

Town costs growing over tax, insurance

Town councillors are going to have a difficult juggling act over the next couple of weeks with their 1986 budget.

Right off the bat, the budget is up 2 per cent over last year because of increases in the town's insurance rates and the recent federal budget. Town treasurer Ray King says every \$45,000 of town spending translates into a one per cent increase in the general town tax bill.

Right now, the town's insurance is up between 50 to 60 per cent for 1986. From \$99,441 last year, it's up to \$150,000 this year, Mr. King said.

"Most of that increase is made up of liability," he said. "It's something that's not really controllable by us, and it represents over a one per cent increase in the general tax rate."



Ray King

Two budget meetings have been held already this month and March 22, councillors hope to finalize the 1986 town budget. "Right now we're at a 13 per cent increase," Coun. Rick Bonnett said. "We've got a lot of chopping to do. We might come in at 8 per cent, but I want it to go down to 4 or 5 per cent."

A report from the town treasurer will be presented to council in a couple of weeks, Mr. King said.

The federal sales tax increase of one per cent which comes into effect in April spells out into a \$25,000 to \$30,000 extra expense for the town, he said.

"So just with the insurance and the sales tax, we've got a 2 per cent budget increase," the treasurer said.

The town's two major grants from the province, the roadwork grants and the unconditional grants, are up 4 per cent which is a little better than last year although they're still less than the inflation rate, Mr. King said.

POLICE BEAT

Slid into plow

An Acton man could not stop on an icy Norman Avenue and slid into the back of a 1979 AMC Jeep which was plowing snow Thursday at 10:30 a.m. Damage to the Jeep was estimated at \$2,000. The Acton man's 1983 Ford received no damage, police said.

School thefts

A wallet and its contents worth \$50 was taken from the pocket of a jacket left in the Acton District High School staff work room. It was taken Friday between 8:30 and 11:30 a.m.

A bracelet, ring and watch worth \$200 were taken from a changing room at Georgetown District High School Friday between 3:30 and 6 p.m.

House axed

A vacant house on RR1 Georgetown was robbed and had its inside walls damaged with an axe some time between Feb. 27 and March 5. Police believe culprits entered through the front door which had a broken handle. Food, dishes, cookware, a kerosene heater and a man's gold ring were taken.

Correction

In a police story last week, The Herald said the 19-year-old driver of a Dodge delivery van lost control on Sideroad 10 just west of Ninth Line and struck a 1981 Volvo (Feb. 28). In fact, it was another driver that lost control on loose drifting snow and was unable to avoid the collision. The Herald regrets the error.

Impaired driver

An impaired Acton man was taken to Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital after he crashed his car into a telephone pole Sunday at 7:10 a.m. He was west-bound on Highway 7 at an unknown speed when he attempted to make a left turn onto Main Street North, lost control, swerved, and struck a hydro pole, police said. The car was totalled and the Acton man was treated for minor injuries.

Car ditched

An Acton woman driving a 1985 Mazda eastbound on Highway 7 swerved to miss an oncoming car, lost control on ice and entered a ditch Thursday at 7 a.m. Damage to her Mazda was estimated at \$800. The car she swerved to miss did not stop, police said.

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Sunday afternoon. Punker Barton Lane, 12, of Mississauga, fisherman Stephanie Blichsel, 11, of Toronto, and picnic table Andrea Keserman,

10, of Mississauga were wearing the top three winning costumes at the Conservation Area. (Herald photo)

Speyside parents win reprieve

By MAGGIE HANNAH
Herald Special

Residents will be allowed to register their objections to the proposed closing of their school before trustees make a final decision.

In a meeting with residents and closure committee members Thursday at the Hallon Board of Education chairman Arlene Bruce said she would bend the board's rules to allow the residents to get their message to trustees.

Under current rules the residents would have had to make their submissions on a report recommending the closure of Speyside school to the board by March 11 to allow time for the information to be distributed to trustees for the March 20 meeting.

