

Sunday shopping decision looming

The Liberal government has finally made a decision on Sunday shopping.

Sort of. Whether you'll be able to shop on Sundays in the future will be up to municipalities.

But exactly what the rules will be isn't clear.

Nor will the law be changed until sometime in 1988. The existing Retail Business Holidays Act will be enforced until then.

Except on Sunday, Dec. 27. Police will ignore the law that day on the recommendation of the government.

It took the tag-team twosome of Attorney-General Ian Scott and Solicitor-General Joan Smith to explain this masterpiece of reasoning.

Scott pointed out that Boxing Day falls on a Saturday this year, which means that, under the Retail Holidays Business Act, most stores will have to close on Saturday, Dec. 26.

Under any normal sort of law, this would mean retail employees would have Christmas Day, Boxing Day and then the Sunday off, all in a row.

However, included in the Retail



Queen's Park

By Derek Nelson

Holidays Business Act is something called the Sabbatarian exemption, which permits smaller stores to open Sunday if they close Saturday.

This applies to stores with less than eight employees and 5,000 square feet of space, although the definition is flexible enough that larger stores can also open if they rope off enough space to qualify.

As Scott explained, the purpose of this exemption was to reduce the impact of the legislation on those religious groups for whom Saturday is the Sabbath. Such people are put on an equal footing with other retailers by allowing them to substitute Saturday for Sunday as their day of closing.

But because the three old-line parties (PC, Liberal, NDP) insisted the

Sunday closing law had nothing to do with religion - they were simply trying to ensure a "pause day" for employees - the act was written "so as to avoid the necessity of a state-conducted inquiry into religious beliefs," Scott said.

"But this means the exemption will be available to all small retailers on Dec. 27," but not the larger ones, which would be unfair, he said.

That the law has always been unfair, discriminating against larger and therefore more successful store owners, wasn't something he mentioned.

Nor did he note that the so-called Sabbatarian exemption only applies to those people (Jews, Seventh-day Adventists) whose holy day is Saturday. However, others, whose holy day is Friday, such as Moslems, remain out of luck.

In any case, with the government faced by this loophole in the law for smaller stores, it has decided that police should even things out by ignoring the law as it applies to larger stores for that day. Everyone can open.

The rest of the time, though, the act will be enforced.

That's until legislation is brought into effect.

Smith had the unenviable job of defending the new Liberal approach on Sunday openings to municipalities. She was hampered considerably by her own comments a week earlier that such a course of action would be the "chicken way out."

Squawk, squawk. And what she didn't explain was whether the municipalities would have total control over such openings, or whether they would have to operate within broader provincial parameters. (The analogy would be cocktail lounges, which municipalities can allow or reject by referendum - but if they accept them, they must follow standard provincial licensing rules such as hours of operation.)

That hadn't been decided yet, officials at Smith's office said. Still, at least the Grits should be congratulated on recognizing what everyone else has known since the Retail Business Holidays Act was passed about a decade ago - it is a complex, discriminatory, and generally absurd law.

Good riddance to it.

Stepping down

Thursday, after two years as the chairman of the Halton Board of Education, Arlene Bruce of Acton handed over her gavel to Pat Hillhouse.

With quiet competence, Mrs. Bruce guided the board through the rough roads of change in education.

There were many issues which required strong leadership along with logic and sensitivity during her term. The board had to tackle a number of unsavory issues which affected students, teachers and taxpayers.

In these days of declining enrolments, the board had to make hard decisions about school closings. The provincial government had to be lobbied and issues of primary importance about separate school funding and transfer payments had to be carefully negotiated. Always difficult are the day-to-day budget problems of administering a large school board and tackling teacher salary demands while upgrading facilities, programs and equipment for students.

Through all the hidden turmoil, Mrs. Bruce handled herself very capably as board chairman. Without the blind ambition of other politicians, she carries on, constantly reinforcing to others her concern for students and Halton's education system.

Mrs. Bruce conducted herself with maturity and understanding. She promoted co-operation among her co-board members. There has been little of the in-fighting on the Halton board that we have seen elsewhere from other government bodies. One gets the sense that school board members are willing to put aside personal differences or philosophical variances for the good of the schoolchildren.

The challenges will continue for Mrs. Hillhouse, who is sure to carry on the traditions of high calibre leadership at the board level.

