

## Police blues

As police services go, residents of Halton can take pride in the fact that we have one of the finest in Ontario, if not Canada.

For the third year in row, Halton ranked as the safest regional municipality in Canada according to Maclean's magazine's 2010 ranking of our most dangerous cities.

In 2009, crime plunged nearly 11 per cent in Halton.

However, that safety is obviously coming with a price— one that some regional councillors are now questioning.

Halton Police, through Chief Gary Crowell last week asked the region to approve a 2011 budget of \$116.4 million— an increase of \$7.6 million or 6.9 per cent over the previous year.

The "most significant driver" of the proposed increases in the budget, which includes the hiring of 13 uniform officers, is the \$2.4 million related to contract and benefit costs.

A Halton finance and administration committee report also reveals regional police wage and benefit increases will keep annual budget increases in the six per cent range for the next few years.

Halton Police have received more than a nine per cent increase in salaries over the past three years including a 3.1 per cent raise on Jan. 1 of this year. They will be in line for another raise Jan. 1, 2012.

Halton Hills Regional Councillor Jane Fogal, chairman of the administration and finance committee, was among those rightfully questioning the escalating cost of policing.

"Absolutely, I have concerns over it," said Fogal. "I wonder why our police costs are going up at this rate. If so much is based on salary, what are those contract settlements?"

It's a legitimate question.

Statistics can be used in many ways and Crowell's pointing to the fact Halton's police to population ratio is the lowest in the GTA is fair game.

But so too is the fact that Halton Police's 9.2 per cent in wage hikes over three years is a tad excessive and tying future police budgets closer to the rate of inflation would not be unfair.

### Letters to the editor policy

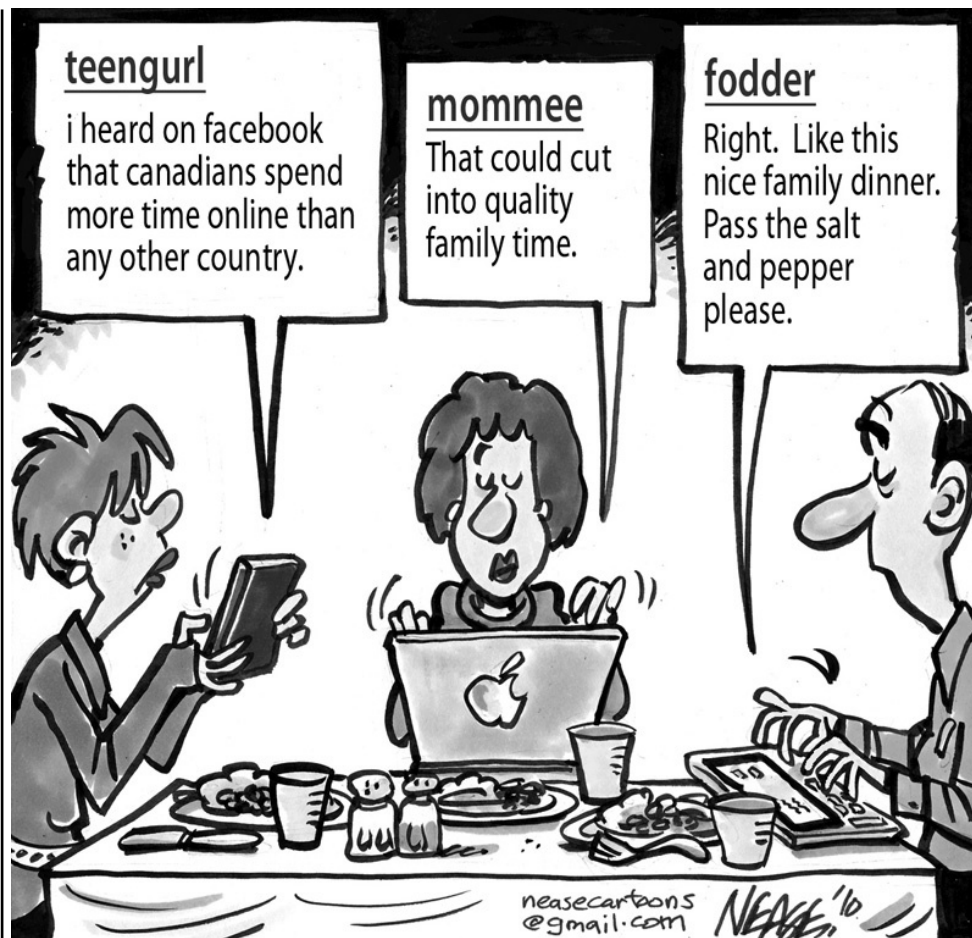
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### WEB POLL RESULTS

Halton Police are seeking a 6.9 per cent increase for its 2011 budget. Is this increase justified?

- Yes... Halton Police are worth every penny (42%)
- No. The increase is too high given the current economy (58%)

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## Letters to the editor

### Town can't afford not to fund hospital

*(This letter was sent to Halton Hills council members. A copy was made available for publication.)*

Dear Members of Town Council,  
 My husband has had cancer for 11 years. We often travel to Brampton and Toronto for treatment. But we have never received such amazing care as we did when he went to the Georgetown Hospital's emergency department.

Two years ago my husband was having severe back pain. (On one occasion) I had to call an ambulance because he could not move his legs. They took us to Georgetown. We were seen right away and sent to Oakville for a CT.

This was a very difficult journey for my husband. Imagine for a moment that you lost the feeling in your legs and were told you had to travel to another hospital to get a test and then come back to get the results. The results were that he had a tumour compressing his spine. He did get treatment and regained the feeling in his legs. I will be forever grateful for all they did for my husband.

I know that some people feel we cannot afford this (money for a hospital expansion) right now but my question is can we afford not to?

That day that he needed that scan probably cost the hospital more than if they had a scanner already. Who paid for the ambulance there and back? The wheelchair that he had to use to get around Oakville hospital? The hospital did. I do know that an ambulance trip can cost between \$100-\$150 one way.

I hope that you can see how important this is for this community and give the hospital the money it needs because you never know when it will be you who needs it.

Jennifer Gerrard, Acton

### \$4.5M is not modest

Dear editor,  
 According to our hospital CEO, John Oliver, \$4.5 million is a modest amount.

That is easy to say for a hospital CEO.

Unfortunately, most Halton Hills taxpayers don't have the luxury of incomes up to 10 times that of a hospital CEO.

Also, what does Oliver mean by

"It is not my hospital"?

Is his maybe a private one in the U.S.?

Marinus (Rein) Pater, Georgetown

### It's a matter of time

Dear editor,

Here are just a few comments that came to mind when I read the first few paragraphs of your Dec. 30 editorial.

Y2K was the year 2000 when computers were expected to have problems with the date in their systems, but it was much less serious than first thought. The start of year 2000 was 11 years ago and not 10 as stated.

The start of the year 2000 was also celebrated as the start of the 21st Century but that was a mistake. The very first year was year one. Two thousand years will not have passed until the end of the year 2000, so the first year of the 21st Century is really 2001.

While in this frame of mind, there is no such thing as 12 a.m. The a.m. is an abbreviation of the Latin words meaning "before midday". Midday is neither before nor after midday. Similarly, p.m. means after midday and 12 p.m. is midnight.

J. M. Graham-Smith,  
 Georgetown