

POLICE BEAT



Numbers To Note EMERGENCY

Police, Fire or Ambulance Dial 911
 Fire (Information) 877-1133
 Police (Non-Emergency) 878-5511
 Hospital 873-0111
 Distress Centre 877-1211

Breaking up

Halton Regional Police charged a Milton man with assault after he allegedly assaulted his girlfriend after she broke up with him. Police say the couple had lived and worked together at a Georgetown horse farm earlier this month before the woman decided to break off the relationship. On Dec. 17, the man returned to the home and allegedly assaulted the woman to get the house keys so he could retrieve his belongings say police. While in the home, police say the man stole the victim's \$300 television. The man has been charged with assault and theft under and will appear in Milton court Jan. 27 for a bail hearing.

Caught in the act

Police report a mischief maker was caught in the act of smashing in a door at a Main St. apartment building in Georgetown Saturday night. Police say the couple were

awakened by the sound of loud banging coming from a second floor hallway. The husband went to investigate and came face to face with the accused. A police investigation revealed the accused had kicked in a vacant apartment door causing \$100 damage. Charged with mischief is a 34-year-old Georgetown man.

Shoplifters

Police charged two Georgetown men for shoplifting Saturday. The first man, a 43-year-old Georgetown resident, was caught concealing a box of chocolates from Delrex Smoke Shoppe and charged with theft under to appear in court Jan. 20. The other Georgetown man, aged 45, was witnessed hiding a \$29.99 jacket underneath his own coat in Zellers. A store employee followed him around the store and chased him across the parking lot to catch him. He was also charged with theft under and will appear in Milton court Jan. 13.



Tour of lights

Norval seniors, Muriel Eyre, (left), and Helen Louth received a big hug from Santa Wednesday at St. Andrews United Church in Georgetown after having just completed a tour of Christmas lights in Georgetown with approximately 160 other local seniors. The event, which was the 13th annual, is

sponsored by the Georgetown Kinsmen Club. Upon arriving at the church, the seniors were treated to an array of eats and a performance by the Centennial Alumni Choir directed by Paul Brisley. Santa is Kinsman Jim Ford.

School board not a grinch

By LISA BOONSTOPPEL-POT
 The Herald

In no way has the Halton Board of Education banned Christmas in schools, says Board Director Bob Williams, in response to recent speculation in Halton newspaper that it had.

"Somehow word has gotten out that the Halton Board of Education has in some way banned Christmas in our schools," says the director. "This is a complete and total misrepresentation by the media of the reality of the celebration of Christmas in our schools."

His comments relate to a cartoon printed in an Oakville newspaper that pictured the Halton Board of Education stating there was no room at the inn for Christmas.

"In no way, shape or form has the Board removed Christmas from our schools," he said at a Board meeting Thursday night. "Our schools have not been sent a directive about Christmas, nor have we passed a policy that would, in any way, negatively affect the celebration of Christmas."

He said the Board recognizes the religious significance of Christmas to the majority of people in the community and that this significance is carried over into the schools.

However, he said schools do have a responsibility to be sensitive to the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of Halton students.

"The operative words are sensitivity and inclusiveness," said Mr. Williams. "We expect administrators and school staff to continue to be sensitive to the composition of their school community and at the same time, to include appreciation of other religious groups."

But at least one Halton Hills woman, who preferred not to have her name printed, believes the Board doesn't appreciate Christmas values.

"They're eliminating Christian customs from schools," she said. "To Christians, Christmas is about the birth of Christ and if others don't want to celebrate Jesus' birth, they can stay in their offices and work."

She believes as the Board tries to respect all religious and cultural beliefs, that Christian beliefs are being eroded.

"If they expect me to respect other religions, they have to respect mine as well, but it seems they're just sweeping Christian faiths under the carpet."



Bob Williams

Mr. Williams said if people find it necessary to find a "grinch" in this situation, they should look to the Provincial government.

The government's Ministry of Education has issued directives to all boards that no one religion can occupy a position of primacy in public elementary and secondary schools.

