

Eramosa Council faces some tough budget decisions

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
The Rockwood Miller

Eramosa politicians must decide which Township services they feel are more important than others, as Council may be forced to make service cuts to hold the line on property tax increases this year.

Faced with a possible 20 per cent cut in transfer payments from

the Province, Township Treasurer Terry Noble warned Council they will have tough choices to make.

"We are heading into different times with a different set of standards," Noble said Monday night.

Noble suggested Council should set targets for the operating budgets of all departments based on the scenario that they will have 20 per

cent less funding in 1996.

Based on last year's unconditional roads and library grant totals of \$380,017, that level of cut would produce a revenue shortfall of \$70,000 compared to last year.

Noble gave Council a summary page of the budget with the expenditure side left blank and the revenue side showing a zero per

cent increase in taxation and the expected 20 per cent drop in grants.

Noble said Council should fill in the blanks with targets for each department's budget, prioritizing each department's requests.

Noble also cautioned that the fiscal picture from the Province may be worse than anticipated.

"We're talking about a 20 per

cent cut for sure and maybe 30 per cent. Delegates at a recent conference for the Association of Counties of Ontario were presented with what happened in Alberta.

"The Alberta experience involved a 20 per cent cut in transfer payments in the first year, 20 per cent the second year and a further 20 per cent the third year."

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Council to save on snowy sidewalks?

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Before the snow flies Eramosa Township staff will recommend ways to save money on ploughing and sanding sidewalks in Rockwood.

"If we don't get our expected allotment (of cash) from the province, then we will have to cut back to save money," Len Smeltzer, superintendent of public works, explained on Thursday.

Initially, Smeltzer was to implement a tier level of service, provided the major sidewalks in the village were cleared before 8 am, but Council decided it wanted more information before making any changes.

"It may be that our own help, or hired help, would clear the sidewalks in the subdivisions later in the day, not first-thing in the morning," Smeltzer explained.

Smeltzer said he is working on a report that will outline how much was spent on sidewalk snow clearing last winter and information on

a possible special area rate for snow clearing.

