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Constable Nick Leoni, dressed up in a century-old English bobby's uniform, sat upon his new bike Thursday night which was presented to him by Mayor Russ Miller and Ollie Tichel, owner of

Ollie's Cycle and Ski which donated the bike. Constable Leoni will use the bike for his village constable duties. (Herald photo)

Village Constable rolls along

Villagers in downtown Georgetown had just gotten used to seeing their village constable, Nick Leoni, walking the beat. Now, they'll be seeing him whizzing by on a bicycle thanks to Ollie's Cycle and Ski in Georgetown.

"It's another facet to the village constable's duties" said village Constable Leoni Thursday night at Pioneer Days where Ollie Tichel of Ollie's Cycle presented him with the bike. "I'll use it to ride around the perimeter of my

downtown area and it will allow me to get to the extremities of the village quicker."

He hopes to be out biking within three weeks after the bike is equipped with the proper safety features and warning stickers. He'll also have a special uniform designed for safety while he's biking around town.

"How I, and the bike are outfitted will provide a good example of safe bicycling to the community," said Constable Leoni.

On July 9, members of Halton

Regional Police's 'Target Response Accomplished by Cycling Enforcement' (TRACE) team will arrive in Georgetown to teach Constable Leoni how to effectively make use of the bike and how to use the bike in a defensive mode.

Constable Leoni stresses that he will not become a TRACE officer and his mandate as a village constable will not change with his new wheels.

He said the bike will just allow him to be a more effective village constable.

Bankruptcies soar in Halton Region

By BEN DUMMETT
The Herald

Despite claims by "experts" that the economy is about to, or has already started to turn around, the number of consumer and business bankruptcies in Halton is on the rise.

According to Dave Stewart of Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada, the number of consumer and business bankruptcies in Halton during the first four months of 1991 is already approximately half the number declared during all of last year.

"And there is no sign of the numbers declining," said Mr. Stewart.

From January to the end of April of this year, 250 Halton consumers declared bankruptcies, while 27 businesses did the same. Comparatively, 433 consumers in the Region and 58 businesses filed for bankruptcy during all of last year, said Mr. Stewart.

In 1989 only 217 consumers and 56 businesses declared bankruptcy, he said.

"Ever since last August, we have been averaging 500 to 630 bankruptcies a month, but before that time the average was between 250 and 300," said Mr. Stewart. These averages reflect the total number of bankruptcies filed with Mr. Stewart's office in Hamilton. His office covers Halton Region, Peel, Niagara Region and Hamilton-Wentworth.

Asked to compare the number of bankruptcies in Halton with the other areas his office covers, Mr. Stewart said, "the number declared in each Region is amazingly close." He was unable to provide bankruptcy statistics for each of the municipalities in Halton Region - Halton Hills, Milton, Burlington and Oakville.

Mr. Stewart pointed to overspending by both companies and consumers during the "boom period" between 1984 and 1989 for the higher than usual bankruptcy rate in Halton and throughout southern Ontario.

Through this six-year period people and businesses were taking on more debt than they could handle, said Mr. Stewart. People thought they could recover from their debt during the long-term because it was a "boom time", he said.

Mr. Stewart points out the number of consumer bankruptcies declared between 1984 and 1989 "was practically zero."

"But then the recession hit, unemployment rose and the dream (of endless purchasing power) came crashing down," said Mr. Stewart.

During the first four months of this year the debt owed by consumers who declared bankruptcy in Halton totalled just over \$17 million with the average consumer owing \$35,000. Bankrupt Halton businesses owed a total of \$7.3 million with the average business owing \$133,000 during the same time period.

Contacted Friday, Halton Business Development Coordinator Brent Kears said he was unaware of the bankruptcy statistics because his office doesn't compile them.

He did say his office has started to compile a mid-year economic index comprised of several economic indicators including housing starts, new jobs, and building permits to get an idea of the state of the economy.

"People on the street are telling me the economy is starting to turn around," said Mr. Kears.

