



756 Squadron Royal Canadian Air Cadets of Georgetown will be celebrating their twenty-fifth year in operation in 1993. There is a reunion banquet planned for all former cadets and staff on June 12. Anyone who was a cadet or knows someone who was a cadet of the squadron can contact Capt. Greg Siekierko at 873-6824 for further information regarding the reunion banquet. We would appreciate hearing from anybody pictured in the above picture taken in the early years of the squadron.

Excessive FOI requests anger taxpayers

By Wendy Long

A former Halton Hills woman is crusading for public awareness of what she believes is an abuse of the Freedom of Information (FOI) and Protection of Individual Privacy Act.

In 1991, the Halton Board of Education had the highest number of FOI requests of all school boards in Ontario. There were 79 such requests of the Halton board compared to an average of 1.8 requests at other Ontario boards.

Broken down by area, 97.2 per cent of 1991/92 FOI requests were by Oakville residents, 37 per cent of which dealt with the Oakville Trafalgar High School relocation issue and 33 per cent with the board's now defunct Key Communicator program.

In comparison, Burlington made 1.2 per cent of these requests, North Halton made 0.4 per cent and outside of Halton 1.2 per cent respectively.

The Halton Board of Education estimates that these requests, from 1991 to 1993, have cost taxpayers \$107,500.

It is crucial to point out that in 1992, only 11 people were involved in making 168 requests. This year so far, three people have made 23 requests through FOI.

Brian Woodland, the board's communications officer, stated that

each request requires a minimum of one and a quarter hours to complete based on the specific process that FOI requests must go through. A media released prepared by Woodland and Peter Gnish, executive assistant to the office of the director, explains that in several cases there was no need to use FOI. The information sought would have readily been available through other channels, Woodland said.

Lorie Jocius, now a resident of Guelph, is spearheading the effort to investigate FOI abuse. Jocius is a 43-year-old mother of three who was actively involved in the Nassagaweya community and served on the Milton library board as well as being a Key Communicator.

"I'm asking a question," Jocius said in a telephone interview. "I want to know whether or not we as a society condone misuse of the system...or will it be allowed to be a lobbying tool?"

Jocius is referring to a long drawn out battle between the school board and a group of Oakville citizens who have accused the board of mismanagement and secrecy over a variety of issues.

Central to the FOI requests from

the Oakville residents were two issues: the opposition of the relocation of Oakville Trafalgar High School, and the board's Key Communicator program.

The Key Communicator program was established in 1988 by the board in an effort to facilitate grassroots communication between the community and the board. Certain citizens were asked to volunteer to provide input on board policies, decisions and publications.

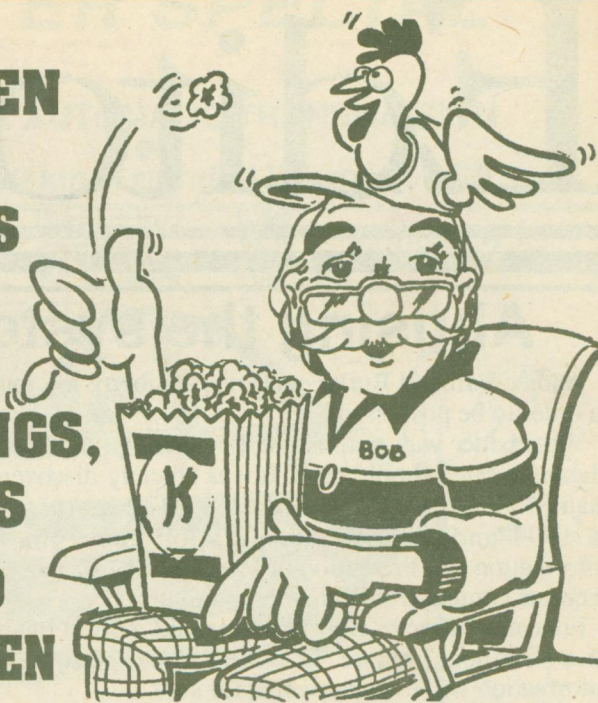
"At that time there was a tremendous flurry of activity in communications," Jocius said. "The board sought to create better access to the public at large, to be accountable to the public...there were all kinds of things occurring to establish a lot more grassroots communication."

Because the program was established before the Freedom of Information Act legislation was implemented in 1989, the Key Communicators were not told that their names would be made public.

When the board would not release the names to a group of special-interest Oakville citizens, a media war erupted in which the Key Communicator program was accused of a myriad of devious

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