

No teacher layoffs for Wellington – yet

BY DOUG HARRISON
The Rockwood Miller
Centennial school teachers' jobs are safe, for now, as the Wellington Board of Education will not

follow the Hamilton board in handing out layoff notices to public school teachers and support staff. Last Monday, 437 teachers, 272 lunchroom supervisors, 46 educa-

tional assistants and hundreds of support staff employees were given notices in Hamilton schools.

"There won't be any notices given at this point. But that's not to say it won't happen in the future," says Wellington Board chair Jennifer Waterston, who adds Hamilton was merely complying with the Employment Standards Act, which states you must give at least four months notice if more than 500 people are to be laid off.

Waterston says notice would not have to be given until May 1 if layoffs are deemed necessary at the start of the next school year.

That there is twice the number of students in Hamilton – about 50,000 compared to Wellington's 25,000 – also contributed to the layoff decision, notes Waterston.

Local layoff notices have also been held back as school boards across Ontario await word from Education Minister John Snobelen.

They are anticipating the release of his tool kit, which will provide boards with measures to slash budgets.

Waterston says she couldn't estimate how much of a hit the

Wellington budget – \$147 million – will take.

"It would be better to know now and deal with it. The uncertainty has been stressful for our employees," Waterston reports. "I have two kids in elementary school and they're feeling it, too. Young teachers will be the ones to go, but they might be ones who run important extra-curricular activities."

Eramosa school board trustee Wilma Tosh says it's "foolish" to think there'll be no local layoffs.

Hamilton board chair Bob Stewart reportedly wants the province to introduce an early retirement package for teachers with an "85-factor," those whose age plus years of service adds up to 85.

"There's a lot of wealth in the school of hard knocks (older staff)," Tosh points out, "but we'll gain, lose and hopefully balance when it comes to fruition."

"I wake up and wonder 'what is it going to be like a year from now.' I hope people start thinking community-minded and not individually or issue minded, so we can't see a solution that's good for the community."

No tenders for ballpark snack bars

BY KAREN WETMORE
The Rockwood Miller

"I wasn't really surprised." That was Sherri Thompson's response to not receiving a single tender application to run the concession booths at Rockwood and Eden Mills three ball parks. The Rockwood-Eramosa Minor Ball Association had been advertising for anyone interested in taking over the booths, with a deadline of Feb. 29 to accept tenders.

Thompson said the intent was to have one person operate all three booths at Rockmosa, Lloyd Dyer and Eden Mills ball diamonds, and hire staff to fill in.

Luckily for the ball association, one person had expressed an interest in running the concession booths prior to the group's search for tenders. Thompson says it is likely this person will eventually get the job.

"I don't know what we would have done if we had no one at all interested," she added.

Because they don't receive any grants from Eramosa Township, the ball association runs the parks and the concession stands on its own.

Dot Polo, now co-owner of Dottie's Diner, had been running the stand at Lloyd Dyer Park and the one at Rockmosa had also been looked after up until this year, which left no need for the association to look for further help.

There is still a question of what will be done to the Eden Mills booth, said Thompson, which is currently condemned.

Dangerous driver flees, is caught

An Eramosa Township man led a Guelph OPP cruiser on a high-speed chase last Friday, resulting in charges of dangerous driving and other charges.

The OPP officer paced a vehicle driving at 140 km per hour in a 80 km zone on Hwy. 24 near County Road 49 at 7 pm. He followed the speeding car and put on his flashing lights.

The driver kept on going and speeds reached 160 km per hour during the pursuit. The police officer temporarily stopped the chase due to traffic safety concerns, but resumed once there was no blocking traffic.

The driver eventually stopped and was arrested for dangerous driving. He was subsequently charged with operating a motor vehicle while having more than 80 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood and failing to stop for police.

