

Budget bombshell

By Oksana Buhel

Minutes before Town of Halton Hills Councillors were to approve the 1993 Tax Levy by-law Monday evening, municipal treasurer Ray King announced that further cuts would be necessary.

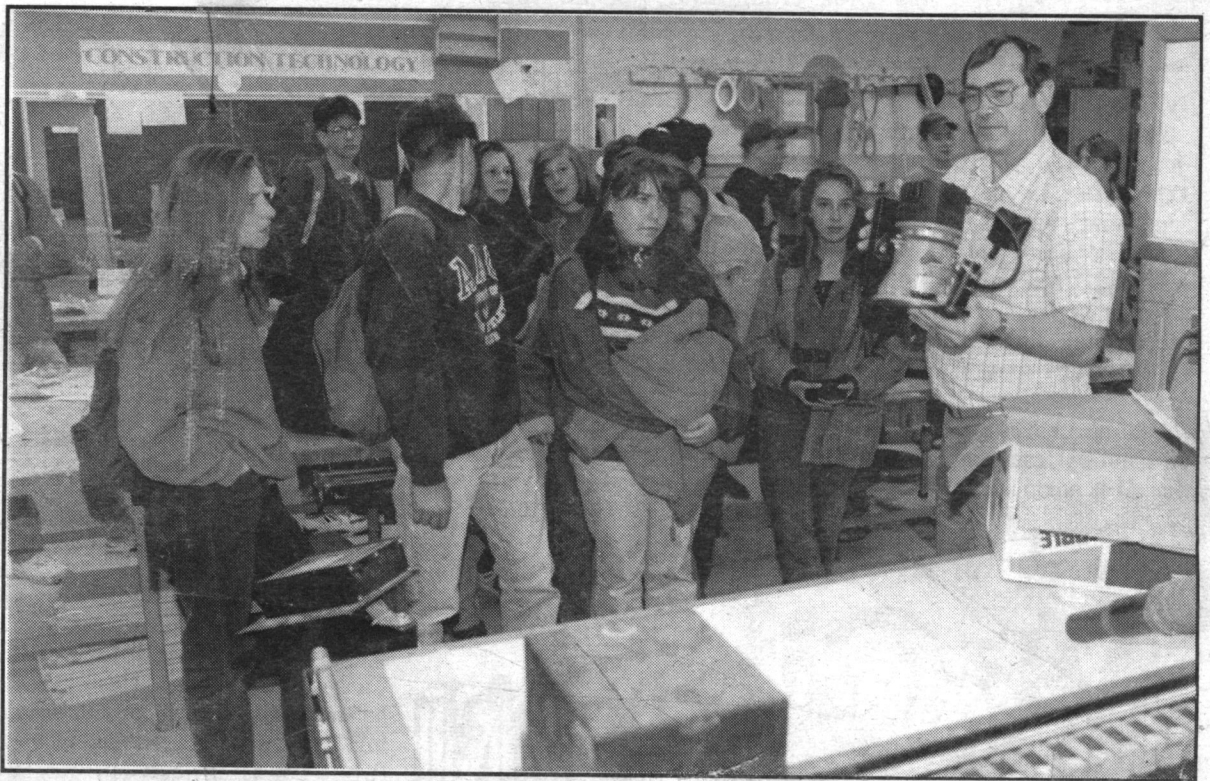
King was notified just that morning that the provincial government would be cutting back unconditional grants by between 2% - 11%. "Speaking with finance members of the government, I think this figure will be close to \$125,000," he said. This is a direct result of the NDP cuts which were announced Friday.

"We have two options now," he continued. "We can go back into the municipal budget and readjust it, or we will have to look elsewhere for the money, which will mean pulling out the fine-toothed comb."

Budget cuts had been discussed by councillors at a general committee meeting March 1, and approved the following week. They were to be approved again Monday night

because the March 8 budget only dealt with town taxes, and not education and regional taxes, which the town also collects.

