

THE HALTON HILLS WEEKEND

KEN NUGENT
Publisher

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Unbelievable!

Well they did it.

We can't believe it, but they did it.

Halton regional councillors reversed a decision made by their finance committee members last week and gave themselves a pay raise after all.

Not only did the 24 councillors give themselves a raise, retroactive for this year's work, but they departed from usual practice and rewarded themselves with a raise for work they will be doing next year.

Each councillors' job, which is supposed to be a part-time one, costs taxpayers \$18,337 annually. The pay hike is retroactively increased from Dec. 1, 1991 by \$183 a year, and again by another \$185 beginning this December. Regional chairman Pete Pomeroy sees his full-time salary rise by \$698 and \$705, respectively, bringing his total to \$71,226 annually.

The one per cent raise may not seem much to quibble about, but given the current economic conditions, given these same councillors have approved market value assessment which will create financial hardship for many people here, and given they approved a raise for themselves with our taxpayers' money, surely they could have made a statement to their public by forgoing a pay raise.

We suppose we should be grateful that it's only one per cent — they could have voted for 5.26 per cent and 2.5 per cent hike for '92 and '93.

Nevertheless, we agree with regional chairman Pete Pomeroy who last week said "I don't think an increase this year is appropriate ... I can't personally accept an increase." Let's hope he means it.

As for the councillors, Halton Hills' Rick Bonnette and Pam Johnston voted against the pay raise — Mayor Russ Miller, and councillors Bill Robson and Marilyn Serjeantson voted for the raise. At budget time, when these three say there's no money in the budget, we'll know one reason why.

Assess the impact of MVA

Dear editor:

I am concerned about the impact of market value assessment on Halton Hills and had called the assessment office before reading your article in the Nov. 8 Weekend.

Let me say at the outset that as a longtime resident and homeowner in Georgetown, I expect and indeed want to pay my fair share of property taxes. There are, however, some areas of concern.

It has already been stated and I endorse the opinion that the current recessionary period is the wrong time to introduce a change which will, it appears, result in tax increases and attendant hardship for a large number of ratepayers.

Likewise, the base year of 1988, when local property values were at the highest level ever experienced, hardly seems to be a fair basis on which to arrive at an assessment which is being promoted as a way to arrive at "fair" taxes.

I am also concerned that the

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new assessment which appears on 1993 tax bills will be arrived at by some system of "number crunching" which means that if there were inequities in the previous assessment there could well be equal, or even greater inequities in future assessments.

Calling the assessment office is an essential start but does not, of course, provide the answer to what the final tax bill will be. This must await local, regional and board of education budgets.

In my own case, the figure provided by the assessment office represented an increase of 9.58 per cent. Based on this, an increase in actual taxes of more than 10 per cent would seem likely.

As a senior I am keenly aware of the circumstances of many seniors

who have received minimal increases in old age security in the past year, experienced a reduction in Ontario property tax grant from \$600 to \$450 and are now faced with a potential and more than likely significant tax increase. There is no doubt that for some this will result in real hardship.

There must be many others in the community whose financial circumstances are marginal and who will have great difficulty in meeting increased taxes at this time.

There remains the question of impact on local businesses. This I must leave to the local business community to address. Let me just say that any large increase in taxes hardly seems the way to keep current businesses healthy or to attract new business and industry to Halton Hills.

In conclusion, if market value assessment is to be introduced let us at least consider phasing it in over a period of years and using a more realistic year than 1988 as the base year. Hopefully this would serve to lessen the impact and give the economy time to improve.

Sincerely,
Ernest Ball



The Arts and Crafts of Georgetown are much more than they seem

From time to time, I think we all tend to take some things for granted — I know I have.

And just last month, I became better informed about a group who have been active for 50 years, almost right under my nose.

Members of the Arts and Crafts of Georgetown held their 50th annual craft sale and exhibition last month, at St. George's Church Hall, in Georgetown. Prior to the sale, I chatted with their president, Pat Beer.

When I dropped by to talk about the Arts and Crafts of Georgetown, I learned one of the group's organizers was Pat's mother-in-law, Mrs. Lydia Beer, who lived right down the road from me.

A further investigation of the first minutes of that organizational meeting in August of 1942 recorded many names familiar to me even though it happened nearly a decade before I was a twinkle in my parents' eyes.

The minute book was fascinating, and Pat allowed me, (with threats within an inch of my life