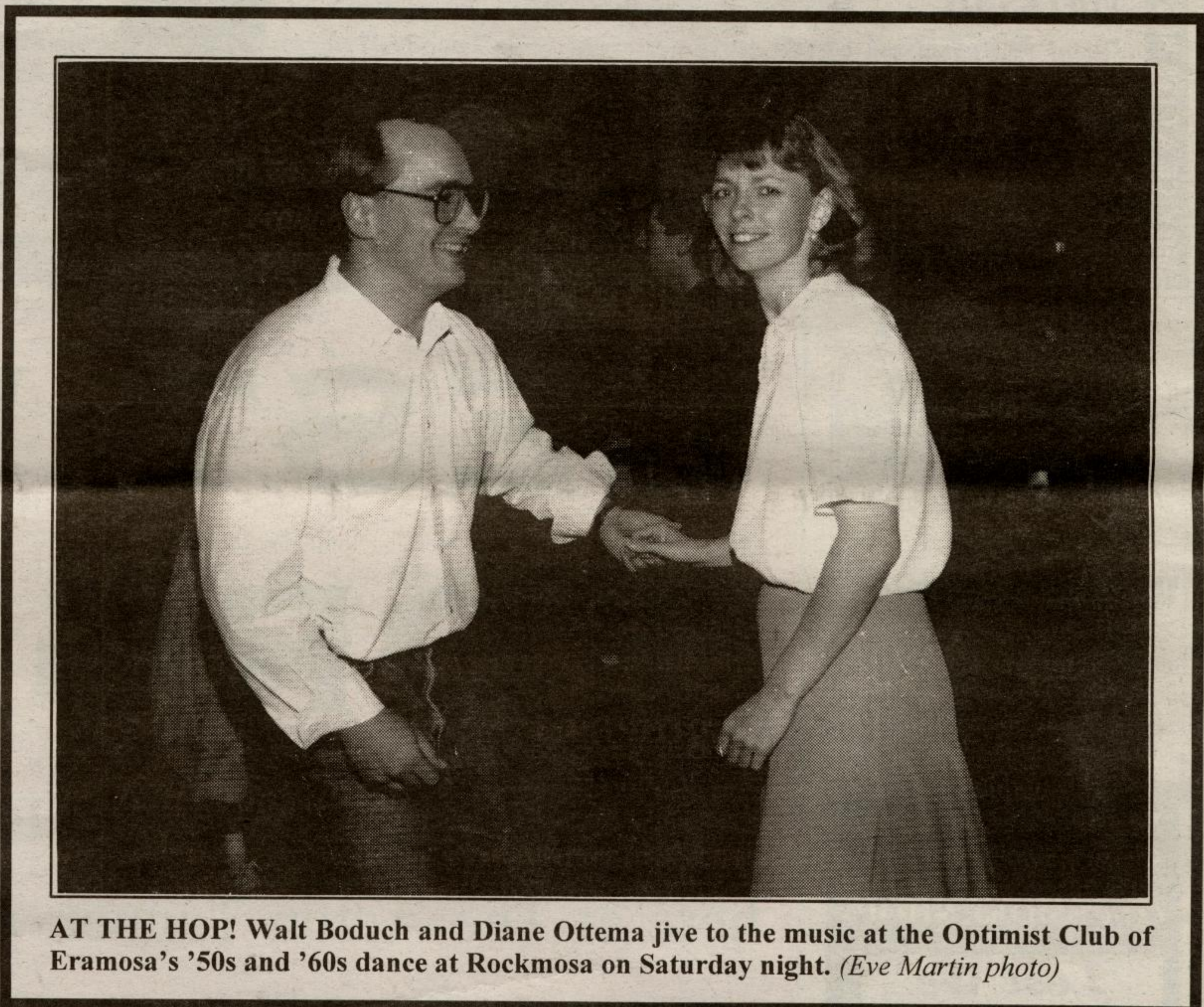
Smeltzer was also asked to look at ways to save money on ploughing and sanding of the Fire Hall, Medical Centre parking lot, Old Quarry Road and Clara Street extension.

In a related issue, Smeltzer is waiting to hear from the Township's insurance agent if Township staff and snow clearing equipment is still covered while crossing 12 bridges that have weight restrictions imposed on them.

"Our trucks, with ploughs and sand, are way over the limit on the bridges that we've put load limits on," Seltzer explained.

"We are looking at bridge stress tests to see that the current weight restrictions are accurate."

If the current snow clearing equipment can't use the bridges in question, Smeltzer said they would either contract with someone to do the job with lighter equipment, or purchase or lease a truck that would meet the load limit restrictions.



AT THE HOP! Walt Boduch and Diane Ottema jive to the music at the Optimist Club of Eramosa's '50s and '60s dance at Rockmosa on Saturday night. (Eve Martin photo)

Annual beef dinner and auction

Special to The Rockwood Miller
Anticipation accompanies dessert at the annual Roast Beef Dinner at Ebenezer United Church next Saturday (Nov. 18) from 4:45 to 7:30 pm. In addition to the traditional country dinner, this year's event will include a silent auction.

Everything from butter tarts, to

a CPR course, an oak coffee table or an all-day boat cruise, are just a few of the many items offered.

Dinner guests can browse the silent auction area before, during and after dinner and bid on any of the items on display. All proceeds go to the Church's building fund.

The traditional roast beef dinner dates back to the International Plowing Match days.

The evening offers good food, conversation, and suspense. Tickets are \$12.50 for adults, \$7.50 for students, \$3.50 for children and free to pre-schoolers.

Tickets are available at the door or by calling 824-3770, 856-9507, or (905) 854-2698.

Ebenezer United Church is on the west side of Guelph Line, between 20 and 25 Sideroads.

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