After much discussion, councillors approved the existing budget, although it may have to be reopened once the provincial government officially informs the town what percentage of grants will be cut. Al Cook, chairman of the municipal budget committee, explained the budget was passed because one of the four tax collection stages is in June. "There's still a lot of work to be done before June, and we can't sit around and wait until the government (provincial) decides to tell us what percentage it plans to cut," Cook explained. "Ray King is in communication with them (provincial finance officials) daily, and he will report to us as soon as he finds something out. And it (the cut in unconditional grants) might not be as bad as we think."



Sixteen students from Madame De Stael College/Lyce, St. Julien en Genevois France, listened intently as Georgetown District High School Technical Department head Dave Lawrence demonstrated equipment Friday. The French students are part of an exchange program. For story, see page 7.

photo by Simon Wilson/HHTW

Halton Hills

THIS WEEK

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Mike Adams means business!

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Leader of the Pack

Melissa Hill plays the part of the young Ellie Greenich in the Acton High School production of the 50's musical, Leader of the Pack. The show starts this Thursday (tomorrow) at Acton High School, starting at 7:30 p.m. See story on page 3. photo by Simon Wilson/HHTW

PCBs coming to Halton Hills

Maple Leaf Foods submitted a letter to the Town of Halton Hills Council requesting permission to transfer PCBs from its registered storage site in Dresden to the one in Acton.

The reason for the transfer is that the Dresden facility is to be donated to the St. Clair Conservation Authority. Janet Lunn-Stewart, municipal clerk, explained the amount was very small, that it would be transported in decommissioned capacitors within a sealed steel drum, and that the procedure is "quite safe." She also informed council their permission is not essential and the real reason for the notice was to "respectfully inform" councillors the toxin will be entering the municipality. "The MOE (Ministry of the Environment) has already authorized the transfer," Lunn-Stewart explained, "and that's all that's required."

The motion was passed, but Councillor Ron Chatten expressed some concern. "I'm a little worried when the ministry needlessly asks for our approval for something like this," he admitted. "I don't want to see this become a habit."

Tax measures OK'd

David Bracken, an independent businessman, approached council to list his concerns about the tax collection methods which were

Council Briefs

described by Grant Usher, municipal deputy treasurer, at the general committee meeting April 19. "I'm just here to ask for a little grace," he insisted. Usher had explained that he would like to be able to enforce a 21 day payment on overdue realty taxes. The issue was reintroduced at Monday's meeting and several councillors joined Bracken in voicing their concerns. Councillor Gail Rutherford wondered if the period could be extended to 45-60 days. Councillor Marilyn Serjeantson asked how the treasury department would deal with partial payments. As a result of the numerous questions, Councillor Rick Bonnette suggested that decisions be deferred for two weeks, during which time the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce and any other members of the public will be allowed to comment. Other council members were opposed to the deferral and demanded that the report be accepted. Councillor Al Cook and Mayor Russ Miller insisted the councillors were "making a mountain out of a mole hill," since the 21-day-period was in the Ontario Municipal Act, and could not be amend by the municipal council. Councillor Norm Elliot stated that the treasury

department should be allowed to continue conducting its business "reasonably and firmly." In a recorded 7-5 vote, the motion was carried to accept Usher's report.

GO not going

Councillor Rick Bonnette announced the Acton stop of the GO train service will be eliminated as a result of the provincial government budget cuts. Acton residents will have to drive to the Georgetown station. Councillor Norm Elliot expressed irritation at the decision. "The government wants us to cut down on driving, and then it cancels our alternatives to driving," he complained. "I find this personally distressing and protest it in the strongest terms."

Kinsmen Auction

It will be lights, camera and action this Monday night, as the 1993 Georgetown Kinsmen Club T.V. Auction takes to the air on Halton Cable Systems Channel 4.

The Auction gets underway at 6 p.m. and bidding will continue through 10:30 p.m.

For full details on what is planned for the evening, please turn to pages 10 and 11.

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