

In the hills

Tax clinic

Income tax returns for seniors will be completed at no charge by the volunteers from the local branch of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario.

The service is being offered for seniors, as well as low income families whose single income is no greater than \$14,000 without dependents, or \$19,000 with dependents.

The service is being offered at the Georgetown Library March 8 and 14, 7-9 p.m., and the Acton Library March 7 and 15, 7-9 p.m.

For an appointment call 873-2681 or 853-0301.

Photo Art

The deadline for Photo Art 89 is this weekend, and entries must be received by 5 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 18.

Each entrant is allowed a maximum of six entries, and requires a minimum of two. Photos should be no smaller than 5-in. by 7-in. and no larger than 16-in. by 20-in.

The exhibition of photographs will be open to the public March 1-26 at the Cultural Centre Gallery in Georgetown.

Drivers needed

The Halton Hills Unit of the Canadian Cancer Society is in urgent need of volunteer drivers to transport patients to treatment sessions in Toronto.

Mileage is paid for the service, and satisfaction can come from helping others.

Anyone who feels they can help is asked to call 877-1124.

Society meets

The Acton Horticultural Society will meet again Tuesday, Feb. 21 at 8 p.m. at Knox Presbyterian Church.

Everyone is invited to attend the meeting and learn about "Planters and Windowboxes."

Newcomers

Moving to a new community can certainly be an unsettling experience, and the Georgetown Newcomers are there to help.

The Newcomers meet today (Wednesday) at 7:30 p.m. at St. Andrew's United Church, 89 Mountainview Road South, in Georgetown.

For more information, call Deb at 877-7878.

Council agrees on lot levies

The town of Halton Hills will likely have to go \$7.5 million in to debt to help pay for new growth, even with increased lot levies passed by councillors.

After a lengthy debate, councillors agreed on increased lot levies that will be used for new development, including initial building in Halton Hills Village.

Lot levies are a tax the builders must pay for each unit to help offset the costs of providing services, such as sewer and water, and other facilities such as fire protection and recreational facilities.

The levies for a single home, a semi-detached home or a townhouse will jump from \$2,330 per unit to \$2,820 a unit. Lot levies on one bedroom or bachelor apartments will increase from \$930 a unit to \$1,091 a unit and levies for

two or more bedroom apartments will go up from \$1,733 a unit to \$2,095 a unit.

The new levy increases rank Halton Hills 28th out of the most populous municipalities in Ontario for their charges. In 1985, when the last complete lot levy review was undertaken, Halton Hills ranked 13th.

The new lot levies will mean that new residents of Halton Hills will, in the end, pay for the cost of growth, said Cam Watson, the economist who studied the town's lot levy policy and recommended the changes.

But the town will have to go into debt during the mid-1990s in order to pay for the growth, he said.

Acton Coun. Norm Elliott strongly disagreed with the new rates saying they're not high enough.

Many other municipalities have much higher lot levies with no deterrent to growth, he said.

"We've been benevolent," he said of the town's low lot levies. "I've always felt that lot levies were not high enough to underwrite the cost of development. We seem to be bucking the trend," he said of the town's drop to 28th on the list of municipalities.

Coun. Pam Johnston said she was "pleased to see the (lot levies) are going up but I'm not sure they're going up enough."

And existing taxpayers may have to bear some of the cost of growth because of the extensive repairs to roads which will be needed in the future that isn't entirely covered by lot levies, said Coun. Pat McCarthy.

Developers must pay up front

Apartment and condominium developers will soon have to pay their lot levies much sooner than before.

Halton Hills councillors decided to make apartment and condominium developers pay their lot levies when the building permit is issued. The luxury of lot levy deferral was awarded to developers of apartments and condominiums by the town previously because of the massive cost they would have to pay at one time. Someone developing a subdivision, could acquire building permits slowly enabling them to spread out paying of lot levies.

Apartment or condominium developers had been able to defer payment for between 90 and 180 days.

But growth-related costs, such as laying services for apartments

and condominiums, cannot be geared towards a single project, said town treasurer Ray King.

And paying lot levies at the issuing of building permits is the most common approach in the province, he said.

As well, the town is losing interest on those lot levies, Mr. King added.

But Councillors Joe Hewitt and Pam Johnston argued in favor of allowing the deferred payments for developers.

"We shouldn't ask

(developers) to up-front all the lot levies," said Coun. Hewitt. "It's not totally fair to the developer."

"We speak about developers as if... they can cough up the dollars (immediately)," added Coun. Johnston. "We need them as much as they need us," she said of developers.

Break-ins may be linked

Halton Regional Police say there could be a connection between five break-ins at downtown Georgetown businesses over the weekend.

Although only about \$35 in change was taken in all five break-ins, police say evidence, including a pried-open cash box at one location, led them to believe money was the motive.

Police say the doors to two chiropractic shops, one shoe store, Halton Hills Hydro on Mill Street, and a Main Street book store were entered in the same manner. The front door lock had been damaged to gain entry, they say.

At only one location was cash on the premises. Police say the shoe repair store had anywhere from

\$35 to \$50 in Canadian coins that were taken.

Total damage to the five stores is approximately \$600.

Police continue to investigate the break-ins, which they say likely occurred Friday night or Saturday morning. The incidents were reported between Friday night and Monday morning.

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