

Catholic school board faces 17 per cent budget increase

The Halton Roman Catholic School Board is considering a 17.2 per cent increase in its 1990 operating budget.

Andre Paradis, a trustee from Burlington, asked the board for some help in finalizing the budget proposal at the Feb. 27 board meeting.

Mr. Paradis said he realizes "budgets are never quite passed easily," but says the general direction of this budget is correct.

Almost \$67 million of the just over \$87 million budget goes to instruction services. This includes teacher and facility wages, teaching supplies, and pupil transportation for special events. It also includes almost \$42 million being budgeted for day-school instruction. Joe Birett, a superintendent of business services, said about 80 to 85 per cent of the instruction budget goes to wages. This translates to between \$53.4 million and \$56.7 million.

Also included in the instruction section of the budget is almost \$11 million to be paid to other boards for taking and teaching students from the Catholic board's schools, Mr. Paradis said. He compared this to the \$3 million the board is paid by other boards to teach their students.

This year's proposed budget balances with the estimated revenues of the school board. Last year's budget also balanced but when the actual figures turned out the school board was in a \$1.8 million deficit situation.

"What you have to do is estimate the number of students" going to schools and also estimate the number of new residences and the taxes that come with the new homes, Denis Nolan, the superintendent of education, staff development and planning services, said.

There are two ways of looking at the deficit, Mr. Nolan said. It is either an overestimation of students and new homes "and the grants and taxes that flow from there," he said, or "an error."

The property section of the

budget has increased by \$33 million. According to the budget, over \$5 million of this section goes to the day-to-day transportation of students. Over \$500,000 goes to rental accommodations which includes some portables, Mr. Paradis said.

Another \$6 million goes to the operation of the board's schools and buildings.

Administration costs will rise almost 27 per cent, according to the proposal. The actual dollar increase is approximately \$1.7 million.

While the expenses are going up by 17.2 per cent, the revenue will be increasing by 17.3 per cent.

According to the proposal the revenue includes what sounds like a major increase from the federal government of 380 per cent. It translates, however, to a \$67,000 increase. The provincial government is also expected to increase its grant by 2.4 per cent. The provincial increase, according to the proposal, will add almost \$7 million to the school board's revenue.

Catholic school board trustees will vote on the budget later this year.

Six horses die in barn fire

Six horses perished in a barn fire on First Line just north of Sideroad 5 that started shortly after midnight March 4.

Milton firefighters responded to the fire around 12:34 a.m. Sunday morning. Acton firefighters also responded to the scene. Both fire departments left the scene at 10:18 a.m.

Nowak Burkhart, the barn owner, received minor burns as he tried to free the horses, Halton Regional Police say.

Police reported that the fire chief said the fire appeared to have started accidentally. The fire marshal's office will not be called in to investigate the blaze.

Mr. Burkhart was awakened by dogs barking. He saw flames coming from the barn and quickly telephoned the fire department, police say. He then attempted to free all the horses from the barn.

He was taken to Milton District Hospital, treated for minor burns and smoke inhalation and released.

Police report that Halton Hills Fire Captain Bert Venema estimated \$100,000 damage. He

also said the fire may have started in the southwest corner of the barn, near a propane heater.

Mr. Burkhart said he is trying to get over the "state of shock" from the incident.

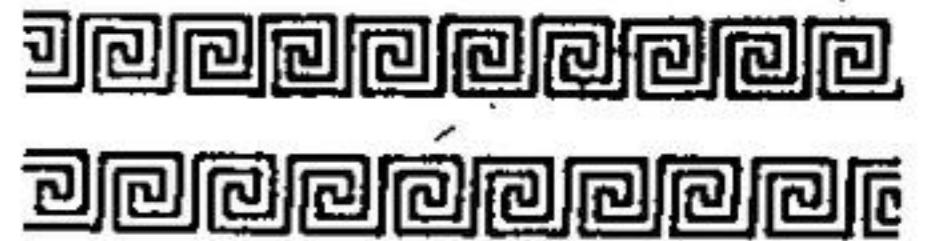
"It's hard getting over something like this," he said.

He added that part of the arena, where the horses are trained, was also damaged in the blaze. He could not estimate the value of the six horses that died.

Acton leather stores charged

Acton businesses Leathertown West Warehouse and Flight-Line were once again charged under the Retail Business Holidays Act after being open this past Sunday.

The two businesses, which are divisions of the Olde Hide House, were the only two in the Region charged under the act for being open on Sunday. An April 2 court date has been scheduled in connection with the charges.



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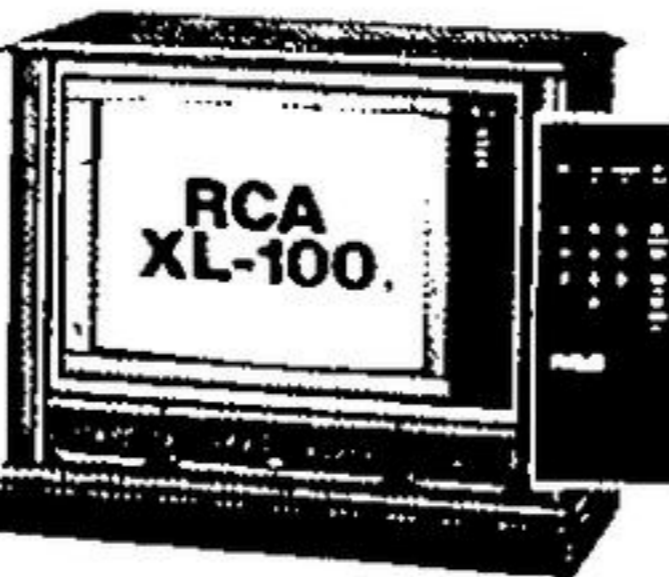
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