

# TOWN DIGEST

## LYME DISEASE RISK?

With experts trying to agree on an appropriate test for Lyme Disease, Halton's Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Bob Nosal, is "confident" existing testing and surveillance will allow Halton to diagnose any cases in the Region.

Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette asked why Lyme Disease is not one of the 10 that Halton tracks and compares in an annual infectious disease report that was discussed at last Tuesday's Halton Health and Social Services committee. "I know of three (affected) families in Halton Hills and one in Milton," Bonnette said, noting that was over a four or five year period, and asking if the province has acknowledged it is a growing problem.

Dr. Nosal said Halton is not endemic for Lyme Disease and there are controversies about the appropriate testing in the USA where some private companies appear to be over diagnosing. He said with one, two or three cases of Lyme Disease diagnosed in Halton annually, it is an issue they are watching closely, especially due to climate change which could allow required conditions for the disease to flourish.

The report showed that last year, 1,765 cases of reportable infectious diseases were reported to Halton, a one per cent decrease over 2011, mainly due to a drop in the number of cases of Chlamydia, which at 754 cases leads the list and was still above the provincial average last year.

Influenza was the next reported disease, following by two intestinal infections, Hepatitis C, gonorrhoea and West Nile virus.

## GRAVEL APPEAL CASH

The Town will kick-in \$5,000 to help Caledon's fight against gravel pit appeals of municipal property taxes. With support from the Ontario Stone, Sand and Gravel Association, gravel pit properties across the province have appealed their property assessments for tax years ranging from 2006 to 2012. Halton Hills finance staff said a successful appeal would represent a "dramatic decrease" in future property tax revenue, as well as large one-time refunds for previous years' taxes.

The Town has 13 gravel pits and three are part of the province-wide appeals including St. Mary's Cement on the Fifth Line, and two Bot-Dufferin Resources Inc. pits, both on the Fourth Line. Bonnette said the Ontario Stone, Sand and Gravel Association has "tonnes" of money to spend on the appeal process.

Caledon will spend \$200,000 to defend the gravel pit appeals, and through the Greater Toronto Countryside Mayors Alliance is asking for cash to help fight the appeals at the Assessment Review Board.



**KNOX ARTIST SUPPORT:** Three young artists were recently awarded monetary gifts from the donations made to the assistance fund at the local artist benefit concert at Acton's Knox Presbyterian Church. Cassie Coker (left) has been accepted at Sheffield University in England for her third year of musical studies. Dakota Leopard (centre) is a portrait artist and Melissa Benham is a landscape painter and designer, and both plan to further their educations in these fields. — George Henderson photo

## SURPLUS DISPERSED

More than one-third of the Town's \$811,126 surplus from last year – minus \$31,100 carried forward to this year's budget – has been transferred into a new OMB (Ontario Municipal Board) Hearing Reserve to help defend Town planning decisions at future OMB tribunals.

Unspent communications funds totalling \$82,825 that previously were accrued as an operating expense will be transferred to the Capital Reserve. The remaining \$397,201 will be distributed to Capital Reserve (\$258,181), the Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve (\$9,440) and \$59,580 to the Building Repair and Maintenance Reserve.

In a report on the 1012 Town general surplus, Moya Leighton, the Manager of Accounting, said "most departments were under budget."

## FED FUNDS?

The federal government needs to be "at the table" to help alleviate gridlock in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area – a 25-year, \$50-billion provincial plan to improve transit and transportation systems, called The Big Move.

At Council on Monday, Bonnette suggested they amend a resolution drafted two weeks ago that said while

Council endorses The Big Move's initiatives, it is not happy that all-day GO Train service to Georgetown is no longer in the 15-year timeframe, and that the cost of the plan will add \$447 to every residents' tax bill, with no benefit.

Bonnette said the GTA is supposed to be the engine that drives the Canadian economy, and as such, Ottawa needs to "be here to help out." He will also write the Federal Transportation Minister to express Council's concerns with the proposed funding plan to pay for The Big Move, which include a parking levy, gas charge and increased development Charges.

## ARENA EXPANSION CASH

Thanks to a \$200,000 donation from Saputo (formerly Nielsen's) and a \$200,000 donation from Fernbrook Homes, the Halton Hills Arena Users Group is much closer to reaching its \$2-million fundraising goal to expand the Mold-Masters SportsPlex in Georgetown from two ice pads to four.

Wearing hard hats, safety boots and vests during two separate ceremonies at the arena, Town officials gratefully accepted large ceremonial cheques from each company on Monday afternoon. The arena fundraising has raised \$1.4-million to date, or 70 per cent of the goal.

## School Board Director reflects on the school year

The following message was shared with Halton District School Board staff, trustees and parents:

Another school year has drawn to a close and nearly 60,000 students have left our buildings with additional skills and knowledge they did not have just 10 months earlier. Students progressed from recognizing words to reading books, from calculating area to understanding volume, from playing their first notes to a solo performance, and from not knowing what they want to do to adopting a career pathway.

All Halton District School Board staff can truly celebrate the achievements of our students and the role they have played in the process. We acknowledge credit is due to our teachers who work directly with our students, and the support staff who provide the operational structures for our classrooms. The senior administrative team and trustees should also be proud of the learning environment that was supported by our decisions and actions. On behalf of the Board's Senior Administrative team, I would like to thank the Board of Trustees for their collective support and for their focus on student achievement and wellness. We look forward to a restful summer break in preparation for yet another productive year in 2013-14.

## Losing your Grip?



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