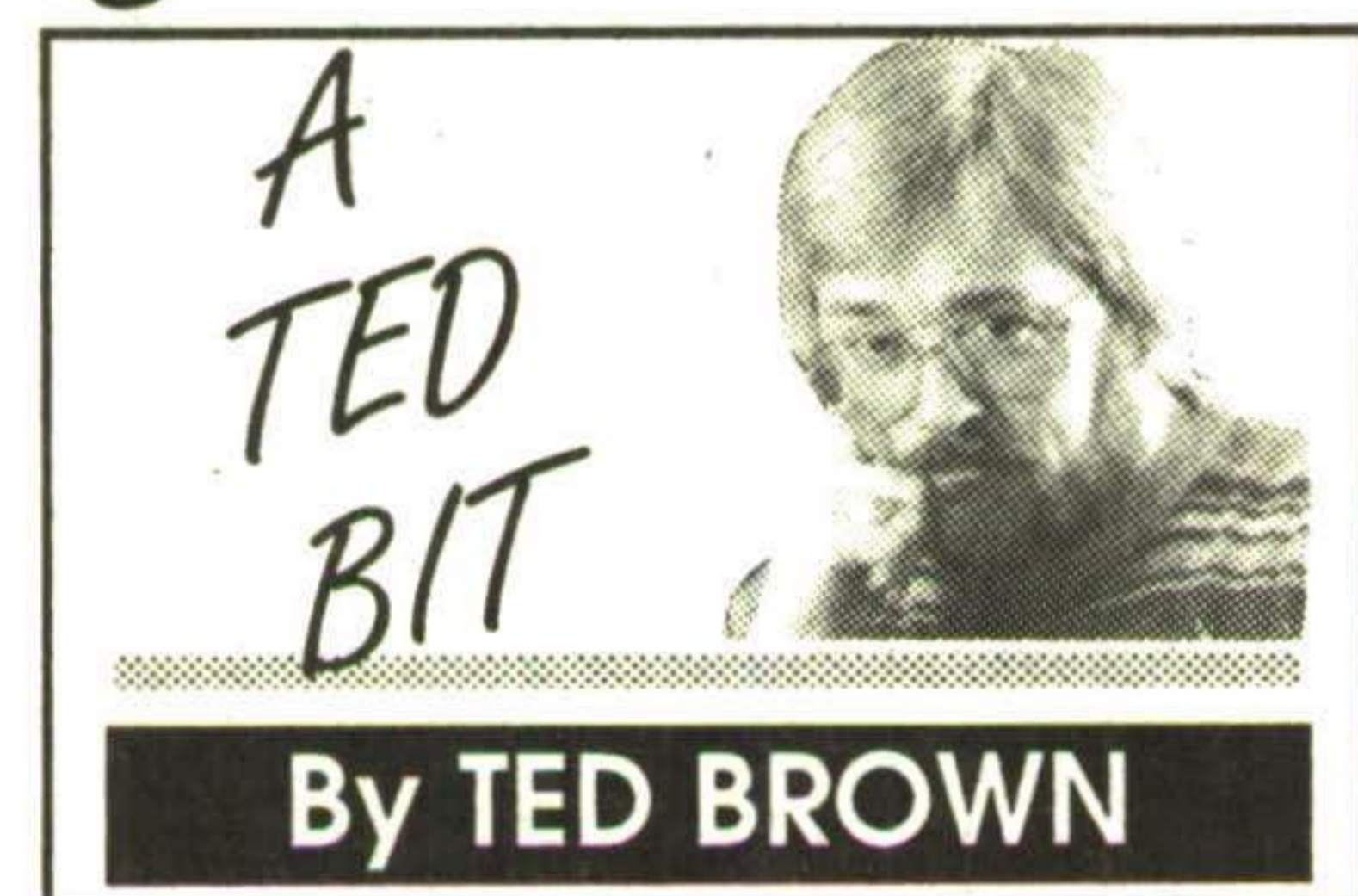
should something happen to it) to borrow the book, and read the minutes of the group's first years.

The first entry said it all; "A meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Moyer in August 1942 for the purpose of discussing and planning an Arts and Crafts Guild in Georgetown. This guild could include as members, anyone from the neighbouring locality willing to help its promotion."

These ladies certainly had a definite purpose, of that I am certain. It continued:

"The purpose being to revive and encourage interest in handiwork, especially necessary in our present time when much of the materials formerly enjoyed are separated from us due to conditions caused by the world war. Therefore, the advancement of creative arts should serve as part of our war effort and be a stimulant to the cultural interest of our community as well."

With that beautiful, verbose paragraph, their aims were lofty yet admirable, and the groundwork



for the group was established during that meeting, with Mrs. Moyer elected as first president and Mrs. Bruyns of Georgetown, and featured crafts from 10 members.

The efforts of the ladies continued to feed their enthusiasm, who by this time, had the honor of being reviewed in the Toronto Telegram.

The Telegram praised their efforts for promoting crafts in aid of soldiers, sailors and airmen, and probably gave them the impetus to continue with their labor of love, long after the shortages of wool and crafts materials had disappeared with the end of the war.

Through the old minute book, I learned members took an interest in teaching each other new crafts and started inviting guest speakers to the meetings, to further a craft or help members with problems.

It was two years later, the Arts and Crafts of Georgetown had their first display at Georgetown Fair in 1944, and have contributed ever since. They later exhibited and demonstrated at the CNE, the Royal Winter Fair, and had dis-

plays at the Toronto Art Gallery.

Later, they sponsored the promotion of crafts in schools donating time and energy, teaching young people as they honed their creativity. In 1953, they were responsible for organizing the first night school programs in Georgetown, and later commissioned and donated the metal gates at Georgetown Hospital as a 1967 Centennial project.

And much, much more. Perhaps I'm a little thick, but I didn't know of any of these facts. I thought the Arts and Crafts of Georgetown was simply a handful of artistic people who put together a craft sale every fall - nothing more.

But I was dead wrong.

The faithful group still meets every other month, at members' homes, with a social hour afterwards. And they still insist all members contribute a craft as they continue "to revive and encourage interest in handiwork." Just as their mentors did 50 years ago.