

# the HERALD

Home Newspaper of Halton Hills - Established 1866

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## An expensive ride

As taxpayers our pocketbooks are getting hit from all sides this year. But don't look for a reprieve, 1989 is just the beginning of what will likely be a steady climb in the municipal tax bill in the coming years.

And the theme that runs through all the excuses given for higher tax increases is growth.

Here in Halton Hills, the budget jumped 11.5 per cent to \$14.3 million this year. At Halton Region, which has kept increases below the rate of inflation in recent years, the tax bill has jumped from a meagre 3.5 per cent increase in 1988 to a 7.1 per cent increase in 1989.

Councillors bickered over the \$27.5 million police budget containing an 11.2 per cent increase last week but Halton police chief James Harding put it all in perspective when he said the force needs 20 more officers to cope with growth.

If councillors don't want the force to grow, "stop the community from growing," he said.

Local councillors have always been fond of a catchphrase that says new residents will pay for growth.

But that's not happening.

With the province tightening its belt on grants, and with new and increasing expenses municipalities must endure because of growth, we're all paying for it.

Growth can't be stopped. People need shelter and steady growth benefits everybody.

But the days of the single digit budget increases are quickly passing.

Halton's budget director Dave Birkett told us last week that the Region is having to "finance larger and larger portions" of growth.

And if provincial transfer payments hold still again next year, Halton's budget could go up by more than 10 per cent, according to Halton's finance commissioner Joe Rinaldo.

Halton will grow in the 1990s. But hold onto your wallets, it's going to be an expensive ride.

## Clouding your day



### Editor's Notebook

Brian MacLeod  
Herald Editor

Statistics Canada has published an excellent set of figures which demonstrate the proper way to fudge numbers.

I'll give you a run down on what Statistics Canada calls your average day - if you're a Canadian over the age of 15.

In the last 24 hours you spent 11 hours sleeping or involved in personal activities.

Also in the last day:

- you devoted 5½ hours to leisure activities (right?);
- you spent four hours and 20 minutes working or in school (huh? What happened to the other three hours and 40 minutes?);
- you spent three hours on domestic chores, minding the kids or shopping.

Now none of that sounds like my last 24 hours, or any 24 hours for that matter.

But wait, there's more.

On any given day in an average week an adult Canadian spends 4.4 hours alone, excluding time spent asleep or on other personal activities.

Both sexes spend an average of 2.4 hours a day with friends (males over 65-years-old are least likely to

spend time with friends).

Men aged 35 to 44 are most likely to be found in a car. Women, over 65-years-old are least likely to drive.

The 75 per cent of you who admit to watching television spend an average of 3.1 hours a day in front of the tube.

Now, if you were to fit all this into an average day you probably would need a 36-hour-day. In fact, you probably don't fit all this into 48 hours.

That's because those numbers become relatively useless when you lump in weekend days with week days, which is what Statistics Canada has done.

Despite the threat of snow on the weekend the annual Crazy Boat Race went off without a hitch.

The race is obviously as popular as ever with some regular and some not-so-regular entries. The Refugee II, the viking boat which you first saw when you first picked up your copy of the Herald this week, contained an innovative catapult to douse spectators with water balloons.

You had to like that Elvis floating bus, complete with coffin but my personal favorite was a somewhat undistinguished looking craft carrying two burnt-out hockey players dubbed the "Toronto Who's?"

The boat carried a sign saying, "We put as much effort in this boat as the Toronto Maple Leafs did all year."

## Money, status triggers teachers' war

Money is at the root of most political controversy. Status is much of the rest.

Status is by far the one more liable to arouse emotions.

That distinction should be kept in mind when reading about the growing war between Premier David Peterson's Liberal government and the various teacher federations. Both cash and status are involved.

Perhaps 20,000 people, a majority of them teachers, turned out at the weekend's Liberal convention in Hamilton to denounce the Grits.

A money issue was the trigger, specifically the attempt by the Liberals to get the teachers to pay a little more annually towards preventing the inflation protection part of their pension plan from going broke in 2007.

On average, it might cost the teachers another \$400 a year out of their \$40,000 to \$50,000 salaries.

That upsets them, but what seems to anger them even more is that the Liberal government doesn't appear to take them seriously.

Their self-esteem is hurting. Peterson himself set the tone when besieged recently in Peterborough by a group of teachers demonstrating over the pension matter.

"This isn't worth fighting about. You're being silly about it," the premier told them.

