enough time.

In the meantime, until the task force is set up and its report accepted, there is no hunting allowed in the agreement forests in Halton. The weighty decision of whether discharging firearms should be permitted in these forests is up to this task force.

As well, the task force will look into Halton's potential liability vis-a-vis the hunting or use of firearms in the agreement forests, as well as consider compensatory claims to the region's farmers.

Other items to be considered include: a regional land registry for hunting, a residents-only hunt, an extended deer hunt, visible hunter numbers and improved Ministry control and enforcement.

Regional Chairman Peter Pome-

Hunters or birdwatchers?

Safety, public safety, is one of the key factors in the debate over whether Halton's agreement forests should be re-opened for hunting.

"I don't think the issue is liability at all. To me, the issue is land use conflicts," Burlington Coun. Joan Little said Wednesday at Halton regional council.

She said she wanted a close look taken of the agreement forests to see if some areas lead themselves to hunting and some don't.

Residents living near the forest lands object to their recreational uses of the lands being disturbed by hunters, as well as the trespassing on their private lands by these hunters. They say they are afraid to go cross country skiing, hiking or birdwatching alongside with hunters.

Burlington Coun. Rob Forbes said he supported a ban on hunting in these forests and pointed out that unless there was some enforcement of the law on these lands, a ban was the only way for council to go.

"The Ministry is going to have to realize that and are going to have to give us enforcement," he said.

Oakville Mayor Bill Perras said that if someone gets killed or serious injured while in the forest, the region may be named responsible.

"I'd rather run into an unsafe hiker than an unsafe person who hikes," he concluded.

Milton Coun. Bill Johnson pointed out residents near these agreement forests don't object to hunting but are concerned because of all the trespassing on their property by hunters.

"God help anyone on this council if there's a shooting accident," he warned.

Residential growth in the rural areas has increased over the years, creating this conflict between recreational use and hunting, Oakville Coun. Liz Behrens noted.