

# CANADA AT WAR

## How the war is affecting Halton Hills

The Persian Gulf War may be on the other side of the world, but businesses, organizations and individuals in Halton Hills are reacting:

The Paper Factory which serves north Halton has sent big yellow bows to every school in the area as a morale boosting gesture for the civilians back home. The yellow bows are important symbols of peace and honor our service men and women.

At Halton Cable Systems, the war is causing the company to break the law. According to John Ollivier, marketing manager, cable companies are required by law to substitute Canadian stations over top American stations if they are broadcasting the same program. This is called simulcasting substitution. On Wednesday, January 16 when war broke out and people at home were watching the American networks' coverage, they were suddenly watching a "silly" program. Irate subscribers immediately called Halton Cable Systems whose on-call technician pulled the plug on the computer which does the simulcasting automatically.

The local cable company feels access to information about the war is so important, Ollivier said, it has made a decision to suspend all simulcast substitutions for the time being until they can be sure the initial crisis is over.

Also at Halton Cable, Ollivier said there has been some expansion in the sales of their Value Pack which contains the heralded cable news station, CNN. Ollivier says 86 per cent of subscribers have that service now, but of the 14 % who don't, the cable station is seeing some increase in the additional requests for service.

The habits of Halton Hills residents have also changed — more people are spending time reading about the war. The Toronto Star reports a significant increase in the number of newspapers sold daily. According to figures compiled by John Brooks, director of communications, day one of the war saw a 10 to 15 per cent increase in papers sold. While Friday's numbers tailed off slightly, and Saturday's press run is predetermined by the television insert, The Sunday Star maintained the 10-11 % rate increase. Monday's dropped slightly to 8-9 %.

On average The Star has maintained an increase of 10 per cent in the number of papers sold since the start of the war, although Brooks indicated that may be softening a bit. He added, however, that as each event occurs, it could drive up sales again. For instance, he didn't know yet what impact the missile strike on Tel Aviv had — expecting that sales will again climb to their 10 % level.

Meanwhile the Canadian Red Cross has launched a \$1 million fund-raising campaign to finance humanitarian activities in the Persian Gulf. Donations can be made to the Georgetown branch at P.O. Box 106, Georgetown, L7G 4T1. Bernice Gibbs, branch manager says write the cheque out to the Georgetown and District Branch and make a note on the bottom that it's for the Persian Gulf Appeal. Gibbs will send a receipt out immediately.

One hundred per cent of the donations will be sent to the International Red Cross which has intensified activities in the area since August by establishing refugee camps. The funds will also be used to buy medicine food and shelter for victims of the war.

The Canadian Red Cross role also includes providing blood at the request of the Canadian Forces, expanding its tracing and reunion ser-

VICES, and supplying personnel to work with the International Red Cross.

The local Halton Hills branch will also be setting up displays around town, most likely in the library or in store windows in prominent areas.

The public school board has discouraged debate on the topic of the Gulf War and Canada's involvement. Bryn Davies, principal of Georgetown District High School said, "We're not dealing with abstracts, we're dealing with real people and real lives. Debate could create a climate of conflict with the school and I don't think we want to escalate that."

The day after the war started the school extended its opening exercises. One teacher briefly outlined the events leading up to the war, while the head of the English department read some poetry related to peace. Students interested in talking about it more were invited to the cafeteria after school, but only two students showed up.

At McKenzie-Smith School in Acton, the war has hit home with Principal Al Zanatta. In September Zanatta had returned from teaching children of military personnel in

Germany for three years. "I was closely associated with staff, parents and kids of people affected by the war," he said. "Sometimes I wish I could be there to support them, but on the other hand, I'm relieved I don't have to deal with the stress of the situation." He said he knows security at his former school has been stepped up, since it is considered a terrorist target.

Students at McKenzie Smith don't seem to be distressed by the war, said Zanatta. Staff however, as are other public school staffs are following the guidelines on crisis management by allowing students to express their fears and listen carefully.

At St. Joseph's Catholic School in Acton, students are encouraged to pray that things go well, and there is a special quiet prayer corner that children can go to, said Principal Carolyn Hilton. While no school-wide activities are planned because of the different age groups attending the school, classroom teachers are encouraging discussion and sensitive response to any opinions. As well the school is relating the war to the religion curriculum such as decision-making and the sacred-

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### MP to hold meetings on Persian Gulf War

Halton-Peel MP Garth Turner will hold special town hall meetings in Georgetown and Acton and discussion will centre on the Persian Gulf War.

The MPP wants to give people a chance to air their views on a number of issues, including Canada's involvement in the war now raging in the Gulf.

"It has been more than 40 years since Canadian troops went into battle," Turner said. "We are not a war-like country, but we do have a tradition of supporting freedom and taking on those who threaten it."

"I want to give everyone an opportunity to voice their concerns or their support on this important issue. Of course, as with all my meetings, people are free to discuss anything else as well."

The town hall meetings will be held in Acton on Wednesday, Jan. 30 at Trinity United Church, 70 Mill St., E. at 7:30 p.m. and in Georgetown on Thursday, January 31 at Georgetown Lions Hall, 42 Mill St. (behind Memorial Arena) at 7:30 p.m.

### What to tell your kids

By JANET BAINE

If kids ask about the war in the Persian Gulf, parents shouldn't dismiss the topic by saying don't worry about it.

That's a response which would have been widely accepted a generation ago, but not anymore.

"What we tend to do with children is say don't pay any attention, don't worry, it doesn't concern you," said Geoff Sansom, a teacher at Acton High School with a background in psychological counselling. Sansom is giving a series of presentations on parenting at the school this year.

Young children may not ask directly about the war, but they may give some hints that they are concerned about it: they may dream about bombing, or show unusual interest in the television news.

"If parents pick up on those cues, they can deal not with the politics of the situation, not with who is wrong and who is right, but with personal safety: what does this mean to the kid," he said.

Children will want to know if the war will come to Canada, if they will be affected, if their father will have to go to fight.

"It might be useful to pull out an atlas and show them where (Iraq) is," he said.

"The tendency would be not to (explain how the war got started or why) unless the child wants to know," he said. "It's like telling children about sex. Answer the questions the kid is asking, but don't go further than that, because

what they ask is what they are ready to learn."

If children wonder about their own safety and have heard about terrorist acts, tell them a terrorist isn't interested in coming up to Acton, but is interested in more important places, he said.

"Listen to the kids and take them seriously. Make sure you answer their worries," he said.

Teenagers who want to talk about the war should also be listened to. Sansom recalls a recent case where a father in India killed his son when they disagreed about the war.


"There can be grounds for pretty strong feelings," he said. "Young people may be involved with peace rallies. Parents may feel Canada is justified in joining the war. With teens, respect differences of opinion. That's number one."

While Sansom noted that students at Acton High School have a variety of opinions about the war: some think it is right to go to war, while others disagree.

"I wouldn't be surprised if what's going to happen with this war is everybody will get used to it," he said. "We've heard a lot of speculative information because of a news blackout on both sides. People will get used to it, it will become part of the general hub-

That will change when there is another major development, such as ground troops becoming involved, he said.

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