Mrs. Bruce told residents she would extend that deadline to give them the time needed to study the closure report and make their comments.

At stake are the futures of Limehouse or Speyside schools.

Speyside residents are upset because the board committee which has recommended the closures had a year to prepare its stand while they were being expected to study the issues and respond within a week.

The residents' brief will be delivered by board courier to trustees before the meeting.

A decision has to be made in March, the residents were told, if the schools are to be closed in September.

Mrs. Bruce and board superintendent Ron Chapman both said the question could be deferred by a board motion but such a delay would keep the schools open another year.

Residents made it plain they were unhappy with the procedure the board has used in its closure study, arguing the committee should have warned the community their school was being considered for closure, giving them time to make their presentations.

They expressed support for the representatives they had on the study committee, but said those representatives had been muzzled.

Under current board policy, committee decisions are not revealed until after they have been presented to the board.

The conclusions of the study committee were presented last week, giving residents only a week to prepare their response.

The schools to be studied were chosen in December. Mrs. Bruce said, but the committee didn't want to tell residents because no firm decision had been made.

Resident Jim Sheldon questioned why the report contained no mention of potential disposition of the closed schools, despite requirements for that information in both Ministry of Education and board policies on such studies.

Mr. Chapman said committee members wanted to place the emphasis on what was best for children rather than on the financial issues and thus did not discuss disposing of the surplus properties.

Residents were also unhappy at the fact children being bused to Limehouse will have to travel over a treacherous road which has been deemed too narrow and is part of a gravel truck haul route.

Mr. Chapman said if Limehouse was closed and its pupils taken to Speyside 77 youngsters would have to travel that section of road, while only 27 children would have to travel the road if Speyside were closed.

—Courtesy Guelph Mercury

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\$100,000 blaze damages 2 homes

A garage fire spread to two homes about 1 kilometre south of Maple Avenue in Georgetown and caused an estimated \$100,000 damage Thursday at approximately 2 a.m. No one was hurt in the fire at 241 Main Street South. Seven young people are staying elsewhere, temporarily.

As of press-time, the fire department did not know what had caused the fire. The fire began in the garage which is between a small summer home and a large home.

The garage, which was attached to the summer home, was completely burned. The summer home received damage to the roof and one wall.

The bigger home, although not directly attached to the garage, also received damage to one wall and the roof. Both buildings received

fire and smoke damage.

The fire was discovered by Glen Sparring, 24, who lived in the summer cottage with Rick Hunter. Glen Sparring warned the residents of the large house: Tom Ditchfield, 23; Bob Claxson, 25; Dave Smith, 22; Bob Hafsue, 23; and Lisa Cain, 19. The homes are owned by Douglas Ditchfield of Oshawa, formerly of Georgetown.

The fire was completely underway when firefighters arrived. Deputy Chief Bob Hyde said "They (firefighters) were hampered by the weather," he said. It was snowing at the time.

Two show motorcycles, tools, antique furniture, a riding lawn mower and more were lost in the fire. Deputy Chief Hyde did not know when the people will be able to move back into the two homes.

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Paper restorer

Paper is excellent to write on but it does not last forever unless carefully preserved. Many of us have old family papers which are stained or brittle. The Esqueing Historical Society has a large collection of papers, books, and maps in its archives and knows firsthand how short-lived paper can be.

The Esqueing Historical Society has arranged for Mr. Keith Felton to be guest speaker March 12. Mr. Felton is an expert on preserving and restoring old papers.

Parents of Faith

Single Parents of Faith, an interdenominational group, held their regular meeting Saturday evening, March 8, at the home of Neville and Doreen Palmer, Georgetown.

After a pot-luck dinner and singing of choruses, a presentation was given on "Spiritual Eyes".

Meetings are held the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month. All single parents are welcome; phone: 877-4853 or 7228.

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