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'HOMETOWN PAPER, NEIGHBOURHOOD NEWS!'

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 1996

## GTA reform means costly tax hikes

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK  
The Acton Tanner

Two of the three urban Acton councillors expect the worst when Queen's Park moves to reform government and taxation in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

The Golden Report recommends sweeping changes to the tax system and government structure in the GTA. Those proposals, if endorsed by the Harris government, would see the five GTA regions scrapped and replaced with one regional government to coordinate police and other services.

The Golden Report also calls for property tax reform, which

would mean lower business and property taxes in Metro Toronto, but substantially higher taxes in Halton Hills.

Since that briefing, Town Treasurer Andy Koopmans attended a meeting at the Region and received new figures on the impact of the tax reforms on Halton Hills.

The new numbers show a house assessed at \$175,000 in Acton would pay \$450 more if the Golden Report were endorsed, while a house assessed at \$250,000 would pay \$650 more, not the \$883 first reported by Halton finance staff.

Despite the drop, Koopmans called the increases "fairly signifi-

cant" and said staff are continuing to assess the impacts.

"I think we will end up being sucked into this trap," Acton councillor Rick Bonnette said as he predicted the Town would end up paying for costly ambulance and welfare programs.

"I don't think that we're doing our duty by not investigating opting out (of the GTA plan). It may cost more, but at least we would have our autonomy," he argued.

Councillor Norm Elliott said it is an interesting irony that the first regional government created by the Province was Metro Toronto and now that Metro is in trouble,

the province is looking to dismantle the successful regions.

"I think we need to sit down and do an analysis, a plus and minus balance sheet, that shows us what we gain from these (GTA reform) proposals and what we lose," Elliott said, noting both tax money and representation will be lost.

Councillor Gerald Rennie said he's disturbed by the air of defeatism he detects in the municipality.

"I think we really need to take a different attitude here - look at it positively and try to recognize some features of the task force report that are useful to us and to try to overcome this defeatism."

## Flowers still say it best

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK  
The Acton Tanner

Today is the perhaps the mushiest day of the year with 63 per cent of the population celebrating a romantic relationship by sending a Valentine's card.

Valentines Day dates back to Roman times with legends of a martyred St. Valentine, who died protecting the sanctity of love. One myth had Cupid, son of Venus, the goddess of beauty, shooting love potion-tipped arrows at unsuspecting couples.

If sending a card doesn't bring romance to your life, you could send flowers, a box of chocolates or take your sweetie out to dinner.

For the three Acton florists Valentine's Day is the busiest single day of the year.

Dot Gould at Blue Springs Flowers said roses are always a very popular purchase by younger men.

On Monday, Sue Richling at Blooms Away Flowers, said orders were already heavy for cut flowers, but people "have a fear of buying roses because they say they don't last, but they do."

At Rene's flowers, Rene Short said cut flowers and carnations will be the big sellers with roses also being a popular choice.

And my perfect Valentine's gift? A glue-covered construction paper and doilie card - a crayon-lettered missive of love from my children, which I'll save forever.



### P-U-U-U-L-LLL!

Joseph Luty, left, Justin Mota and Sarah Jordan give it all they've got during a tug-of-war contest at St. Joseph's Carnival d'Hiver, which the entire school took part in last Wednesday afternoon. (Karen Wetmore photo)

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