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## Budget committee faces dilemma

By BEN DUMMETT

The Herald

Halton Hills Budget Committee spent yesterday (Thursday) determining if there was any fat to cut from the 1991 tax-supported operating budget. No cuts will mean Town residents are faced with a 7.7 per cent tax increase over last year.

The 7.7 per cent increase translates into a 1991 tax bill of \$579.98 for the average urban area resident - a \$38 increase of last year's tax rate.

Rural area residents will see their tax bill increase from \$411.67 in 1990 to \$443.47 this year, according to the budget report. Rural area residents pay less tax than urban area residents because they don't pay for Regional services such as garbage disposal.

This year's tax levy is based on an average residential assessment of \$5,500, Town Treasurer Ray King wrote in the budget report.

Information regarding whether any cuts were made during the committee meeting was not available at press time. The committee is comprised of Town councillors.

Mr. King, however, outlines in his report three ways committee members could consider to reduce the tax increase to 5.8 per cent. The three include: reduce Town money set aside to fight the Acton dump proposal from \$200,000 to \$150,000, reduce the amount the Town allocates to its contingency fund by \$50,000 or at-

tempt to attract more construction to Town in order to increase Town revenue from building permits by \$50,000.

"There is an inherent risk in each of the options because of the uncertainty associated with each account," Mr. King wrote in his report.

According to the report, Town expenditures have increased 4.7 per cent over last year from just over \$16 million to approximately \$16.7 million. At the same time, the 7.7 per cent increase is down from the 1990 increase of 9.9 per cent.

To arrive at the increase figure, Mr. King outlines that the capital used to fund capital projects must be reduced from \$1.1 million last year to \$800,000 in 1991. Town staff cannot increase its expenditures for materials, supplies and other purchases over last year and the amount of money spent to send staff on seminars and the like must be cut by half over last year.

As well, four vacant Town staff positions must remain so and money spent on overtime for administrative and operational staff must be reduced by 20 and 10 per cent respectively.

Mr. King predicts the 7.7 per cent tax increase or a lower one, if approved, will mean a decrease in Town services, since there is no provision for the budget for inflation and materials, supplies and service levels.

The operating budget won't go before council for final approval until later this month (March).



## Business of the Year honored

Bill Chard (left) representing North-Halton MPP Noel Dulgnan, is seen here presenting Paul Armstrong of Paul C. Armstrong Insurance Brokers Ltd. in Georgetown with a plaque in recognition of Mr. Armstrong's company being recognized as the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce 1990 Business of the Year during a dinner at the North Halton Golf and Country Club Wednesday. (Herald photo)

## The joke is on us

By BEN DUMMETT  
The Herald

Despite the Federal Government's claim at being fiscally responsible, it appears the government, or at least Finance Minister Michael Wilson, is unable to manage \$1,200.

That's the amount of money Halton-Peel MP Garth Turner handed over to Mr. Wilson last

October on behalf of the Halton Chamber of Commerce.

The chamber raised the money through ticket and beverage sales resulting from its Deficit Reduction Barbecue held last spring at the Gordon Alcott Arena.

Money raised from the event at which the Finance Minister appeared as the guest speaker, was

specifically intended to go towards the government's special deficit reduction fund. But it turns out it has yet to get there.

Chamber Vice-President Lori Kentner said in an interview Tuesday the cheque dated June 21 is now stale-dated. In other words, a new cheque must be issued for the government to get the money.

"We're very disappointed; it's a real slap in the face to the Chamber," said Ms. Kentner. Over 700 people attended the event and the government doesn't even have the decency to cash the cheque."

The money represented a symbolic gesture by the Chamber to help Canada, added Ms. Kentner.

When contacted Tuesday, Mr. Turner said "(Mr. Wilson) is probably more furious (about the stale-dated cheque) than I am. When I told him what had happened he basically exploded," said Mr. Turner.

As a possible explanation Mr. Turner offered that one of Mr. Wilson's staff members "obviously screwed up."

"Mr. Wilson enjoyed coming out to the barbecue and he felt livid when he heard about the cheque," continued Mr. Turner.

Mr. Turner wrote a letter dated Feb. 14 to Mr. Wilson, asking for an explanation. In the letter, he wrote, "certainly we should not be discouraging the active valued help of average Canadians in our struggle against debt by falling to follow through on such a simple task as cashing a cheque. I owe my constituents an explanation."

Mr. Turner said he has yet to receive a response but expects one when the Finance Minister is finished dealing with the government's new budget.

Chamber President, Dave Page, said Wednesday a new cheque will be issued, but not until Mr. Wilson asks for one.



A smiling Federal Finance Minister, Michael Wilson (left) accepts a cheque for \$1,200 from Halton-Peel MP Garth Turner. The cheque for \$1,200 represented monies raised at the Joint Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce and Burlington Chamber of Commerce 'Deficit Reduction BBQ' held this past summer at Georgetown's Gordon Alcott Memorial Arena. In a statement in the House of Commons, Turner said this (the cheque) represented a "direct attempt to help our country. Criticism abound," added Turner, "but so do the average, concerned and involved Canadians like the constituents of my riding who today give money in order to help Canada's future." (Photo submitted)

## Drug bust

Halton Regional Police seized 875 marijuana plants with an estimated street value of \$300,000 from a Norval residence on Friday and charged a Norval man in connection with the seizure.

Last Friday, the joint forces of Halton Regional and Peel Regional Drug Bureau issued a search warrant at a residence and adjoining buildings located at Lot 4, Concession 10, R.R.1, Norval. The residence is located on the 10th Line north of Steeles Avenue.

Also seized was a quantity of electrical equipment used to cultivate marijuana including high intensity grow lights, electrical transformers, fans, thermometers, and a quantity of literature on the growing of marijuana.

Accused is Wymond Walkem of R.R.1, Halton Hills. He has been charged with the cultivation of marijuana and possession of marijuana for the purpose of trafficking. He will appear in Milton Court on Tuesday, April 9 at 2:00 p.m.

## An Inside Look

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