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Readers' Choice, 20 pages inside

Thursday, January 29, 2015

Halton Hills' award-winning newspaper serving Acton & Georgetown

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Safe and sound

Halton Hills becomes 65th town in Canada to be designated a Safe Community.

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Special guest

The Bishop of Niagara was in Acton on Sunday to officially open St. Alban's Church's new Community Kitchen.

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RONALD STOPS BY FOR A VISIT: Kathleen Dills of the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce joined Ronald McDonald in the Acton Winter Carnival picture frame during the weekend carnival. Ronald McDonald was spending the weekend in Halton Hills, first stopping in at the Georgetown McDonald's on Saturday. See photo on page 19. For more Carnival photos go to page 12.

Photo by Ray Lavender

Judges, lawyers issue warning on Halton's aging court system

By Alyshah Hasham
Special to The IFP

Not enough judges, an overwhelmed staff and two outdated courthouses unable to handle the rapidly growing population of Halton Region may lead to an increase in cases being thrown out for taking too long to get to trial, judges and lawyers are warning.

Ontario Court Justice Alan D. Cooper made his concerns known in a recent ruling dismissing a dangerous driving case after it took nearly two years to reach trial.

"Without an increase in court resources and personnel, more and more cases will likely be the subject of unreasonable delay applications," Cooper wrote in his decision. "The court lists are now becoming clogged due to a growing population and the scarcity of trial time."

Judicial resources are stretched thin, he added, noting that his appointment in 2004 was the last time a judge was added in the region.

Meanwhile, new courthouses have been built in other municipalities, including Kitchener-Waterloo and Oshawa, and a six-floor expansion of the Brampton courthouse was announced earlier this month by the province to meet projected demand in Peel region.

"Halton is becoming one of the lost children of the Ontario judicial system," Cooper wrote. "For some reason, its obvious needs have been overlooked."

In response to a question about whether a new courthouse is being considered for Halton region, spokesperson for the Ministry of the Attorney General Brendan Crawley said: "We recognize that there

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