



**CORNUCOPIA:** The silent auction, barbecue and corn roast at Limehouse Community Hall on Saturday raised \$3,600 to help maintain and improve the historic building. Volunteers included, from left: Victoria Scott, Katie Schmidt, Kathy Scott and Mackenzie Scott. — Ted Tyler photo

## Free voluntary fire inspections

*Free and voluntary fire safety inspections offered*

Residents of Acton's Lakeview subdivision are invited to take part in a Home Safe Home courtesy fire safety inspection pilot project, sparked by a recent fire in an illegal basement apartment in Georgetown, started by an electrical problem with a marijuana grow op.

In a recent briefing to Town Council, Deputy Fire Chief Harry Olivieri said the \$325,000 fire that injured one person, was harder to fight because of improper construction in the basement, including no fire

separations and under-rated fire doors. "We found that the dwelling was converted without a permit, wasn't registered and had been in existence for approximately 26 years," Olivieri said, adding charges are still being considered.

He said the Home Safe Home program, a voluntary initiative, involves on-duty staff who will go door-to-door providing public education, including supplying landlords with information about rental units, and what they should know about fire prevention. The trial program will be run in selected older areas

— 202 houses in Acton and 263 in Georgetown — to address fire safety issues, and hopefully will be the blueprint for a community-wide program.

Deputy-Chief Olivieri said those areas were selected for the pilot project because they were built in the 1960-1970 era when Building Code legislation was not as strict as today. The Home Safe Home initiative also includes an amnesty program that will waive any permit/application fees associated with voluntarily compliance for two-unit houses. As well, any charges that would normally result from an inspection program under the Ontario Building Code, or municipal legislation,

will be waived, providing the owner complies with all requirements within a specified time. Staff said potential fees to register an illegal basement apartment are \$1,600. Council has \$20,000 earmarked for the program in the Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve.

Deputy-Chief Olivieri said a similar program conducted in Surrey, British Columbia, resulted in a 49 per cent reduction in fires and a decrease in fire dollar loss. He said the courtesy inspection would take approximately 20 minutes, and will begin the week of October 9 to 15 to mark Fire Prevention Week. This year's theme is "It's Fire Prevention Week, Protect Your Family from Fire."

## Town Digest

### Rates and fees report deferred

The local building industry has more time to study proposed changes to the Town's development application fees, including increases which one councillor called "significant." At the request of Regional/Ward Two Councillor Jane Fogal, on behalf of the building industry, Council recently deferred debate on proposed changes until the issue is before the Economic Development committee, and then Council, on October 11 for debate.

"The building industry wants more time," Fogal said, adding the recommendations from the Town's consultant are a "substantial change in philosophy of how we charge these things." She said the issue of competitiveness also comes up, an issue councillors should look at, particularly when it comes to commercial, industrial fees and rates.

As proposed, the cost for final approval of a condominium would jump by 1,749 per cent to \$15,600 from \$843. The proposed fee for a minor revision, or to apply for an extension of a site plan revision would jump by 540 per cent to \$5,400 from \$843. The proposed fee to apply for an extension to a part lot control bylaw would decrease by 46.7 per cent to \$600 from \$1,125. The proposed rate and fee changes are not slated to take effect until January 1.

**No lobbyist registry**  
Halton Hills Council

does not believe it needs a lobbyist registry, which, since 2007, it has been able to initiate under the Municipal Act.

Two years ago, Halton Council asked staff to develop terms of reference for the sub-committee to investigate and report back on lobbyist registry options, and to develop guidelines to provide public transparency and accountability by lobbyists with councillors and staff. Each municipality was also asked to comment on the issue of lobbyists — people who attempt to influence the opinions of actions of elected officials. As envisioned, the lobbyist registry would provide for the recording and regulation of communications between public office holders and those who engage in lobbying activities.

Currently, the City of Toronto is the lone Ontario municipality to have a formal lobbyist registry — Hamilton has had a voluntary registry since 2004. Town staff said since Halton Hills' elected officials and staff have a proven track record of compliance with the Town's Code of Conduct, Procedural Bylaw and Purchasing Bylaw, a registry is not needed, a position supported by Regional/Ward Two Councillor Jane Fogal. She said the issue arose at Halton Council because of a "clash of personalities." "We don't have a problem...we've not had any complaints," Fogal said at a recent Town Council meeting, adding the registry would be unnecessary "window dressing" that might give the public the wrong impression.

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