

## A refreshing change

Amid this year's back-slapping, gung-ho rhetoric that traditionally accompanies the swearing-in of new councils, Halton Regional Chairman Peter Pomeroy has provided us with a refreshing change from the norm.

In his address after being re-instated as chairman last week, Mr. Pomeroy proceeded to call a spade a shovel - and he did so without mincing any words in the process.

It has become very easy for municipal leaders to take on a sense of complacency when looking ahead to the future. We hear words like "optimistic" and "challenging" used to excess in many circles.

But Mr. Pomeroy chose to take a different tact and didn't bother about minor details like who was in his sights when he began his barrage.

MPP Walt Elliot was on hand for the new Regional Council's inauguration, bringing greetings and best wishes from Ontario Premier David Peterson, and his Liberal government.

And Mr. Pomeroy readily gave Mr. Elliot a little something he could take back to Premier David Peterson and his Liberal government.

Mr. Pomeroy made it clear, and in no uncertain terms, that he has grown weary of talk on the government's commitment to affordable housing, when so precious little has actually been accomplished toward resolving the ongoing problem.

When he referred to the "red tape" the Region must continue to deal with, Mr. Pomeroy most certainly did not have a colorful Christmas in mind.

It was apparent the returned Regional Chairman wanted to get the new council off on the proper one, even if some of the positive aspects were set aside for the time being.

Mr. Pomeroy sent a clear and urgent message to the Government of Ontario, and his timing was impeccable. Hopefully, that message won't go unheeded.

## Season for giving

Christmas is the season for giving, and a number of local groups in town are giving of themselves to see that as many people as possible have a Merry Christmas.

We can all help the cause, whether in a big or small way. But it's important that we don't get so caught up in ourselves that we forget those who are less fortunate.

It's within our power to make someone's Christmas a little brighter by contributing in whatever way we feel we can.

Others are leading the way. We need merely help the cause.

## Let it snow - please!



Editor's  
Notebook

Mike Turner  
Herald Editor

The season of "Christmas spirit" seems to be getting shorter and shorter each year, doesn't it?

It seems like most people aren't taken by the Christmas spirit until they're sitting by the tree on the morning of Dec. 25, opening their presents and watching the joy they bring to others when the gifts they've given are being opened.

As much as I hate to admit it, the Christmas spirit is on a steady decline, and it's hard to say just how critical the situation might become.

And when we try to analyze the problem, it's natural to think back to Christmases past to determine what the difference was between them and Christmas now.

One of the most obvious differences has to be the lack of snow we have now. There's something about snow blanketing the ground that makes Christmas more exciting.

These days, the "white Christmas" scenario has become rare. The only serious accumulations of snow seem to come in the new year. Sure this takes some of the burden off Christmas travellers but it also casts an entirely different atmosphere over Christmas.

Those same travellers practically have to remind themselves from

time to time when they're heading home for Christmas that that's the reason for their trip.

I'm not terribly fussy on snow. But there's something about having a foot of the white stuff on the ground that picks up my spirits, around the Yuletide season.

I can remember one Christmas, close to a quarter-century ago (now that's scary) when there wasn't a lick of snow for Christmas, and no one could understand it. The neighbor's kid was out on the front lawn Christmas morning trying out a new set of golf clubs he had received.

There didn't seem to be too much Christmas about that year.

The best Christmas I can remember were the ones when the snow banks were nearly as high as the telephone poles on the country roads.

Now we're lucky if we can get enough snow to cover the lawn.

Unfortunately, there's not a whole lot we can do to improve the situation.

Taxpayers probably wouldn't take too kindly to the proposal of the town buying a snow-making machine like they have at ski resorts. That would be quite a sight though. Town of Halton Hills trucks hauling snow through the town to dump along the streets, so we could be put in the Christmas spirit.

Not too likely, I guess. All we can do is rely on Mother Nature to work her unpredictable magic. In that respect, we're at the mercy of the elements.