"Our Board has been placed in a difficult position," he said. "We are trying to react to policy and direction from the Ministry while, at the same time, be responsive to our local community."

Both Halton Hills school trustees, Dick Howitt and Dave Whiting agree confident religious values are being respected in the school system.

Mr. Whiting said the Board hasn't done anything to discourage Christmas celebrations and believes it's up to the individual schools on how they celebrate the season.

Mr. Howitt said from what he's seen, schools have been relating their celebrations to the cultural make-up of the schools.

"I was at the Georgetown District High School concert and they engaged the whole audience in singing Christmas carols," he said. "That's appropriate for a Georgetown school but it might not be appropriate in other Halton schools where there are large populations of students of other religions."

Whatever is happening in the schools, the Board is sending out Christmas cards with absolutely no religious reference. They read, "Season's Greetings and Best Wishes for the coming year."

Halton Board Of Education gets a passing grade

By LISA BOONSTOPPEL-POT
 The Herald

A Halton Taxpayer's Coalition audit of the Halton Board of Education's 1991 budget has found "no areas of significant overspending."

But it did find some items of "non-essential spending, contract caused or otherwise," according to the report presented to Board trustees Dec. 12.

The Halton Taxpayer's Coalition is a newly-formed group with a mission to obtain value for tax dollars in public spending. It's main target is the Halton Board of Education.

The report was undertaken by the Coalition's Public Audit and Review Committee headed by Roger Love and David Riddell of Oakville and Burlington respectively. The objective of the report, according to the HTC was "to ascertain whether expenditures by the board should be considered under control in the context of actual dollars spent, value for money and programs included in the educational system."

Based on their findings that there was no significant overspending but some non-essential overspending, the Coalition has recommended the following:

- corollary restraint must be taken on teacher salary increases, there is no justification for employment conditions and standards better than those in the private sector.
- halt the declining pupil teacher ratio and increase it somewhat in the medium term.
- make a one-time expenditure to computerize the answering of transportation enquiries (including weather related school closings).
- refuse subsidies to particular interest groups; trustees are elected to do what is proper for the community as a whole, not for specific interest groups.

-the Board should strongly resist legislation mandating new or additional services unless appropriate for Halton and adequately funded by the level of government responsible for the mandate.

Halton Hills school trustee Dick Howitt felt the coalition made "some good suggestions" and was

pleased they weren't super-critical of the board.

He did not see eye-to-eye with them on certain ideas such as class-size. "They're going on the basis that research has shown smaller class sizes don't necessarily mean students get a better education," he said. "But I've seen research that goes both ways and some say a smaller class size is better."

Halton Hills' other trustee, newly-elected Dave Whiting agrees with the coalition's finding that the board hasn't significantly overspent.

"The board seems to be pulling at the bottom line," he said. "They have a lean organization."

As for the cuts in cost the coalition recommends, Mr. Whiting responded by saying, "do we want to make cuts on the system or produce graduates to compete in the job-market?"

The Taxpayers Coalition report also listed a number of objectives, one specifically concerning trustees themselves.

"The time has come for Halton to revert to the habits of yesteryear when trustees were generally people with extensive business experience with the basic knowledge necessary to qualify to serve as a

member of what is, in reality, the Board of Directors of a quarter billion dollar business," states the report.

"Halton cannot afford to have trustees who, however good their intentions, do not have extensive business experience," the report continued.

Both Mr. Howitt and Mr. Whiting disagreed with this theory.

"How can we possibly mandate that trustees have business experience," asked Mr. Howitt. "The only way more business people can get on the board is if they run and are elected."

Mr. Whiting felt the board couldn't be compared to a business because a business doesn't have to worry about producing capable students.

"We can't put blinders on and head to the bottom line," he said. "It takes a mixture of people to do a good job."

At the Thursday night meeting when the report was presented, trustees agreed to receive the report.

The Board's Executive Assistant to the office of the Director, Peter Gnish, said the report will be given to the budget review committee to investigate.

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