

# Community

## Roman Catholic School Board presents re-evaluated budget

By LISA BOONSTOPPEL-POT  
The Herald

The budget committee for Halton Roman Catholic School Board presented a re-evaluated budget to trustees on January 16 that will reduce 1991 expenditures by \$1.6 million and reduce the board's \$6.3 million deficit by \$200,000 with some major reductions.

The revised budget was called for by trustees in November when the initial budget indicated a possible additional \$30,000 to the deficit. Joe Birett, assistant superintendent of business and finance, said the budget was re-evaluated with some basic assumptions.

These assumptions are that assessment will increase by 6.7 per cent, mill rate (traditionally matched to the mill rate set by the Halton Board of Education) will increase by 7.5 per cent, provincial grants will increase by 8 per cent and enrolments increase by 3.1 per cent.

The mill rate percentage increase means on a house assessed at \$7,000, taxpayers will pay \$1,172 from \$1,185 in 1990, marking an increase of \$87. This is a regional estimate from an applied mill rate of 181 mills.

For the provincial grant assumption, an eight per cent increase means the board is estimating for \$56.6 million in costs this year, compared to \$52.5 million in 1990.

Projected enrolment increases, calculated by a formula, indicate the Halton Catholic student population could rise to 16,554

from 16,171 in 1990.

But Mr. Birett said the committee was "really guessing in the dark. We won't really know how much money we'll have to spend until the province indicates how much grant money they'll give us." Traditionally, the province has announced grants in March or early April.

Trustees won't be making a decision on the budget until that time, but for now, they'll be considering what cutbacks will have to be made in order to reduce the deficit if the committee predictions prove accurate.

The proposed reductions include:

- not replacing the IEC Liaison officer who was responsible for liaison between the Board and Industry for career initiatives.
- not hiring a temporary fill-in while the Computer Resource Teacher is on maternity leave.
- consolidating the French Immersion program. If numbers do not warrant a program, students will take the program at another school. A saving of one teacher.
- consolidation of the French Core program.
- central purchase of new textbooks.
- reduction in French Language cultural concerts and conferences.
- tightening staffing in French language schools.
- a proposed staff assistant in continuing education has been deferred for 1991.
- a speech language pathologist will not be replaced.
- staff will look at redeployment

of approximately 10 positions within the special education support services.

- no plant maintenance or renovation work will be undertaken.

These are some of the major recommendations made by the budget committee to conserve funds and reduce 1991 budget costs.

Mr. Birett said if the provincial government gives the Halton Catholic school board an eight per cent or higher increase in grants, the board may not have to cut back as much on programs and services.

The reason the board has accumulated such a high deficit is blamed on cutbacks in provincial funding, inadequate provincial funding for the start up costs of secondary schools, costs of long-term borrowing for capital projects and the shifting of a greater portion of the money burden to local taxpayers and supporters. These comments were made by Don Schrenk, chairman of the board. As well, he blames government initiatives such as Pay Equity, the Employer's Health Care Tax and Asbestos programs for placing the board in its present situation.

"It goes without saying that in order to assure quality schools, offering quality Catholic education, and quality programming, without overtaxing the local taxpayers has become a real juggling act for many separate school boards throughout the province," he said.



### Stained glass class

Val Kirton (left) of the Credit Valley Artisans shows Georgetown resident Carol Brownridge how to solder stained glass during a stained glass beginners class Saturday put on by the artisan group. Ten people participated in the class which also ran the previous Saturday. The class was held at the Credit Valley Artisans Cottage at Cedarvale Park in Georgetown. The club is planning to hold an advanced class for stained glass making. For more information call Mary Rowan at 877-7992. (Herald photo)



### Happy birthday

Family and friends gathered at the house of Georgetown resident Bill Terrell to celebrate the 80th birthday of his mother Maud Sunday afternoon. Halton Hills councillor Al Cook (left) presented Maud with a plaque signed by Mayor Russ Miller in recognition of the big day. Aside from Bill, Maud's daughter Margaret Burton and her husband Ron came all the way from Ottawa to celebrate the birthday. Maud, who has lived the last 11 years in Georgetown, has three grandchildren who were also present. (Herald photo)

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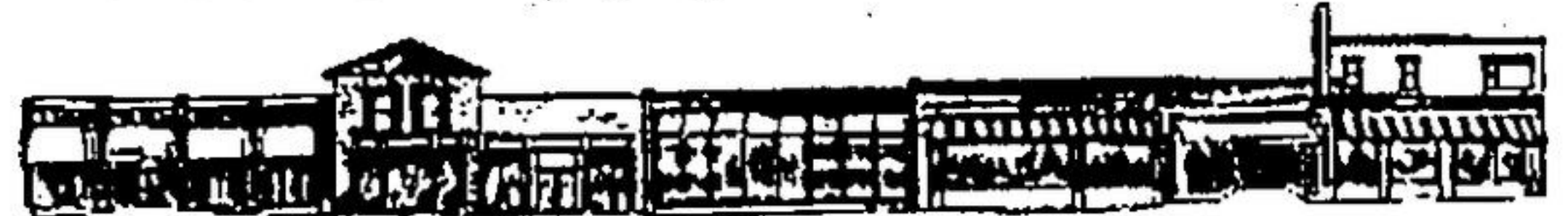
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