And all we can do is keep "dreaming of a white Christmas."

## Spirit of co-operation helps avert a tragedy

Dear Sir,  
On Monday, December 5, 1988 as a result of an accident involving a jack-knifed tractor-trailer loaded with gravel on the 9th Line, a major emergency operation was required to rescue a person from the wreckage.

This operation lasted approximately 4 1/2 hours and ended in the successful rescue of the driver of the vehicle.

Through the co-operation and coordinated efforts of many people this incident did not end in tragedy.

The Fire Department would like to publicly thank all that assisted and in particular the following:

Halton Hills Ambulance and Ministry of Health for their emergency medical expertise;  
Halton Hills Public Works - Superintendent Frank Morette and Mechanic Jim McDowell for their assistance with their acetylene cutting equipment;

Wimpey Construction - for their manpower and heavy equipment; and

Halton Regional Police - for their excellent co-operation and speedy response to all our resource requests.

It was the most involved and laborious rescue operation that we have ever been faced with. You can be proud of the important role you all played.

Wm. E. Cunningham,  
Fire Chief



# All is calm in Ontario legislature

The doldrums.  
"A region of light winds and calms near the equator," according to one dictionary.  
Another definition would be: the Ontario legislature in action, October-December, 1988.  
Partly, that's a consequence of the federal election's dominant impact on political discussion recently.  
But, somehow, that explanation isn't quite adequate enough to explain why the legislative assembly has been so quiet recently.  
Sure, there is the usual theatrics of question period, and issue after issue gets raised for discussion.  
There are bills going through the process, including such controversial items as those on Sunday shopping and the amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act.  
Occasionally, they produce heated debate.



Yet, overall, there seems to be a quietude about the place, a resting or pause before it goes on from here.  
OUT OF FOCUS  
It is almost as though the legislature was slightly out of focus with the world around it.  
Free trade was such an emotional, burning crusade (for or against) that it seems to have soaked up all the available political energy.  
In the assembly itself, the three provincial parties (PC, Liberal,

NDP) tried to approach the topics they were dealing with in such a way as to reinforce their federal cousins.  
Yet, even that had its strange blips. Premier David Peterson's main effort, for instance, was (successfully) trying to get his brother Jim elected in a Toronto riding. He made at least six sorties into the area on his behalf.  
And while it is understandable that he might do so (kith and kin coming first), it was a slightly peculiar way for the only major provincial leader opposing free trade to spend his time during an election that - in his view - was deciding the future of the country.  
Not that the out-of-sync feeling was restricted to the Liberals alone.  
The Conservatives, under interim leader Andy Brandt, started off well this year but have gradually sunk out of sight in past months.

Their greatest failing - their inability to project an image that is consistent while simultaneously framing genuine policy alternatives to the Liberals - has re-surfaced with a vengeance.  
Even when they do something interesting, it doesn't seem to relate to anything else.  
Taxes would seem to be a natural Tory issue, and thus we had Brandt standing on a Toronto street a week or so ago handing out anti-tax literature.  
But what was his action related to? No one said. It was a one-day wonder.

SPINNING THEIR WHEELS  
The truth is that most Tories are simply spinning their wheels until they finally troop off to a leadership convention sometime in the next 18 months.

