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"ALL THE NEWS YOU NEED"

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1993

Crossing guard cutbacks are examined by Town

BY RICK SOUTAR

The Acton Tanner

The Town is examining the possibility of cutting back on school crossing guards as one option in an effort to reduce expenditures and maintain current municipal tax levels.

A survey was conducted in September among guards to determine the times and the numbers of road crossings by children and which school crossings are under-used.

"It is an area we're looking at but we're looking at quite a number of areas," says Ray King, treasurer for the Town.

A report will be given to Council sometime in the next few weeks. King was unable to say what recommendations will be included because he has not had time to fully review the matter.

King stressed that any review of services must be seen in the context of the Town's efforts to avoid tax hikes while dealing with shrinking Provincial revenues.

"We're obliged to try and keep the tax rate as reasonable as we can so we need to look at everything," King explains. "It's a mat-

ter of trying to be as efficient and productive as we can in as many areas as we can."

But some crossing guards have said privately the Town is actively considering the removal of guard services at lunch hours where crossing routes have fewer than 10 children. Reportedly, two Georgetown routes have already had the lunch hour service eliminated and guards fear that this is just the beginning.

"They've cut the budget back as far as they can go and crossing guards are the last spot that they can cut out," said one guard, who asked to not be identified.

The Town employs close to 30 guards at just over \$10 per hour. In Acton, six guards work five crossings two-and-a-half hours each school day for an average of about \$120 per week. The total cost of the program to the Town is over \$100,000 per year.

Crossing guards say theirs is a dangerous job which is anything but easy money. One guard was hit by cars twice last year.

"Where I am, it's impossible to get the kids across at any time. I've got a lot of seniors who wait and come down to the crosswalk at noon hour or a night when I'm there," the guard said.

YMCA building a sore spot for downtown

BY DOUG HARRISON

The Acton Tanner

Plans for the conversion of Acton's downtown YMCA building into a non-profit housing complex aren't dead yet—but they're close.

Eileen Dix, a board member

with the Acton Baptist Church—which has applied for government funding three times in the past 18 months—said recently that the building is condemned and has deteriorated since it was last occupied just over two years ago.

She and the group, headed by Pastor Tom Cullen, would like to move seniors and the Acton Teen Education and Motherhood (TEAM) group into eight to 12 apartments on the building's top floor as part of an affordable housing project.

Dix also said on Thursday that the TEAM program could run in a 100-foot long by 30-foot wide gym room in the basement of the building.

However, the local group is being stalled for the same reason the building shut down in 1991—a lack of money.

Please turn to Page 16



PEACE FLAME: Tina Peterson, right, exchanges the flame with Carishma Rafi during McKenzie-Smith's Remembrance Day ceremony on Thursday. The girls were a part of an 11-person candle ceremony which symbolized the day's significance. Other students took part in a dramatic presentation and Tanner school reporter Kelly Holmes read a poem by fellow student Chris Seads entitled "You'll Be Home Soon." (Doug Harrison photo)

United Way donations top \$105,000 mark

BY DOUG HARRISON

The Acton Tanner

A negative economy isn't tarnishing the shine on the local 1993 United Way campaign.

It was projected by executive members at a mid-campaign review meeting on Thursday that the local campaign is about 60

per cent toward its goal of \$180,000.

"In terms of industrial, with both Acton's Campaign West and Georgetown's campaign in the east, I'm hearing good news,"

said United Way executive director Kathleen Hayward on

Please turn to Page 2

'Twas the month before Christmas and all through the House ...



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