Mr. Stewart said Mr. Kears's statement doesn't necessarily contradict the bankruptcy statistics. He explained the recession had already started before the number of bankruptcy claims started to skyrocket. Therefore it follows, said Mr. Stewart, the economy must first turn around before the number of bankruptcies being filed begins to slow down.

When told of the bankruptcy statistics, Mr. Kears said the Federal Government has taken a positive step in introducing changes to the existing Bankruptcy Act to help businesses and consumers.

If the proposed changes are passed by the legislature, businesses will be given a "30-day cooling off period" to give them time to negotiate a restructuring with all their creditors. After the 30-day period businesses are permitted to ask the court to extend the cooling off period for five months, according to a Federal Government press release on the changes.

Hospital tribute

OTTAWA BUREAU
Thomson News Service

OTTAWA - MP Garth Turner has paid tribute to the "compassionate and caring" nature of Georgetown as it celebrates the 30th anniversary of its hospital.

"For the past 30 years, local civic leaders and volunteers have been instrumental in seeing to it that the Georgetown community hospital protects and heals the citizens who have come to depend upon it," Turner told the Commons recently.

The Conservative MP for Halton-Peel said the hospital has expanded to include a centre for the care of the aged.

"In Georgetown, we are proud of this achievement. I want to remind all Members that our communities are enriched by local institutions such as this, to which we must all offer our deep thanks," Turner said.

Municipalities want more input

By BEN DUMMETT
The Herald

Halton's four municipalities should have further input on proposed changes to the make-up of Regional Council before changes are approved, the Region Administration and Finance Committee recommended Wednesday.

The recommendation will go before Regional Council this Wednesday for final consideration.

The changes, which include Halton Hills and Burlington each giving up a seat on Regional Council and Oakville and Milton each gaining a seat, were published in a report by Halton's Regional Review Sub-Committee and presented at Wednesday's meeting.

Administration and Finance Committee members made their recommendation after Burlington Mayor Roly Bird called the Regional Review Report "judicious."

"There is nothing in the report that shows any progressive change," Mayor Bird told committee members.

If the sub-committee recommendations were approved that would leave eight Burlington Regional councillors, eight Oakville Regional Councillors, four Milton Regional councillors

and four Halton Hills Regional councillors.

Aside from the changes in the number of Regional councillors for each municipality, the sub-committee decided to maintain the existing method of selecting the Regional Chairman.

The current method of selection calls for Regional council to choose the Chairman from among themselves or the public-at-large. Norval resident Peter Pomeroy is the current Regional chairman.

Georgetown resident Alex McKee appeared before Administration and Finance Committee members and argued the Regional Review Sub-Committee has failed the public by not considering the elimination of Regional government altogether as part of the study.

While acknowledging the elimination of Regional government may not be appropriate, the sub-committee should have given the idea serious consideration.

"Clearly people feel they are over-governed and want a level of government abolished," Mr. McKee told committee members.

Since the Regional Review Sub-Committee neglected to consider eliminating Regional government, Mr. McKee suggested an impartial group be formed to consider the idea. The group should

be impartial, he said, because "I don't think it is likely a political body would design its own coffin."

Halton Chairman Peter Pomeroy, who was a member of the Regional Review Sub-Committee, said he had no objections to Mr. McKee's request, but he did object to the expectation that the sub-committee review the question of the existence of Regional government.

To have included the question in the sub-committee's mandate would have been "ludicrous," said the Chairman.

"It would be extremely difficult for the committee to work within a framework that it was trying to dismantle," he said.

Speaking in favor of there being two levels of municipal government, Trent University Professor Harry Kitchen, who appeared before Administration and Finance Committee members, said the facts clearly indicate there is no significant difference in cost to the taxpayer between one and two levels of government.

Mr. Kitchen based his statement on a Regional review of Niagara Region that he helped conduct. Professor Kitchen acted as an advisor to Halton's Regional Review Sub-Committee.

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Quote of the Week

"I believe Canada is leading a very quiet way of life and if it has no real problems, it simply creates one."

Gediminas Vagnorius
Prime Minister of
Lithuania on
Canada's constitutional
crisis