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SATURDAY MAY 11, 1991

A Metroland Community Newspaper Serving all Halton Hills and District 32 PAGES /50 CENTS +G.S.T.



VOLUME 7 -- NO. 5

Willow Park family pleads for eviction stay

By JANET BAINE

Somehow Bernadene Kavanagh can muster a smile from the picket line, in spite her many troubles.

Kavanagh lives in Willow Park, on land which has been expropriated by the Credit Valley Conservation Authority. All 20 families living there have been told they have to leave their homes this Wednesday, but they've got no place to go. They began picketing the CVCA on Wednesday, hoping it will find another piece of land where the trailers can be parked.

To complicate matters the Kavanagh's son Alex, 6, has leukemia and is recovering from chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant. His health is still very fragile and coming into contact with even a cold virus could send him back to the hospital.

"There's no remission for this disease. The only known cure is a bone marrow transplant, and that can be worse than the leukemia," Kavanagh said.

Alex's sister Paula, 5, was the donor, but since her bone marrow wasn't a perfect match, his body is rejecting it. Without the operation, his own bone marrow would have slowly poisoned him, she said.

"We can't just move into a hotel or public housing," Kavanagh said. Alex can't stay in an apartment, because there would be too many germs, and the family can't afford to rent a house. Alex can't go to birthday parties or anywhere he may come into contact with other people — tutors come to his home,

since he can't go to school.

"We would like to stay at this point, or move somewhere that's safe for Alex," Kavanagh said. But she knows of nowhere else that is affordable and safe for Alex. Kavanagh said she doesn't want her family to be given a special extension because of her son's fragile

health.

"We're all fighting for our home. Even without him being sick, we wouldn't be able to afford to leave," she said.

The Kavanaghs didn't bring their predicament to the attention of the Credit Valley Conservation Authority which is expropriating

the land their trailer is on.

"We preferred to keep it a secret. It was nothing to be ashamed of, but we were trying to keep things as normal as possible for Alex," Kavanagh said. Now that May 15 is upon them, they felt they had no choice but to make their predicament known.

Rob Peace, the community relations officer with CVCA, said he found out about it after an article appeared in a Toronto newspaper Wednesday. Peace said the Kavanagh's situation will be discussed at a meeting Friday.

"What's going to happen is her case will be raised at the executive meeting. But if an extension is granted, it'll be only for her (family) and not anyone else," Peace said. The general manager of the CVCA, Vicki Barron, met with Kavanagh last Wednesday.

In any case the CVCA is not going to move in Wednesday and tell the people living in the trailer park they have to leave immediately, Peace said. The CVCA will get a court order to get them off the land, and this will likely be appealed by Willow Park residents. The matter will then go through the legal system, and this could take a long time, he said.

"It's not a faceless government agency evicting helpless people," Peace said. "It's strictly a safety issue. It's a yearly event that there is a high risk to people's lives because the land could be flooded."

Families living in the trailer park were first told about the expropriation in 1988, and they have been negotiating over the evacuation date ever since, Peace said.

The Kavanaghs say they're not going to give up the fight for their home. Paul was laid-off from his job at Cobra Manufacturing in January, and he doesn't think there's any chance he'll be called back to work. They can't afford to move to a rented house, since they still pay a monthly \$575 mortgage, even though their trailer is virtually worthless without a place to park it.

The Kavanaghs paid \$21,500 for their trailer five years ago, and the CVCA has given them \$6,200 to cover improvements to the land and moving costs. They say that's not nearly enough. One man who moved from the park had to pay \$8,000 to move his trailer to the nearest trailer park in Woodstock, and ended up paying an additional \$5,000 to repair damage, Paul said.

But the Kavanaghs are also fighting for their community, since trailer park residents are close-knit, like family. They want an alternative place to park their trailers and hope the town and CVCA will find one.

"I want to stay in my home. If you take our place away, give us a place to go," Kavanagh said.



The Kavanaghs hope that somehow they'll be able to stay in their small trailer at Willow Park in Norval in spite of an eviction notice. From left are Paula, 5, Bernadene, Alex, 6, and Paul. Joey, 4, sits in the front.

Regional councillors hopping mad over NDP budget

By STUART JOHNSTON

The new NDP Ontario budget is "insulting" to municipalities, and will only increase taxes in the years to come, Regional councillors said Wednesday.

"This budget is insulting to all of the municipalities that have worked so hard this year to (keep taxes down) in these economic times," Oakville councillor Janet Mitchell said.

Councillors were responding to treasurer Joe Rinaldo's report on the new budget, which attempts to analyze its impact on Halton Region.

Rinaldo believes that, while "it is difficult to assess the impact of many of the new expenditures" right now, the bottom line is

municipalities will be stuck with the bill eventually.

"An additional concern centres on how Provincial-Municipal relations will be affected given Ontario's growing deficit problems and reduced assistance from the Federal government," Rinaldo's report concluded. "This could have implications for cost-sharing program as 'the buck gets passed' downwards to municipalities."

In addition, the immediate 1.7 cent fuel tax, along with an equivalent tax hike next January, will increase Halton's vehicle expenditures by \$20,000 this year, and \$70,000 in 1992, according to Rinaldo.

That had some councillors hopping mad Wednesday.

"They are putting the respon-

sibility of the deficit on the next generation," Burlington councillor Rob Forbes said. "Obviously, the answer is pay as we go. It is absolutely clear that the deficit will continue in perpetuity, which means my children will be paying for my excess."

"Somewhere down the road someone has got to control the deficit and they won't be able to. Municipalities will get the brunt of it...it will force them to increase taxes."

Oakville councillor Kevin Flynn agreed, but cautioned his colleagues that it would be wise to tell the Province exactly what Halton's concerns are, instead of just being angry.

"We all talk of our own ratepayers, and how they want us to keep taxes

down by cutting programs, and we ask how shall we do it?" he said. "Now we find ourselves on the other side of the coin...Don't just run off at the mouth, tell the (Province) what you want cut."

Ontario treasurer Floyd Laughren announced the first NDP budget on April 29, which will increase the province's deficit to a record \$9.7 billion.

Laughren defended his budget as one which combats the recession by such things as pouring money into job creation programs and welfare reform. Laughren claimed his plan will reduce the deficit to \$7.8 billion by 1994-95.

The NDP government inherited a deficit of \$2.5 billion from David Peterson's Liberals.

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