

News at a Glance

Sunday shopping issue still causing concern

By LISA BOONSTOPPEL-POT
The Herald

Reaction from Halton Hills business owners to new Sunday shopping legislation which allows stores to be open on Sundays only in December is mixed, ranging from outright negativity to eager acceptance.

"I work six days a week and I like a common pause day," says Bob Creasy, owner-manager of Knechtels Foodmart in Georgetown.

The new NDP legislation, called the Retail Business Establishments Statute Law Amendment (RBESLA) Act, or Bill 115, was released Nov. 25. It states that the Bill "reinforces the status of enumerated holidays as common pause days in Ontario."

But a provision in the Bill declares that all retailers are permitted to open on Sundays in December prior to Christmas day. This year, those days are Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22 and businesses can open on those days with no restrictions.

According to the RBESLA, businesses have a choice whether or not to open but Mr. Creasy feels he doesn't have a choice.

"I'm not opening this Sunday (today) but I'll be forced to open the other three Sundays because my competitors will be open," he says. "As an independent businessman, I can't allow other businesses to take away my business."

He's not the only business owner who feels this way.

Michael Kinal, co-owner of Home Hardware in Acton feels he will also

be "forced" to open on the four Sundays.

"I cannot give into the competition. I have to follow the trend," he says resignedly. "I don't think there is a need for Sunday shopping. People should have one day of rest from their businesses."

That sentiment is echoed by Gail Dodokin, owner of John Boughton Jewellers in Georgetown.

"We will not be open Sundays. I believe people should have a day of rest."

Ron McEachern, manager of Loblaws in Georgetown is also displeased to be opening Sunday but he's against it because he believes it's not fruitful financially.

"I don't believe it's beneficial to be open Sundays," he says. "It only spreads buying out from six days to seven days."

Nevertheless, his store will be open all four Sundays.

Not all business owners are against the legislation however.

Mike Manes, owner-manager of IGA Foodland in Acton says he's happy to be opening on December Sundays. "I want to be open. It gives people a chance to do their grocery shopping Sunday and leaves the rest of the week for their Christmas shopping," he says.

"I think it's also good for the staff. It gives them some extra spending money."

Tom Kase, owner of Canadian Tire in Georgetown is for Sunday shopping but against the government's way of handling the issue.

"I believe it's my right to open Sundays," he says. "We are in the service sector and should provide

service when the public demands it, not when the government legislates it."

He added that he doesn't believe part of the government's mandate includes legislating when stores should or should not be open.

Legislate they have however. Any store wishing to open on Sundays outside of December has to earn a tourist exemption which meets criteria established by the provincial government, according to a press release on the act.

Violations of the act can earn business owners a minimum fine of \$500 for the first offence, \$2000 for a second offence and \$5000 for a third and subsequent offences.

The act also includes amendments to the Employment Standards Act. One change states that retail workers now have the right to refuse any Sunday or holiday work assignment except for those workers in the hospitality industry. Workers who have previously accepted such work assignments must give employers 48 hours notice at their request.

An additional amendment in the Bill states that municipalities may enact bylaws that allow stores in tourism areas to open on holidays but that the areas must meet tourism exemption criteria established by the provincial government.

For more information on the Retail Business Establishments Statute Law Amendment Act, the government has set up a 'Common Pause Day Information Centre Hot Line' at (416) 325-3390 or 1-800-565-8002.

Psychiatric services now available in Georgetown

Patients in need of psychiatric services no longer have to travel to Milton now that the Halton Regional Health Department's North Halton Mental Clinic has opened a sub-office in Halton Hills.

The new office, staffed part-time with nurse therapist Betty Mackenzie and psychiatrist Dr. Tony Marriott, is located in the Bennett Health care facility in Georgetown.

Ms. Mackenzie is in the office Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays while Dr. Marriott is in attendance on Wednesdays.

Mae Vaivods, Supervisor of the North Halton Mental Health Clinic, said Halton Hills has never had an office due to "shortage of staff and space."

"It finally came together last year and we were able to open an office in Halton Hills," she said. The office has been operating since this summer but wasn't officially opened until last month.

Ms. Mackenzie said since the opening, more and more patients have been making use of the local office.

The new office in Georgetown and

North Halton Mental Health Clinic's other offices in Acton and Milton provide psychiatric services to people suffering from "severe psychiatric mental illnesses," she said. "We're not a family planning clinic and we're not here for people who have mild anxieties. This office is for people in need of a psychiatrist."

The clinics offer a range of services including: adult psychiatric services, long term rehabilitative services, child and adolescent services, geriatric psychiatric services and developmental paediatric consultation.

One of the Mental Health Clinic psychiatrists will be at the new Georgetown office on a weekly basis to provide psychiatric consultative services. The psychiatrist will work with the nurse therapist to provide psychiatric assessment and treatment services.

All referrals, as well as requests for further information, should be directed to the main North Halton Mental Health Clinic office in Milton at 878-7267.