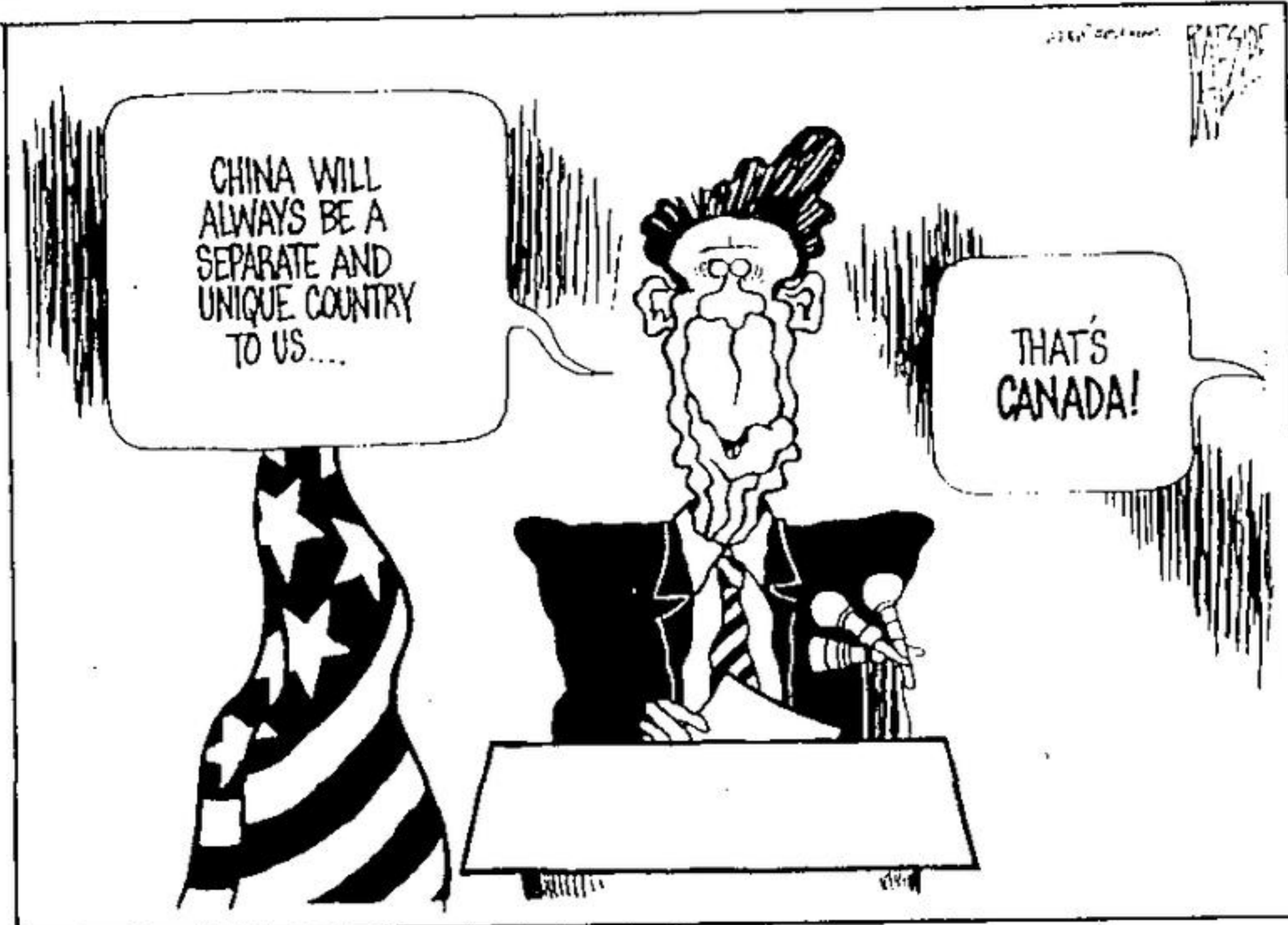
Then there is the NDP. New Democrats should have had the good feeling that comes from winning a byelection, especially in a riding that historically hasn't been their fold (although the retiring incumbent was NDP).

Yet, there hasn't been a lot of spirit on the party's benches.  
Mind you, maybe the byelection victor, Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold), will help. With a flamboyant style that includes a Corvette, cowboy boots, and a record for income tax evasion - he isn't exactly your standard dull New Democrat.

The truth is that, in a somewhat different way than the Tories, the New Democrats, too, are fumbling.  
In their case, it isn't so much a lack of policies as the frustration they feel in being unable to package them in such a way as to make them attractive to the broad mass of voters.

