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Home Newspaper of Halton Hills — Established 1866

FREE DISTRIBUTION

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25th, 1989

48 PAGES

Halton Hills to lose half its Via service

By DONNA KELL
Herald Staff

Via Rail service from London to Toronto, stopping in Georgetown, will be cut in half as of Jan. 15.

Recent federal government budget cuts to the national rail service will mean that service presently operating 28 trains a week will be pared down to 14

trains a week, Via public relations officer Richard Gauthier said Monday.

There is an average 2,061 passengers getting on and off Via's trains at Georgetown each month compared to an average 2,029 a month in 1988.

The train leaving London and stopping in St. Mary's, Stratford,

Kitchener, Guelph, Georgetown and Brampton before arriving in Toronto, will likely arrive in Georgetown at 10:30 a.m. - too late to serve the commuter crowd, although schedules for the reduced train service have not been completed, Mr. Gauthier said.

"The bad news is we're basically getting out of the commuter

market. We'll no longer be serving the commuter." Long-time advocate of Via Rail, Halton Hills Councillor Rick Bonnette, said recently the Toronto-Kitchener-London line is a well-used service in the community.

"The train becomes entirely filled as it gets to Toronto," Coun. Bonnette said. "That train, I've been told, has increased from three to five (rail) cars in the last year."

The councillor said Via looked at figures showing an "overall pic-

ture" of the service used to 50 per cent capacity. But he said the train should leave from Kitchener "where it's making money," on the line through to Georgetown and Toronto each morning.

Via will run the present Toronto-London service from Sarnia each morning, Mr. Gauthier says. That train now leaves that city west of London each day at 7 a.m. The Toronto-bound train from Sarnia would have to leave at 3 a.m. to

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Not-so-scary scarecrow

Charlie the Scarecrow from "Oz" flew in to the craft and bake sale put on by the North Halton Centre for Special Needs at the Acton Arena on Saturday. Mary Burak of Georgetown seems to be pondering if the scarecrow from Oz could use this huge pumpkin

for his much-needed brain. The day-long event is the first bazaar for the special needs centre and Mr. Burak said "we're doing very well, thank you." (Herald photo by Brian MacLeod)

Town to consider public bus service

Halton Hills town staff over the next few months will consider testing a public bus service on the community.

Mayor Russ Miller said Monday night that a private Halton Hills transportation company approached him recently to offer a mini-bus service. Funds for private service would be provided by municipal government, the mayor said.

"It's nice to know that someone is interested in providing the service," Mr. Miller said of the company's offer. The company cannot be named because a contract would likely go through the tendering process before it is approved by town council, the mayor said.

A bus service, if funds are available in the 1990 town budget, would be tested in the community before a permanent service is put in place. The contract would likely be awarded to a company already in the transportation business, the mayor said.

"It would almost have to be someone who has the equipment."

The bus service issue was mentioned by Halton Hills rural area Councillor Joe Hewitt at the town council meeting Monday night. Coun. Hewitt asked the town to consider a shuttle service from Acton to Georgetown.

"I often see high school kids hitchhiking. People try to get to work hitchhiking."

Councillors said that a bus service to GO Transit in Georgetown could be considered in a town study.

Mayor Miller said many people in Halton Hills have "two to four cars" but said that the town would "look into" public transportation.

Town staff will study transportation needs in the town and will look at the impact of a temporary bus service on the 1990 Halton Hills' budget. Mayor Miller said the report could be completed in a few months.

Georgetown man charged with attempted murder

Toronto Metropolitan Police charged a Georgetown man with attempted murder after a Toronto woman was stabbed several times at her Queen's Quay apartment in Toronto a half hour after police say the pair were watching videos.

Kevin Blackmore, 30, will appear at a bail hearing Oct. 26 in connection with the charges.

Ambulance attendants rushed the woman to the Toronto General Hospital where she underwent emergency surgery for a punctured liver and multiple stab wounds, early Monday morning, police say.

Her name has not been released by police.

Neighbors called police after

the woman started running down the hall knocking on people's doors, and yelling for help.

Police say the ex-boyfriend and girlfriend bumped into each other at a church meeting at 8:30 p.m. Sunday night. After the meeting they went back to the woman's apartment to watch videos. A man left the apartment at about 12:30 a.m. but returned a half hour later to use the telephone, police say. A man chased the woman into the bedroom and "stabbed her about the body," according to police.

After the woman escaped, a man attempted to flee but was stopped by police as he was leaving the apartment building.