The fact that his statement is probably dead-on is irrelevant. Even though being silly about something and being a silly person



### Queen's Park

Derek Nelson  
Thomson News Service

are not the same thing, the teachers seem to have convinced themselves that one means the same as the other.

Teacher hats and buttons at Hamilton repeated variations of the insult. NDP Leader Bob Rae drew a huge cheer at the rally when he castigated the word.

Even teachers willing to accept as reasonable a .83-per-cent increase in their pension contributions (taxpayers will be kicking in another .83 per cent plus a flat \$6 billion to cover past shortfalls) were irritated by the condescending nature of Peterson's rejection of their union's arguments.

There's a long-term danger in this for the Grits. Many teachers are involved in politics and are door-to-door activists during elections. They have the time, and are also knowledgeable and dedicated.

Thus making teachers angry can hurt a political party at that grass roots level as, ironically, the Liberals of 1977 found out when they made a campaign pledge to ban teacher strikes.

Their teacher workers evaporated that year.

But even if Peterson had been somewhat more diplomatic and

avoided puncturing teacher status there would still be the money issue.

Here the government's arguments win hands-down, which may be why the teacher unions are relying so heavily upon slogans like "we pay, we want a say" to sway the general public. ("Silly" slogans, anyone?)

Not only have taxpayers forked over 60 per cent of the teachers' pension fund money so far (compared to 50 per cent by employers in most private plans), but among pension plans only the teachers (and civil servants) are fully protected against inflation.

The trouble is that they don't pay enough money into the inflation-protection portion of their fund to match what will eventually have to be paid out of it.

What makes the teacher resistance even harder to swallow is that Treasurer Bob Nixon has actually offered them a couple of fair choices.

-They can reduce inflation protection to 75 per cent without any increase in contributions.

-Or, they can take over the pension fund and run it themselves, which would end the government's guarantee of its soundness.

The unions reject both of those options, of course, with unconvincing arguments that the government really doesn't mean it.

They should say yes; then. Otherwise, it looks simply as though teacher unions are simply looking for a further free ride on the taxpayer.



## LETTERS

### Is CBC bowing to pressure from nuclear industry?

Dear Sir,

For the first time in its 29-year history, a scheduled Nature of Things episode - on nuclear power - was cancelled at the last minute (on Feb. 15). One wonders, after reading an article in the Feb. 17 Globe and Mail, whether the sudden postponement of this rerun, without proper explanation to viewers, was made solely to accommodate nuclear industry public relations personnel.

In February 1988, for example, CBC President Pierre Juneau hosted an unprecedented "editorial board" session on nuclear issues, at which time industry spokespersons - including the president of the Canadian Nuclear Association and a past vice president of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited - met with senior CBC personnel. The nuclear establishment used the meeting as a forum to attack David Suzuki's nuclear power coverage. Why were no nuclear industry critics invited to this meeting?

It is outrageous to think that the CBC, whose function is to serve the Canadian public, could be so subservient to nuclear (or any other) industry pressure. Twenty-

million dollars from the public purse is already earmarked so the atomic establishment can tell us misleading half-truths through glossy magazine and TV ads, and saturate the public school system with their self-serving "educational" materials.

If the atomic industry has nothing to hide, why are they so desperate for a monopoly on nuclear issues coverage? (Interestingly, prior to the program's first airing in November 1987, a CBC review found it neither imbalanced nor unacceptable).

Those who are as eager as we are for an explanation of this mysterious decision at the CBC should write: Pierre Juneau, CBC Chairman, Head Office, P.O. Box 8478, Ottawa, K1G 3J5. David Suzuki, who has long been a supporter of environmental and anti-nuclear causes, can be reached at Box 500, Station A, Toronto M5W 1E6. To see what all the fuss is about, watch The Nature of Things on April 12.

Yours truly,  
Irene Kock, Anne Hansen,  
Nuclear Awareness Project

## Thanks to volunteers

Dear Sir,

As this is Volunteer Week, a week to honor the commitment and dedication of special people - our volunteers - I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to a great team of special people within our branch.

It takes many volunteers to make the different programs and services work and because of these 'special' people we are celebrating

our 50th year of helping people.

We are always in need of more volunteers as our community grows and if you know of a person who would like to join our Red Cross team, please invite them to join us.

My sincere thanks to all of you for your caring and hard work.

Sincerely,  
Cathy Dooley,  
President, Georgetown and  
District Red Cross Branch