

EDITORIAL

Readers' writes

Once again we find ourselves with a backlog of letters from our readers. Of particular interest is the following letter from Heinz Dorst to Halton Regional Chairman Peter Pomeroy that was written before Thursday's special council meeting on Market Value Assessment. We believe that Dorst provides some very vivid examples of just how the tax could impact average taxpayers.

Dear Mr. Pomeroy:

As you cast your deciding vote for the MVA, did you give any thought on how this would affect senior citizens of the Region?

To the people who made this country, who worked, sacrificed and saved for the time of retirement. Most of these people invested their lifetimes in a property, to have a place to live on their own.

I was one of these - in 1977 I purchased a place out in the country - North Halton - where I figured I could spend the rest of my life after retirement, surrounded by nature, away from the hassle of city life, in peace and tranquillity, but the way it now looks, it was just a dream which you and some of your fellow Regional Councillors, shattered.

In 1978 my Property Tax was \$640.85. In 1992, fourteen years later, \$2,555.17. This is an increase of 398.71%.

With your approved "fair" MVA, my 1993 basic tax will increase to \$3,185.00 (an additional increase of \$630.00), which makes it more than 497%, not taking into account the possible increases from the Town of Halton Hills or the Region. Where do you think this money will come from?

I am a senior citizen, retired in 1986 and live on Canada Pension and Old Age Security plus a small not indexed Company Pension from the firm I worked for 25 years.

If I want to keep my home, I will have to cut back on food and necessities to be able to pay the "new fair" MVA Tax. I am sure there are many, many seniors who are in the same boat. Following is a small calculation to place emphasis on the situation:

- Nominal Canada Pension and Old Age Security	
Year 1987:	\$11,326.52
- Nominal Canada Pension and Old Age Security	
Year 1991:	\$11,626.17
- Pension Increase:	2.67%
- Property Tax Increase:	44.09%

Can you and your Councillors, in your infinite wisdom, tell me and all seniors how to solve this problem? I am not saying that you designed the MVA, but you did approve its implementation in Halton.

You claim that MVA is a "fair tax system" - I do not agree with this. Where else do you have to pay more for any item or service because of the "maybe value" of your property.

Do you pay more for a loaf of bread or a litre of milk because you drive a more expensive car than I do?

Taxes should be based on service received, not on an assumed value. My property is situated on the Fifth Line, North of Highway 7, which is a gravel road, 90% of the year full of potholes with a few level stretches in between.

I moved here in 1977 and nothing new has been done to date except the occasional grading of the road, which is usually done after a rainfall, which gives a sea of mud for several days.

You cannot compare the value of a rural property with an urban one. The urban property has paved road, sidewalks, water, sewers, streetlights, garbage collection shopping convenience, public transportation, etc.

We do not have any of these services!

Property Tax, to be fair, should be based on service received. The MVA, if implemented, will be a complete rip-off because if you improve the value of your property, you are hit with higher taxes. Should I let my property run down to lower the MVA?

I would appreciate it if you could give me and all the seniors involved an honest answer, but please, no politically correct talk.

Sincerely,
Heinz O. Dorst

Letters Welcomed

Halton Hills This Week welcomes your letters. Letters must be signed and include your full name and address. Names will be withheld on request.

Halton Hills This Week reserves the right to edit, revise, or reject any letters on the basis of factual

errors, punctuation, spelling errors or as a result of space limitations.

Send your letter to:
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Oh Christmas Tree!



The staff at Halton Hills This Week got into the Christmas spirit as they decorated the company's first Christmas tree this week. Here (from left) Teresa Watson, Monica Southton and Wendy Long hang tinsel on the tree.

The memo that caused the storm

Last Friday Halton Region Chairman sent a memo to regional councillors telling them that he wanted the Market Value Assessment discussion reopened. Here in its entirety is that memo.

To: All Members of Regional Council

Re: Market Value Assessment

The purpose of this letter is to inform the Members of Council why I have forwarded a Notice of Motion to Reconsider the Market Value Assessment issue before us on December 2nd.

In September of 1989, Council made a very important decision to ask the Ministry of Revenue to prepare a Market Value Impact Study on a Region-wide basis. In January of this year (1992), the M.V.A. Impact Study was released exposing every property in Halton to its current tax obligations using 1988 Market Values. Simply put, our whole tax revenue base was put at risk if M.V.A. was not implemented. Therefore, in my opinion, the situation left me as the C.E.O. of the Corporation, little option but to support the implementation of Region-wide M.V.A.

I have spent long hours talking to constituents and trying to find common ground that would take into consideration some of the legitimate concerns raised, and still address the outstanding importance of a single mill rate for services

common to all residents of Halton - e.g., Police, Education, General Welfare, Children's Aid Society, Conservation Authorities, etc.

It has not been easy, in fact I cannot remember another time during my municipal experience that a single issue has been so increasingly difficult to deal with. Throughout the discussions, some consistent themes have emerged that I believe are very relevant and worthy of our review. With our current economic conditions and many personal hardships that our residents and businesses are experiencing, the 1993 implementation has been criticized because of its timing. As well, there is a lack of understanding of this issue. Many callers have expressed that this decision to move to Region-wide Market Value Assessment was done without their knowledge and they simply need more time to understand the implications and prepare for them.

Although the special meeting of Regional Council was called to deal with the Treasurer's Phase-in Report, there are now more than fifty registered delegations appearing before Council. These residents anticipate they will have an opportunity to influence a decision on M.V.A. It has been rumored publicly, as a result of recent Council discussion, that the opportunity to reconsider the issue may occur and many of the delegations are coming

forward with this expectation.

On Friday, we received a Resolution that attempts to find some middle ground. I consider the Motion worthy of debate as it addresses some, but certainly not all, of the major concerns raised by our residents.

Therefore, in fairness to all concerned in this extremely difficult issue, I have decided to put forth a Notice of Motion to Reconsider, allowing debate to take place and to see if there is interest in trying to find an alternative and/or compromise position. However, it is very important that we either re-confirm our position of September 23rd or move to another alternative on December 2nd. Anything less would not be acceptable to me.

I do not yet have an opinion on the new Motion, although I believe that it is in the best interest of our community to allow a full debate rather than disallow it for procedural reasons. We owe our residents this further opportunity to express themselves with the knowledge that their input is important to our decision making.

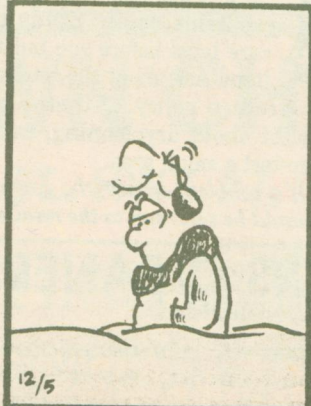
In closing, I have spent many hours wrestling with this issue and I believe that this is the right approach to take.

Sincerely,
Peter D. Pomeroy
Regional Chairman

THIS WEEK

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For Pete's Sake



by Roe