

# THE HALTON HILLS WEEKEND

**KEN NUGENT**  
Publisher

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## New rules for Halton chairman needed

Dear editor:

Every three years now, a new regional council chooses a regional chairman. The practice in Halton, as in most regions, is that the council chooses a chair, almost always from among its own membership.

The chairman is not elected by the ratepayers and has no direct accountability to them. Rather, he or she is the "servant" of the council. The chair's responsibilities are laid out in little detail. He chairs the regional council meetings and is a member of all the standing committees, the only non-staff person to serve on more than one committee. He insures that full information on various issues is available to the councillors so that they may make the wisest possible decisions. The responsible decision makers, the men and women in charge, are the elected councillors.

The chair, then, is accountable to the elected councillors whom he serves. Unfortunately, here in Halton and in most regions, not even a minimum structure has been put in place to direct the ser-

## Letters

to the Editor

vant, to monitor his work, or to hold him accountable.

Looking ahead, the servant of the council, must be effectively supervised and must be accountable. The regional council here meets formally about 20 times each year and each meeting is preceded by committee meetings in the previous week. Individual councillors work with the chair no more than one-half day per week or for 10 per cent of the chair's work week. Councillors are hard pressed to explain how the full-time chair serves them for the remaining 90 per cent of the week.

This situation becomes more untenable when an individual serves in the chair for a long period. New councillors forget or never

realize that the chair is their servant and not their master. And, the chair may assume roles without direction. A time-limited tenure for any chair of six years or two terms, let us say, would strengthen the role of elected councillors and encourage their proper function.

In the long term, regional councillors must find a way to direct their servant, and to supervise him or her. The Region of Halton Act permits the regional council to establish a Board of Control, not a popular term, but perhaps a necessary body by whatever name. A proposal along these lines to regional council was rejected in 1988 and again in 1991. Present councillors or their successors may now be willing to reconsider.

If ratepayers will take some greater interest in a rather distant regional government, and ask the right questions of prospective councillors, it may be possible to improve this level of local government.

John K. Graham

## Only one choice for Quebecers

Quebec voters will go to the polls September 12 to "choose their destiny," according to Premier Daniel Johnson.

He is not understating the case.

The future of Canada, as we know it, could very well be at state in this election, arguably the most important provincial election in Canadian history.

Quebec voters have a very difficult choice to make. On the one hand they have Johnson and his Liberal party — one that has done little to take concrete measures to improve the economy in this recession-ravaged province.

And then there is the alternative: Jacques Parizeau and the Parti Quebecois whose stated goal is to see Quebec become a sovereign nation.

While this is not a referendum, this election will be viewed that way by many. To re-elect the Liberals would be a blow to the separatists; to support the PQ would be the next step towards sovereignty.

Quebec voters are in the unenviable position of choosing between the devil they know (the Liberals) and the devil they don't know (the PQ).

And that is really no choice at all.



## Dauntless mice and spiders invade newspaper office

We're starting to get on a first name basis with the spiders and snakes around here.

And with the mice, and the june bugs, and the crickets, and the centipedes and ....

This office is crawling with wildlife.

We enjoy our location here on Armstrong Ave. when deer have lazily wandered past our back windows; we have also spotted fox, coyote, and I swear one winter's eve I saw a rare lynx. The bird life here too is amazing. Looking through the windows we have seen hundreds of different birds, my favorites being the eagles and a Great Blue Heron, I believe,

soaring in the ravine above the Credit River.

But all of them were outside in the wilds of nature — where they belong. Not in the office where humans should rule.

But these dumb spiders and mice don't seem to know that. I don't know how many times, spiders have chosen to drop on my head or scurry up my legs as I edit copy. Or how many times I have had to coolly and professionally as I can pull myself on top of a desk when a mouse decides to make his presence felt.

Now there are a few nice souls — one recently allowed a cricket to crawl along his arm as he carried it out of the building, and



out of harm's way — my foot. Another, we call her the snake expert, picked up a snake and carried it to a new home across the road. I myself have waited patiently outside the employees entrance in the parking lot until a garter snake decided he would find his breakfast elsewhere. We had quite a conversation going for awhile. Mine admittedly rather agitated; his very calm.

Now I personally have nothing against these little critters finding refuge in our office as long as they stay away from my cubbyhole. But frankly after a winter and spring of sidestepping daddy long legs, examining your chair for mouse droppings and peering cautiously in the women's washroom for snakes, I'm tired of sharing space with these creatures. They've got to go.

One of my co-workers in our office agrees. She, in particular, seems to be targeted by the gay little brown rodents. One even ate through a foil wrapping to eat her granola bar.

I personally think it's because of her cat calen-

dar. These mice party on her desk all night, taunting the one-dimensional cat that won't move.

Now what we need is a real cat.

Yeah Felix would fix these insolent creatures. A daring-do cat would snare the mice, stalk the snakes and squash the spiders. But alas the security system would be set off each time Felix moved.

So we are forced to resort to other measures; such as the mouse trap — we let Ted take the dead mice out; and sweeping the spiders and bugs out the door, and finding new homes for any snakes that slither in...

Aw heck, forget security. Anybody got a cat?