Buy locally

Shop locally. Buy locally. The words themselves may be oft repeated, but the meaning to them bears repeating.

It's Christmas time and local businesses depend on a good record of sales in December to make a profit. Some won't last another year without enough support from residents.

We would be ill-advised to encourage anyone to buy locally if they weren't happy with the quality or price of a product sold in Halton Hills.

But local stores do deserve our support. Here are just a few reasons:

-most of our merchants live in town; they know the people and what they want.

-parking is the cheapest anywhere. Especially around Christmas when downtown meters are paid for courtesy of the BIA.

-where else can you get so much service and friendly smiles than from a store in Halton Hills around Christmas? Besides, chances are the store isn't as crowded as the big Toronto malls.

-local stores pay taxes locally into the community. Their tax dollars allow us to buy more library books and expand our ice-skating facilities.

-merchants in town are community-minded. They support charities such as the United Way and sponsor special town events by donating products, time and money.

-a strong base of local stores allows residents to save time in shopping and money by not having to pump gas into the car all the time for out-of-town trips.

All local firms ask for is a fair shake from residents. Support their businesses and they'll put their expertise, time, support and money back into the community. That's how you build town spirit: with the co-operation of business, citizens and government.

In the news, again



Editor's notebook

By Dave Rowney

Former Herald publisher and Georgetown Chamber of Commerce Secretary Walter Biehn is making headlines again.

Mr. Biehn wrote in to Star columnist George Gamberger about a Toronto streetcar driver who went beyond the call of duty to help a passenger when her packages of groceries spilled.

The driver hopped off the trolley and collected the items for the lady. Says Walter, "Just as I was about to call the driver, he appeared on the road to help her pick up. To me this was beyond the call of duty."

Mr. Biehn is enjoying his busy retirement in St. Catharines where he is now living.

At a recent careers day at Stewarttown Public School I was asked to speak to two classes about journalism and reporting. Part of the fun was putting the kids on the spot to find out what they think about careers, careers day and journalism.

Most surprising to me was a preoccupation with making money in a career. Whatever became of the idealism of the sixties?

Tanya Dale-Johnson likes careers day because "you don't have to do school work." School's boring and "I don't like math," she says.

What does Janet Miller want to be when she grows up? "I don't know right now," she says. Maybe advertising and marketing, she adds.

Jennifer Beasley is looking forward to the seminar on Business 2,000. She wants to know more about a business and how it is run.

Amy Leask says she learned a bit more about journalists from her seminar by The Herald, especially that reporters aren't terribly well paid; also about the trends in the media, she said.

Here's a man after my own heart: Jeff Potipco said he learned from the reporting seminar "how it (journalism) has changed, how it's getting better all the time and what qualities it takes to be a good journalist. None of that money stuff..."

We received a press release from the Better Roads Coalition, a lobby group mainly concerned with our congested highways and roads. Their objective is to improve and expand the Ontario system.

Below are some of the interesting statistics the coalition has been keeping:

-Congestion is the number one problem with our road system today.

-It is caused by too many vehicles using too few roads. It is aggravated by the worsening conditions of this system.

-94 per cent of all travel in Ontario is by road.

-During the last 15 years, motor vehicle registrations in Ontario has increased by 72 per cent.

-Two years from now one third of all of Ontario's bridges will need to be repaired or torn down.

-Two years from now 50 per cent of all of the roads and highways in Ontario will be in the government's eyes either in fair or poor condition.

-Over the last 20 years, provincial government spending for highways and municipal roads declined by 33 per cent.

There is a local angle to all this, as well. According to charts by the coalition, Highway 7 in the Acton area has increased 57 per cent in use from 1976-1984. It is considered one of the "hot spots" in Ontario experiencing major increases in use.

Citizens' forum

There is a King coming

Dear Sir: I would like to ask the question, people what are you being taught in your churches? In the few years that I have lived in the area of Georgetown, I have attended several churches trying to find one where I feel I would like to spend my Sundays worshipping God. I am thankful that after almost four years, I have found one. I am not here to criticize other denominations, just to state a few facts. People, what are your Pastors and Priests telling you? They probably tell you, you are a christian and you are all brothers and sisters in Christ. They will tell you Jesus did this, Jesus did that, but very rarely what Jesus can do for you.