Last Yuletides, the legislature sat right through Christmas battling over free trade.

Nothing will provoke a similar happening this year.



## Citizens' forum

### This round goes to Goliath

Dear Sir,  
Goliath won another round recently.

After 131 years of service, the post office in the little village of Limehouse, northwest of Georgetown, was shut down by the heavyweights at Canada Post.

David never really had a chance. When the power and authority of a multi-billion dollar postal corporation is pitted against the inexperience of a small community, it's basically no contest. No biblical miracles here.

What transpired in Limehouse (population 600) over these past eight months is an all-too-familiar story in rural Canada. The details vary from village to village but, sadly, the plot is the same.

The Limehouse version goes something like this: A young married couple by the name of Delia and Mike Gaskill-Cadwallader bought the Limehouse General Store last spring when the former owner, Shirley Yates, decided to retire. The Limehouse Post Office was part and parcel of the general store, and Mrs. Yates the official, federally-appointed postmaster.

At the time of the sale, Canada Post stepped in to say that the postmaster's job was being eliminated as part of a cost-saving, "rural restructuring" program. But, the corporation was quick to add, postal service would continue exactly as before if the Gaskill-Cadwalladers signed one of its new "retail postal outlet" contracts. In fact, service would be "equal or better" than it was before, or so the promoter went.

One small hitch - the supposedly "non-negotiable" Canada Post contract was to pay Delia and Mike less than a quarter of the salary Mrs. Yates received for the same services rendered.

Now it seems to me (and thousands of other rural people) that you can't get something "equal or better" for less than a quarter of what you paid before.

But at Limehouse, and in hundreds of other small communities

across the country, Canada Post stood firm with its meagre offer. Thus the Gaskill-Cadwalladers were snared in an impossible double bind: Sign the unsatisfactory contract and 'save' the post office for the people of Limehouse. Or refuse to sign, and become the scapegoat for the loss of a beloved, 131-year-old tradition.

Delia and Mike are good and dedicated people, so they signed. But they're not stupid people, so they signed reluctantly. Seven months later, after a great deal of soul-searching and anguish, they terminated the contract. Meanwhile, they had discovered that providing general delivery service to Limehouse was full-time work. At the end, they also learned that the "non-negotiable" Canada Post contract was indeed negotiable, but not to the point of providing a decent return for their efforts.

Above all, they found out that dealing with Canada Post is both wearying and demoralizing, and a week ago Friday, they said "enough" (By the way, how does Canada Post train these \$35,000 per year city bureaucrats to seem genuinely surprised and affronted when rural people turn down their \$400 a month? Aren't we out here in the country ungrateful?)

A decision like this takes courage. Many other retail postal outlet contractors caught in exactly the same bind continue to work for little return, fearful if they say no, mail service in their towns will deteriorate even further. They're right, but this same (understandable) fear allows Canada Post to march blithely on with its ludicrous rural plan, knowing there aren't yet enough people like Delia and Mike who will stand up and say, "We won't perpetuate the wrong system. Rural Canadians deserve better."

All was not lost in Limehouse, by the way. To the best of my knowledge, residents there are the first in Canada, after closure of a rural post office, to receive end-of-lane delivery for incoming mail. I'm not sure what accounts for Canada Post's benevolence in this case, but

my hunch is it had a great deal to do with the corporation's desire to keep things quiet during the last stages of the federal election campaign. Most other post office "losers" get leaky, rust-prone green boxes or those misbegotten "supermailboxes." Canada Post has set an interesting precedent at Limehouse, and new subdivisions crying for door-to-door delivery (plus dozens of other rural communities) will no doubt pay heed.

But to buy stamps, register letters and pick up parcels, the people of Limehouse must now go to Acton, eight kilometres away.