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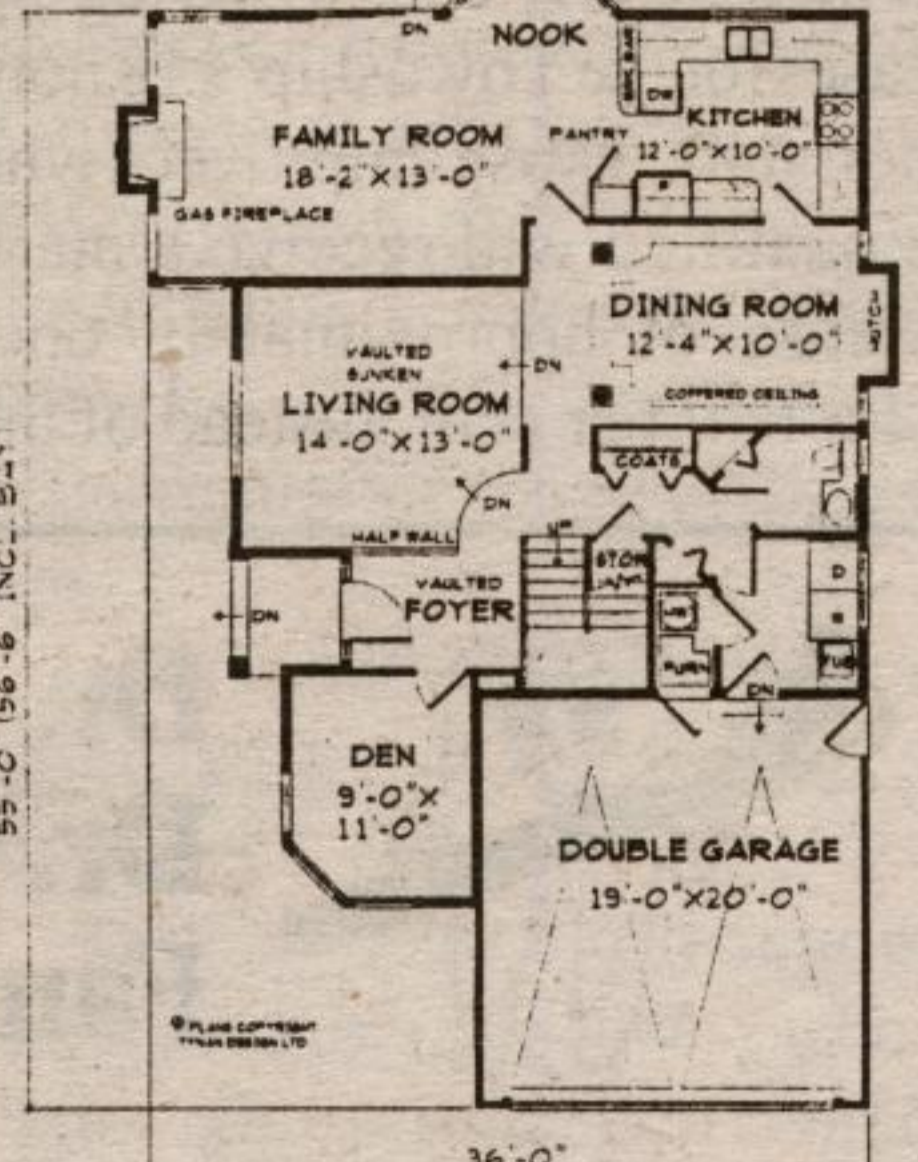
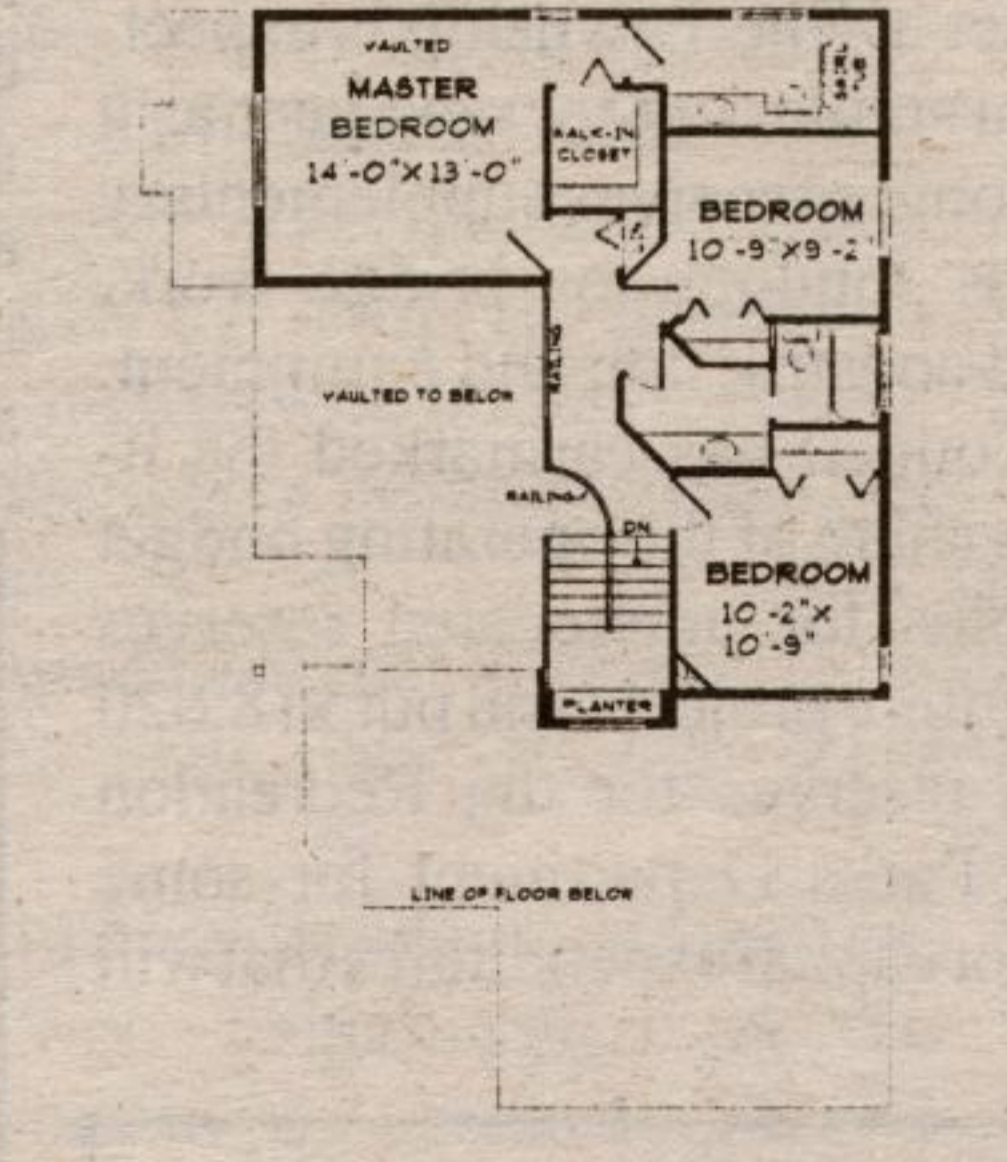
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