Everything that ever happens to you in your lifetime, Jesus is concerned about. You may say, Jesus was a good man, he is like (The Force). I guess meaning (The Lord or Force is with you). Rubbish. Wake up people, you intelligent class, Jesus is God, and those of you who say the Holy Spirit is of the Devil, you are talking about God. Worship God, not Mary, not your church, not your handsome Pastor. Call yourself a christian, after you have said, (Come into my heart Lord Jesus). I have a lot of stickers and Pastors about God. I like to show my God to all. Why are you hiding God? You roll out the red carpet for Santa, for the Bishop, for the Queen. Well people you better get out the biggest roll of red carpet from the closet of your hearts because, There's a King Coming, Jesus. And we all better be ready.

Andrea D. Monte RR5, Georgetown, Ont

Ripped off on Rexway

Dear Sir: Once again the season of "peace, goodwill to man" is upon us. A time to prepare for the special days of

Christ's birth. We all have different ways of preparing: buying gifts for others, baking special Christmas cookies, and spending time with friends and family. One of our enjoyments is to decorate our home, inside and out. This morning we awoke to find two strings of lights, stripped completely of their light bulbs. I find Christmas is a time of giving in our home, but to others it unfortunately is a time of taking.

Ripped off on Rexway, Deb Yelland

Strike causes business chaos

Dear Sir, Tens of thousands of passengers have seen their business and holiday plans thrown into chaos because of the strike by Air Canada, a Crown corporation.

Those who defend Crown corporations argue that some services are so essential that they must be guaranteed through government ownership and control. They also argue that because some services can't be provided at a profit, they must be provided by government.

The emptiness of both these arguments has been shown clearly by the Air Canada strike and the two strikes this year of the post office's letter carriers and inside workers.

Since the airline is owned by the federal government, many of the employees, who are the highest paid in the industry in Canada, no doubt believe that the purse is bottomless. If Air Canada had been privatized several years ago and had to sink or swim without government subsidies or loan guarantees, these striking employees would have been less willing to walk out.

The management and a large part of the work force of Air Canada want the airline privatized. However, Prime Minister Mulroney personally vetoed its privatization this fall.

We believe it's time he reconsidered and put Air Canada where it belongs - in the free enterprise sec-

tion. Sincerely, David Somerville, President, The National Citizens' Coalition For More Freedom Through Less Government

Brighten up festive spirits

Dear Sir, The Christmas season is always a hectic time of year for all of us. We rush around, busily making gifts, attending numerous school, church and family functions, shopping, planning parties, baking Christmas goodies, making travel arrangements and getting ready to celebrate the holidays. We sometimes wonder if there are enough hours to possibly get everything done.

With this in mind, I would like to take the opportunity to thank those of you who have sacrificed a few of these precious hours to put up outdoor Christmas decorations to brighten up our streets. All too often we hustle through life oblivious to the efforts of those around us. However this time of year it is a pleasure to go for an evening stroll or drive to see the lights and I would like to assure all of you who took the time to decorate that your efforts are truly appreciated.

Thank you for brightening up my Christmas and have a healthy, happy holiday!

Your Appreciative Friend and Neighbour

EDITOR'S NOTE: As a rule, The Herald does not run unsigned letters. However, we decided to make an exception due to the positive nature of the content.

In your opinion

What do you want to be?



TONY DESLYVA: "I'd like to be a land developer like my dad. Because you get to meet people and you make lots of money."



TYLER BRANDER: "I'd like to be either work for the government or be a mechanic. Because I'm interested in mechanics and grandpa can teach me a lot of stuff."



JEFF POTIPCO: "I'd like to be a firefighter. Because it looks interesting. Probably the best part would be putting out fires - it's hard to describe - and the satisfaction of helping others."