In all of this, Canada Post will claim its hands were tied. But make no mistake, our huge postal corporation is responsible for the Limehouse closure, although it will protest its innocence with righteous indignation. Some people (and I'm one of them) believe that Canada Post has slowly but deliberately allowed rural service to stagnate, to slip into a backwater. Small federal post offices, with their dedicated postmasters and personal service, have often been called the backbone of Canada's postal service. Now they're under siege, and in places like Limehouse, gone like the wind.

For people who don't know better, it's easy to blame Mike and Delia for the loss of the Limehouse Post Office. They are, after all, the closest - and easiest - target.

For its part, the postal corporation can simply announce, as it did last Monday: "Following discussions last week, Canada Post was informed by the operators of our Retail Postal Outlet at the Limehouse General Store, that they will be resigning at the end of business hours on December 2, 1988." Well phrased, Goliath.

The rest, as they say, is history. All 131 years of it.

Liz Armstrong,  
RR2, Erin  
P.S.: Yes, David is down, but certainly not out of the count. If we all work together, we can still win this struggle for the benefit of all rural Canadians.

## Halton's History from our files

### 30 years ago

Hunter's Real Estaters combined a little strategy and a lot of hustle to trip up the high flying Bradford Fords 9-5 at the arena last night for 200 fans. The win eases the pain of the Real Estaters last three losses to Bradford.

Georgetown's new sewage disposal plant will be in operation in the spring of 1990, if plans materialize according to the schedule of Proctor and Redfern, consulting engineers. G.U. Proctor outlined progress to date when he reported to council on Monday, and said he expects to call for tenders for the trunk sewer early in the new year. Tenders for the disposal plant will be called later in the spring, he said and it will take approximately a year from then to complete the whole project.

### 15 years ago

It was officially announced Monday that Georgetown purchased 15.6 acres of land from Focal Properties at a cost of \$156,000. The land, situated just off Guelph Street between Mountainview Road and Sinclair Avenue, is the site for Georgetown's arena and recreational complex. D.R. Fraser of Fraser and McLaughlin, solicitors for Focal Properties, announced the sale Monday. The land was sold at \$10,000 an acre subject to four conditions, including obtaining provincial approval, municipal approval from the Ontario government, and funding from the provincial and municipal levels.

Norval Presbyterian Church WMS met at the home of Mrs. Craig McClure for their Christmas meeting Wednesday afternoon, Dec. 5 with Mrs. Hyatt McClure presiding. Mrs. Walker of Georgetown gave an interesting talk on "Mary, the mother of Jesus," Mrs. Herb Anthony read the scripture lesson and Mrs. Dixon Duff led in prayer. Mrs. Hyatt McClure assisted the hostess in serving Christmas cake and cookies with a cup of tea for social time.

### 10 years ago

Subject to formal ratification today by regional council, Halton region's new chairman is Jack Rafitis, a 49-year old professional engineer from Burlington who has headed the region's public works committee since its formation in 1974. Coun. Rafitis was acclaimed to the \$25,000-a-year seat when it appeared clear that there were no contenders.

The Liquor Licence Board of Ontario was scheduled to consider an application yesterday (Tuesday) submitted by the Georgetown Bakery at the Delrex Market for the issuance of a licence for the sale of alcoholic beverages in the bakery's restaurant area. Although the information about the application was placed before the town's general committee too late to warrant comment, town planning director Mario Venditti deemed the proposed sale of liquor "inappropriate" for the site.

### 5 years ago

A 20-year council and school board veteran, Russ Miller reached yet another political milestone as he was appointed mayor of Halton Hills Monday night by fellow town councillors. Mayor Miller, who until his appointment was the regional councillor representing the town's rural residents, edged out fellow regional councillor, Mike Armstrong in a 7-5 secret ballot decision cast informally by councillors.

Regional councillors want more information before they'll join a growing call for tougher sentences against impaired drivers. Part of a broad-ranging resolution dealing with drinking and driving was sent back to health department staff after it appeared before council Wednesday.



Drifting along on Wilbur Lake