



Five people injured

Five people were taken by ambulance to Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital following a two-car collision at the Ninth Line and Sideroad 10 in Halton Hills Wednesday afternoon. The driver of the 1988 Oldsmobile (right), a 54-year-old Windsor

man, suffered major injuries. A 36-year-old Acton man and his wife, 26, and their two young daughters, who were all in the 1982 Toyota suffered minimal injuries. Police hadn't released any names by press time. (Herald photo)

Christmas season

December sales mixed in town

By BEN DUMMETT
the Herald

While a lot of retail store owners and managers say sales haven't been bad this December, most agree they haven't been great.

"We're down a bit this year, compared to this time last year," says Russ Hare, the manager of the Canadian Tire store in Georgetown.

Mr. Hare said part of the reason for lower sales is that there are two less shopping days this December. But he also said besides needing the two days to match last year's figures, he'd also need to sell about 20 snowplowing machines.

The store sold less big ticket items this December because of the lack of snow early in the month, said Mr. Hare.

But he did express satisfaction with the store's toy sales.

Mr. Hare said shoppers this year are wiser. "They're shopping for the right price."

Barbara Cooke, owner of Cachet in downtown Georgetown, echoed Mr. Hare's sentiments saying, "people are spending carefully,

they are cutting back and choosing items with a lower price tag."

Ms. Cooke also attributed lower sales at her store to the weather. "Usually people start Christmas shopping in the fall but the warm weather (this fall) didn't encourage people to think about Christmas."

Another merchant in Georgetown's downtown who didn't want to be identified said, "sales were flat" this year because of the weather. The store owner makes the majority of his Christmas sales during the two weeks before Christmas from people browsing downtown. But because it has been so cold lately downtown has been empty, he said.

The manager of the Acton Canadian Tire store, Don Gordon, said sales were really slow at the beginning of the year but they have picked up during the last week. "The big ticket items like the VCRs and televisions are really starting to roll," he said.

Mr. Gordon speculated that the brisk sales this week will balance out the slow period in early

December. But he said he won't have any figures until after Christmas.

Rick Mundy, the manager of Zeller's in Georgetown, said that December has been slow compared to November. The slowdown in December is something he didn't expect. "We thought that since November sales were strong, that it would have had a carry-over effect."

He speculated that people are concerned about the high interest rates and are worried about the economy.

Unlike these stores, Goodlet's in Georgetown and Stedman's in Acton have recorded higher sales this December.

Jim Goodlet said sales are up slightly. He speculated that because there are more houses going up in the area, more people are in the market for furniture.

The floor manager at Stedman's, Chris Lynds, said sales are "definitely up from last year." She said the store is selling better products this year.

Lower sales tax rebate is preferable - Turner

By DONNA KELL
the Herald

Halton-Peel MP Garth Turner says the proposed seven per cent Goods and Services Tax outlined by federal finance minister Michael Wilson Tuesday in the House of Commons is necessary to reduce the deficit but will be accompanied by cuts in government spending.

"Nobody wants to pay more taxes. Taxes right now are as high as they could get," Mr. Turner said. "But I've said all along, the GST should be lower."

Mr. Turner said 54 per cent of people who responded to a survey in his riding of Halton-Peel said they would favor the GST proposed for 1991 if the amount were lowered and the government promised to cut spending.

"I don't think Canadians are going to put up with spending cuts and tax increases if they think that there's a country club in Ottawa where people don't have to pay taxes," he said.

The federal Progressive Conservatives announced Friday a proposed \$1.5 billion in spending cuts over the next three years.

But any rate of GST would hurt businessmen, said Murray Lawton, owner of the Georgetown Canadian Tire franchise and past president of the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce. Halton North MPP Walt Elliot said he "sympathizes" with Mr. Lawton.

The seven per cent solution "is probably going to make (the tax) more favorably but it doesn't make it right," the Canadian Tire owner said. He said he will spend thousands of dollars to adjust accounting equipment for the new sales tax.

"What good is a system costing everybody more money?... I think it's altogether too complicated." The GST would be less complicated if it were combined with the provincial sales tax, Mr. Turner said.

Halton North's MPP said Ontario is the most likely province to reach an agreement with the federal government.

"We collect sales tax now. So we have the bureaucracy in place to do it. The GST and the provincial sales tax could be combined," Mr. Elliot said.

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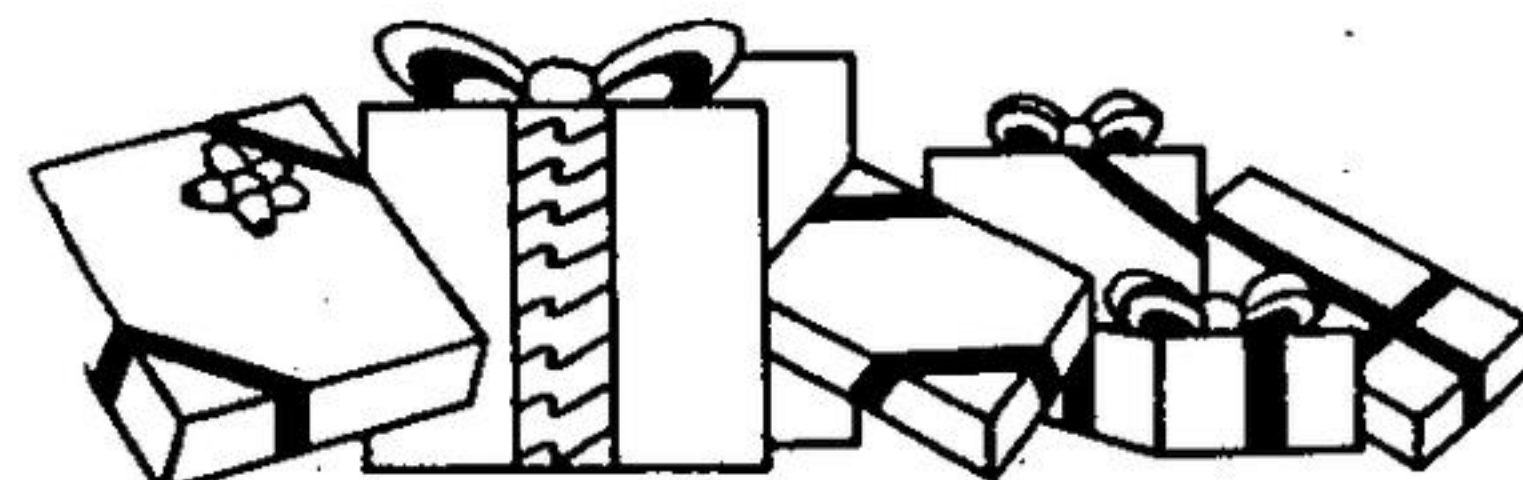


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