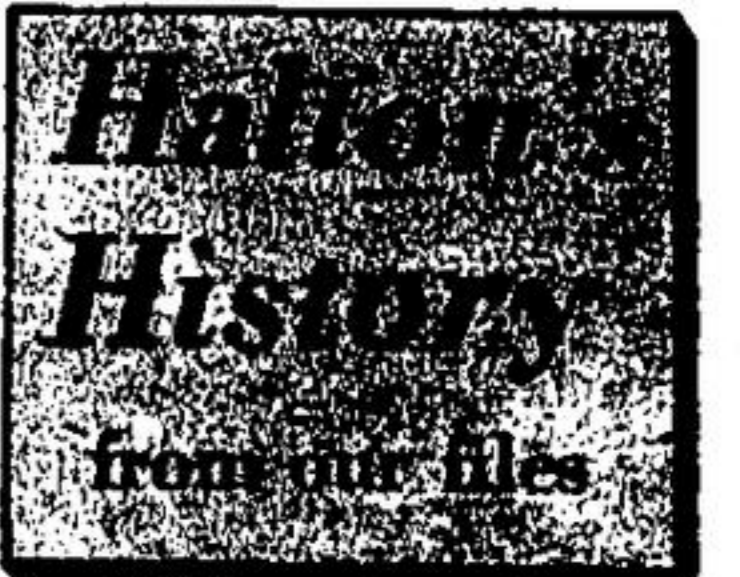


EMILY HAMILTON: "Fashion retail. Because there's a lot of money to be made and it's pretty interesting."



DEREK BREEMHAN: "A dentist. Because of the money and it sound exciting."

Question: What do you want to be when you grow up. Asked at the Stewarttown Public School careers' day.



30 years ago

Georgetown had its 26th annual Santa Claus parade Saturday with over 20 floats participating. Santa distributed 1600 bags of candy.

Jim Costigan won a \$300 pony from the Open Kitchen, a restaurant operated by Mr. and Mrs. Sam Turczyn. Mr. Costigan won the prize through the Key Merchants Association.

Developers have already added rooms to the proposed Stewarttown School in an effort to accommodate the large amount of growth that has taken place in Georgetown. The school will have five more rooms than originally planned, making it an eight-room school.

Jim Andrews has been elected the new president of the Royal Oak Loyd Orange Lodge, No. 245. Jim Andrews succeeds Tom Clark.

15 years ago

The provincial government will announce proposals for regional government west of Toronto early in January. Treasurer Charles MacNaughton said the government should be operating as early as next April. The minister added that a building for the government will likely be built "somewhere in the middle of the region."

Don Kyle has been elected president of the local branch of the Cancer Society. Also on the executive are R. Steele, Leslie Clark and Lillian Clayton.

Malcolm Freeman, who lost out by a single vote in his bid for a seat on Esquing council on December 4, has decided to call for a recount. Mr. Freeman, who garnered 899 votes, lost to George Malby.

Six outdoor skating rinks will be operating in Georgetown this year. This service of the town's, which was in danger of being cut from the budget earlier this year, has pleased Recreation Director Doug Collinson.

10 years ago

A housing developer planning to build 1,840 homes in Georgetown is asking citizens for support for the proposal. Focal Properties is engaged in a heated struggle with the town over the proposal. The issue is now before the Ontario Municipal Board.

The Ontario Heritage Foundation has told Acton citizens that it will not be announcing any grants to help restore the old town hall. The group has now approached town council for some money.

Georgetown and District High School students circulated a petition this week asking for subsidies to students who must use public buses to get to school. Students estimate the cost to be about \$140 a year. They are also asking that the school cafeteria be off limits to the principal and the staff. "You wouldn't like us in yours," the petition said.

5 years ago

A \$134,000 grant has been given to the town to restore the Acton Town Hall. The money comes from Employment and Immigration Canada in the form of a job-creation project.

Over 300 teachers appeared at a recent Halton Board of Education meeting to protest the Board's slow pace on contract negotiations. The teachers and the Board entered negotiations last spring and a contract has not been settled yet.

The town has cut its budget for snow clearing to keep the costs down for the Department of Public Works. Town engineer Bob Austin said last year's heavy snowfall broke the department's bank, with large amounts of money going into repairs and maintenance.

John McDonald, Halton's newest regional councillor, was officially sworn in Wednesday by Judge John Robinson. He joins Pete Pomeroy, Russ Miller, Mike Armstrong and Dave Whiting as the Halton Hills representatives at the region.

Poets' Corner

SOME DIET

I watch a stock put on weight its growth pleases so just as quickly it's down the scale Where the blazes did those inches go? -By MARLOWE C. DICKSON, RR2, Beeton