

# Citizens groups aware they can change their world

The environment and development are two of the issues that have caused many Halton Hills residents to stand up and be counted over the past year.

On the subject of the environment, local ratepayer groups Protect Our Water Environmental Resources (POWER) and Incineration Counteracts the Environment (ICE), have led the way in letting local government officials know where a lot of people in the community stand on what should be done to make Halton Hills an environmentally safe place to live.

Barbara Halsall, president of POWER, which has approximately 600 members, says stopping the Acton dump proposal dominated the group's agenda last year and will continue to do so throughout the rest of 1991.

Ms. Halsall said POWER will spend this year encouraging every resident of Halton Hills to join the group's fight. Milton-based Reclamation Systems Incorporated is behind the proposal to establish a landfill in the Acton dump located south of Highway 25.

Ms. Halsall anticipates there will be a provincially-run hearing later this year on the Acton dump proposal and if POWER is to fight the application at the hearing, money is needed, she said.

Well-known Canadian nature artist and environmentalist, Robert Bateman, has donated three prints valued at \$10,000 to the group to help raise funds for the hearing, said Ms. Halsall. She is hopeful Mr. Bateman's support will also further legitimize the group's cause and therefore encourage other people to lend their support.

While POWER is still engaged in its battle, Incineration Counteracts the Environment has achieved its goal: the provincial ban of municipal solid waste incineration.

ICE member Diane van de Valk said she thinks the province's recent ban on municipal waste incineration projects was influenced by the group's incessant lobbying efforts aimed at the New Democratic Party government, to implement the ban.

ICE formed last summer in the wake of the Region's plan to in-



Barbara Halsall

investigate establishing an Energy From Waste plant somewhere in Halton and perhaps Halton Hills. Ms. van de Valk expects the Region to scrap that plan given the province's recent announcement. With their goal accomplished Ms. van de Valk anticipates the group will be dissolved.

The 500-member ratepayers



Diane Van de Valk

group, Residents Against Indiscriminate Development, was formed last spring in the wake of the demolition of a Maple Avenue house located next to the North Halton Golf and Country Club in Georgetown.

The house was demolished to make room for a high-rise condominium development.

RAIDD President, Gail Ruther-



Gail Rutherford

ford, said the demolition awoke people to the fact "that some of the development proposed for Halton Hills may not be in the best interest of the community."

Since the group's inception, focus has been on encouraging people to vocalize their concerns about development and what is suitable for the Town.

## Hydro Commission aware of concerns

Halton Hills Hydro Commission, similar to last year, will focus its attention in 1991 on lobbying Halton-Peel MP Garth Turner to have the government stop charging the Goods and Services Tax on hydro electrical power, says Commissioner Bill Smith.

Mr. Smith points out people's utility rates would only have increased by 8.6 per cent last year but because of the GST the percentage increase was in the low teens. All last summer and fall leading up to the government's enactment of the new tax legislation, the Commission argued hydro power should be exempted because it is an essential product.

Mr. Smith compares hydro power to basic grocery products, which are exempt from the tax. The two types of products are similar because everyone needs food and electricity, he said.

Although the commission's lobbying efforts showed no positive results, Mr. Smith believes the commission and others across Ontario have better ammunition to fight the government during this year in the GST battle.

During the first quarter of this year, said Mr. Smith, the government announced it would receive more money from the GST than originally anticipated. Mr. Smith estimates the final sum of unanticipated money will total in the millions.

The commission will use the miscalculation to show the government should exempt power from the GST, he explained.

Mr. Smith said the plan will only succeed if the public joins the cause.

The Chairman went on to say the high 1991 increase not only hurt members of the general public, it also hurt business. If business continues to be hit hard, with high hydro rate increases, more of the general public will feel the GST impact in their pocket books, he predicted.

Mr. Smith also predicted that people should expect an 8.6 per cent increase in their hydro bills in 1992.

Another important issue facing the commission and its customers this year, is that of conservation of energy, said Mr. Smith.

Aside from the GST, another reason hydro rates are increasing by so much is because a lot of people take electricity for granted, he said.

"People will have to start turning off those lights and television sets if they expect their hydro expenses to drop," he pointed out.



Bill Smith

## Housing market is recovering

April marked the third month of recovery in the Halton Hills housing market, says Georgetown National Real Estate Broker, Gary Brand.

The market has been very active since February, said Mr. Brand. He predicts the upswing in the local housing market isn't a "blip" but rather the beginning of a normal market.

Mr. Brand describes a normal housing market as one in which houses are being bought and sold with some frequency, but people aren't acting under pressure.

He refers to a "pressure buying situation" as a "frenzy market." This type of market characterized the period preceding the recession, he said. At that time, house buyers were told if they didn't make a decision on a house in 15 minutes it could be gone, said Mr.

Brand.

Today's market situation benefits the public as well as the agents, said Mr. Brand. For agents 1990 was a bad year. The slow real estate market devastated a lot of agents, said Mr. Brand. He said that during 1990, 500 agents left the Brampton Real Estate Board of which NRS agents are members.

Those who survived the bad economic times last year, said Mr. Brand, are that much more seasoned and therefore will be better able to service buyers and sellers.

Because the market isn't hyperactive, agents will have more time to spend with their clients, added Mr. Brand.

One of the big reasons for last year's market slump was a lack of confidence on the part of the

public. People didn't have the confidence to either buy a house or sell the one they already owned, explained Mr. Brand.

However, that all important confidence is returning, he said. He listed several reasons for the change. These include: spring time is a traditional time to buy or sell a house, the release of pent-up demand and the return of housing affordability, he said.

The current decline in mortgage rates means potential first-time home buyers can enter the housing market, he said. Mr. Brand went on to predict the upcoming year will also see greater housing affordability for first time homebuyers. There is a good chance mortgage rates will sometime hit single digits this year, said Mr. Brand.



# APPLE

## AutoGlass

Your best pick for...

WINDOW TINTS
BOX LINERS

TRUCK RUNNING BOARDS

ALL MAJOR AUTO WINDOW REPAIRS

Call 873-1655



# APPLE

## AutoGlass

LIMITED.

An all Canadian Company

OUR SERVICE WILL  
MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!

354 GUELPH ST., Unit 27, GEORGETOWN