



Mayor Russ Miller received a pair of tickets to the Jan. 23 benefit performance of Opera Comique by Georgetown Little Theatre as a special invitation to the show from Diane Aplin (left) treasurer, and Gail Cartwright, Co-ordinator of the Georgetown Parent-Child Centre. The benefit performance is in aid of the Georgetown Parent-Child Centre, who will be hosting a cast party

open to the public following the play. Tickets to the party are \$10, and are available at the centre on Mountainview Road S. (St. Andrew's Church) or at M.V.P. Distributors, downtown and the Delrex Smoke Shop in Georgetown Market Place. All proceeds are going to help the Georgetown Parent-Child Centre continue present programs.

25 percent more claiming welfare

By ROB KELLY

Welfare rolls in Halton are getting longer.

Monday, Halton regional social services commissioner Bonnie Ewart tendered a report estimating that there will be 25 per cent more welfare claims overall in 1992 than there were in 1991. Those claims are expected to cost about \$26 million, up from almost \$20 million in 1991.

Halton pays 20 per cent of that cost — the provincial government picks up the rest. But even so, regional taxpayers will have to come up with almost \$1 million more in 1992 than in 1991 if the estimates prove accurate.

The local welfare bill will jump to \$3.5 million, up 35 per cent from the initial 1991 budget of \$2.6 million. That forecast itself proved to be \$740,000 short of the roughly \$3.3 million taxpayers paid last year.

Janet Menard, Halton's director of income maintenance told Halton's health and social services committee that the number of welfare cases swelled by 71 per cent in 1991 over 1990. While regional officials had projected a caseload of 2,850 for the last month of 1991, "it looks like it was probably closer to 3,000," she said Monday.

"We've seen a phenomenal growth in the number of cases we're dealing with. In 1991, the number of cases "surpassed even the highest prediction."

The report, presented by Ewart and Menard, while forecasting a slowing in the upward spiral of welfare costs, offered little else in the way of positive news. They cautioned that "there does not appear" to be any circumstances "in the foreseeable future" that will lessen pressures on the welfare system.

Other points in the report:

* Last year, 55 per cent of the

people on welfare were considered employable — able and willing to work but unable to find jobs. That ratio has risen to 65 per cent.

(Rob Kelly is news editor of our sister publication, *The Milton Champion*.)

Renewed call for fraud investigator

By ROB KELLY

Escalating welfare costs has prompted Burlington regional councillor Doug Greenaway to renew his call for a welfare fraud claims investigator in Halton.

But Halton's social services commissioner Bonnie Ewart says hiring people to manage the soaring number of welfare cases is a more pressing need. At the end of December there were 3,000 families on Halton's welfare rolls

Having an investigator is "important" she said, but what "has to be in place first" is an adequate number of caseworkers to process and monitor welfare claims.

Ewart said one method of cost control is to make certain claimants are only getting the benefits they are entitled to if they earn income on top of receiving welfare. Caseworkers oversee the income claimants earn to avoid overpaying the welfare recipients, she pointed out.

While statistics show that only 2 per cent of claimants are cheaters, provincial officials told Greenaway the number of abusers is closer to 8 per cent. They stick to the lower figure because they can't prove the higher one.

Regional social services staff will prepare a report for the committee on the pros and cons of hiring an investigator.

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At the Acton Social Services and Information Centre (ASSIC) volunteer reception last Friday, (Jan. 10) volunteers Jane Adshead (left) and Fran Marcoux (right) were served by Linda Russell of ASSIC. The reception featured Chinese food in honor of the Chinese New Year.

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Mr. & Mrs. Jack Vermeulen and Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd McIntyre are proud to announce the forthcoming marriage of their children Lori Ann & William Todd on Friday, May 29, 1992 at the Knox Presbyterian Church in Acton