

Blue Box program works in Halton Hills

By LISA RUTLEDGE
The Herald

Halton Hills residents do not have a "false sense of accomplishment" every time they see their recycling blue boxes emptied, said Paul Sergeant, Halton Hills Refuse Reduction Co-ordinator.

In response to a London entrepreneur's claims that Ontario's blue box recycling program has given people a false sense of security, Mr. Sergeant stated Halton Hills residents are educated enough to know the blue box is not the final solution.

"Recycling is one of the three Rs and it is only the third most impor-

tant," said Mr. Sergeant. He believes people in Halton Hills realize recycling is only part of the solution and that re-using and reducing methods are key factors in relieving the garbage crisis.

President of Tomra Systems Inc., Ernie Martin, met with Ontario Premier David Peterson early this week to ask the province to place suspensions on the recent deregulation of the soft-drink industry.

Martin told the premier the blue box program, in addition to the decreasing amount of refillable bottles, has encouraged people to recycle what they could re-use.

Mr. Sergeant, said the London entrepreneur who sells equipment to collect refillable containers, has a point, but said Mr. Martin's invested interests are difficult to overlook.

Halton Hills introduced the blue box recycling program in February 1989 and has made tremendous progress and is said to be a model system, said Mr. Sergeant. It's not the end solution but its one of the easiest and direct ways for residents to contribute, he explained. Halton is recycling close to 23 per cent of its waste, compared to other regions like Mississauga which recycles about

12 per cent, Mr. Sergeant said.

Subject to regional approval, pending provincial grants, 500 compost units will be available for distribution this fall, said Mr. Sergeant. The units, which have a market value of close to \$90, will be made available on a first come, first serve basis for about \$25, he added.

The new units, four feet high, will help more Halton Hills residents move towards the reducing and re-using phase, which could eliminate up to 45 per cent of garbage disposal, said Mr. Sergeant.

Recycling is just the most conve-

nient method for residents because reducing and re-use takes a little work, he said, adding that the blue box provides an immediate sense of accomplishment.

John McKay, Halton's Director of Waste Management, agrees that if the blue box program is the only involvement in cutting waste Halton residents do have a false sense of achievement.

The blue box is the third priority behind reducing and re-using and should only be the first step to encourage people to become involved in eliminating waste, said Mr. McKay. Halton residents should be concerned about the overall waste management strategy, he insisted.

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Public concerned by tax hikes

Halton residents dependant on de-indexed pensions are the ones most concerned about the yearly Regional tax rate increases, Halton Regional Chairman Peter Pomeroy told Regional councillors Wednesday.

Mr. Pomeroy said he has received more letters from the public, and especially de-indexed pensioners throughout Halton, indicating they perceive recent tax hikes as out of control.

As such, "taxes are paramount in people's minds," he added.

The chairman made his comments in reference to council's decision that the finance department outline budgetary "options and alternatives" once the Region begins to consider the expenses for the 1991 Regional budget. Budget deliberations are scheduled to begin in late August.

Although the chairman didn't offer any specifics, he predicted cuts to Regional services may be required to keep next year's tax rate down.

He based the prediction on Halton's "revenue sources being down and the cost of social services making significant in-

creases."

The chairman also said, "the public is tired of the Region using provincial downloading as an excuse for municipal tax increases." Provincial downloading happens when the province relinquishes the financing of a service to the municipalities.

Halton Hills Regional councillor, Marilyn Serjeanston, took the statement to mean the Region accepts downloading. But the chairman quickly denounced this perception, saying, "I don't accept it." He emphasized though Halton "can't do anything about it."

He went on to explain that the province has warned municipalities it will download some programs for 1991. Municipalities should, therefore, account for this in their 1991 budgets, he said.

The Region was in a better position last year to justify the 1990 budget tax increase of 30 per cent over 1989, because the province only started to download certain services during the 1989 budget deliberations, said Chairman Pomeroy. These deliberations happened during the fall and winter of last year.



What a catch!

Not exactly 'The Littlest Mermaid', but Brent Cudling played the role of a mermaid by the fishing pond during the Halton Hills Parks and Recreation Department's 'Summer Cruise' Nickel Carnival Night Wednesday at the Action Community Centre. The evening was staged by the Recreation and Parks

Department's Summer Activity Program Leaders and was heralded as a great success by everyone involved. Pictured above, Brent is flanked by co-leaders Sarah Hobbs and Theresa Galt. More pictures on page 3. (Herald photo by Colin Gibson)

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