Psychiatrist Dr. Tony Marriott (left) and Nurse Therapist Betty Mackenzie (right) discuss their plans for the new North Halton Mental Health Clinic office which opened recently at the Bennett Health Care Centre in Georgetown. (Herald photo)

Newly-formed environmental group adopts ecosystem approach

By BEN DUMMETT
The Herald

The newly-formed local environmental group, Silver Creek Valley Environmental Association, held its inaugural meeting last Wednesday at the Halton Hills Cultural Centre in Georgetown and its platform appears to be on the cutting edge of environmental protection.

To kick-off the group's first meeting, Deborah Williams, a spokesperson for the Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront was the guest speaker.

The commission's primary mandate is to advise the provincial and federal governments on how best to protect the environment of the Greater Toronto Lake Ontario waterfront and the tributaries that feed into the lake.



Deborah Williams

Ms. Williams told the audience of approximately 50 people how the successful protection of the environment will necessitate an "ecosystem approach" whereby equal importance is attached to environmental, economical and community interests during the planning process.

Until recently, explained Ms. Williams, economic interests have taken priority over environmental protection.

It's this ecosystem approach to planning that the Silver Creek Valley Environmental Association supports, said Ashley Ranson, group spokesperson.

For instance, just as Ms. Williams said the ecosystem approach requires measuring the cumulative environmental impact development projects have on a surrounding area, the group also advocates this approach to determine the appropriate amount of development that should occur in Georgetown's Silver Creek Valley.

Halton Region is currently trying to determine if projects such as a trunk sewer and a major well should be located in Silver Creek to service future development growth in Georgetown West.

The Association wants the Region to consider the environmental impact of each project in context of the whole instead of separately - an idea Ms. Williams said the commission would support.

Although several Georgetown residents, including Mr. Ranson, have been very vocal about the need to protect Silver Creek Valley for a long time, Mr. Ranson said a formal association has been formed so that more people can get involved.

According to the association's information release, "... a more formal association that was open to all who share our concern with the environment, would be a more effective way to harness the interests and considerable talents in the community."

Aside from ensuring the protection of Silver Creek, Mr. Ranson said the group's purpose is also to recognize and protect other significant environment features within Halton Hills, including recognized Environmentally Sensitive Areas, (ESAs), Black Creek, the Credit River, hazard lands, wetlands, groundwater recharge areas and woodlands.

To get the group's message across to the general public, Mr. Ranson told the audience social events centred on the environment such as clean-up days in which the public is invited to clear away the litter in areas along the Credit River watershed will be organized.

Based on a suggestion from some audience members, the group will consider setting up neighborhood networks to collect data on whether or not peoples' wells are going dry.

If the data showed some people were having trouble with their wells, then this information would be given to the appropriate authorities in order to rectify the situation.

Commenting on the outcome of the first meeting, Mr. Ranson said, "peoples' reaction seemed to be very positive; I'm encouraged."

Seniors community forum

Easier access to information, better transportation services and a seniors recreation centre is what's needed in Halton Hills revealed seniors at the 'Seniors Community Forum' put on by Georgetown District Memorial Hospital Tuesday.

Over 60 seniors turned up to discuss their concerns about health care, recreation and transportation in Halton Hills at the Halton Regional Police station in Georgetown.

Their concerns were taken down by committee members conducting a Georgetown Hospitals' study on health and social service needs for seniors.

Tuesday's comments will make up the base of the study and be documented in an Action Report which will be used to administer to needed change in this area, in Halton Hills.

For the full story, see next Wednesday's edition of the Halton Hills Herald.

New approach urged on landfill divergence

Halton must start focusing its attention on the promotion of waste reduction and reuse if it is to divert 50 per cent of its waste stream from landfills by the year 2000, Georgetown resident Lawson Oates told Halton Regional Council Wednesday.

Mr. Oates is Halton Hills' representative on the Region's Joint Municipal-Regional Waste Management Committee.

The committee was established by Regional Council as a cooperative effort between Halton's four municipalities to promote the 3R's - reduction, reuse and recycle - in order to minimize Halton's dependency on landfilling.

Speaking on behalf of the committee, Mr. Lawson told Regional councillors, Halton has been successful in promoting recycling to the point where most residents and institutions in the community recycle a wide range of material through the bluebox program or depot system.

Therefore, it is now time for the Region to use public education programs to encourage people and businesses to focus on waste reduction and reuse, he said.

According to the committee's just

published mission statement, "it is time for both citizens and businesses within Halton to move away from consuming resources and towards conserving them for future generations. This new approach will not only reduce waste, it will also extend the life of both renewable and non-renewable resources."

Mr. Lawson told Regional Council the committee will now take its mission statement to the people for public comment.

The public consultation process includes the following: the mission statement will be circulated to area municipalities, local ratepayer groups, businesses and other interested organizations; committee members will make themselves available to speak to interest groups from Nov. 27 1991, to Jan. 31, 1992; committee members will host two televised phone-in workshops, the first being held sometime during this upcoming January.

The public comments will then be incorporated into an updated version of the group's mission statement which will then form the basis of a report to be submitted to Regional Council for consideration in May or June.