

## 'Tool kit' is lacking: Glover

Continued from Front Page  
private meetings between the principals and the affected teachers when the layoff notices were handed out last Tuesday, younger students at the elementary schools were unaware of the impact of the layoffs.

At Acton High, the students immediately began to plan their protest to the announced cuts, includ-

ing a delegation to the Board's meeting Thursday night in Burlington.

For Board chair Linda Glover, the students' response to the layoffs made her proud.

"The petition the students presented to the Board was thoughtful and well-organized and showed us how much they have learned in the way of making their thoughts

known," Glover said in an interview on Friday.

Glover said that they are "very disappointed" with the measures announced by Education Minister John Snobelen this week that are designed to help boards deal with reduced provincial funding.

"The Minister's so-called tool kit was empty and we haven't been given the tools to deal with the massive grant cutbacks," Glover complained, adding they can't even speculate whether all of the announced layoffs will be necessary.

Glover also said that suggestions made by the Minister to reduce spending outside of the classroom, including cuts to transportation, purchase-sharing and partnerships have already been implemented in Halton and the administrative staff has already been substantially reduced.

## Town budget gets some adjustments

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK  
The Acton Tanner

The Acton Citizens' Band will get an operating grant of \$4,625 from the Town this year - just one of two groups that will get grant money as the Town begins to reassess providing grants to community groups.

A report on alternate funding for the Band was to have been ready before this year's budget debates, but since it wasn't, Council voted to give the grant - 96.5 per cent of last year's grant - to the Band for this year.

The other organization to receive a grant is the Glen Williams Town Hall Board to help pay for their annual Canada Day celebrations.

Other highlights of the third budget meeting, held last Tuesday, was a decision not to cut the Halton Hills Heritage budget by 66 per cent to \$3,500, but to give the volunteer community group \$7,000.

"I was stunned when I saw the extent of the proposed Heritage budget cut," said Acton Councillor Norm Elliott.

"I'm amazed at (Treasurer)

Andy Koopman's ability to still find flesh on the bones to cut," Elliott said as he persuaded his fellow budget committee members to increase the Heritage committee's budget to the \$7,000 figure.

Council spent almost an hour debating a proposed \$10,000 expenditure for the newly reconstituted Halton Hills Tourism Committee.

When it was determined that the money was in the budget and no one was suggesting it should be cut, Councillor Elliott complained that, "Never have we spent so much time dealing with an item that nobody moved to cut."

Town staff's original operating budget proposal included a one per cent property tax increase but that was unacceptable to most councillors who want to come in with no tax increase for the fifth consecutive year.

Heading into the last budget meeting Koopmans presented councillors with a list of potential cuts totalling \$187,929.

Those proposed cuts will be debated at the next budget meeting on Tuesday.

### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"Another 15 to 30 seconds of propane leaking in that house and we would have found debris 500 feet away and the homeowner definitely would have been dead."

— Robbie Schnurr, Ontario Fire Marshall investigator, Page 5

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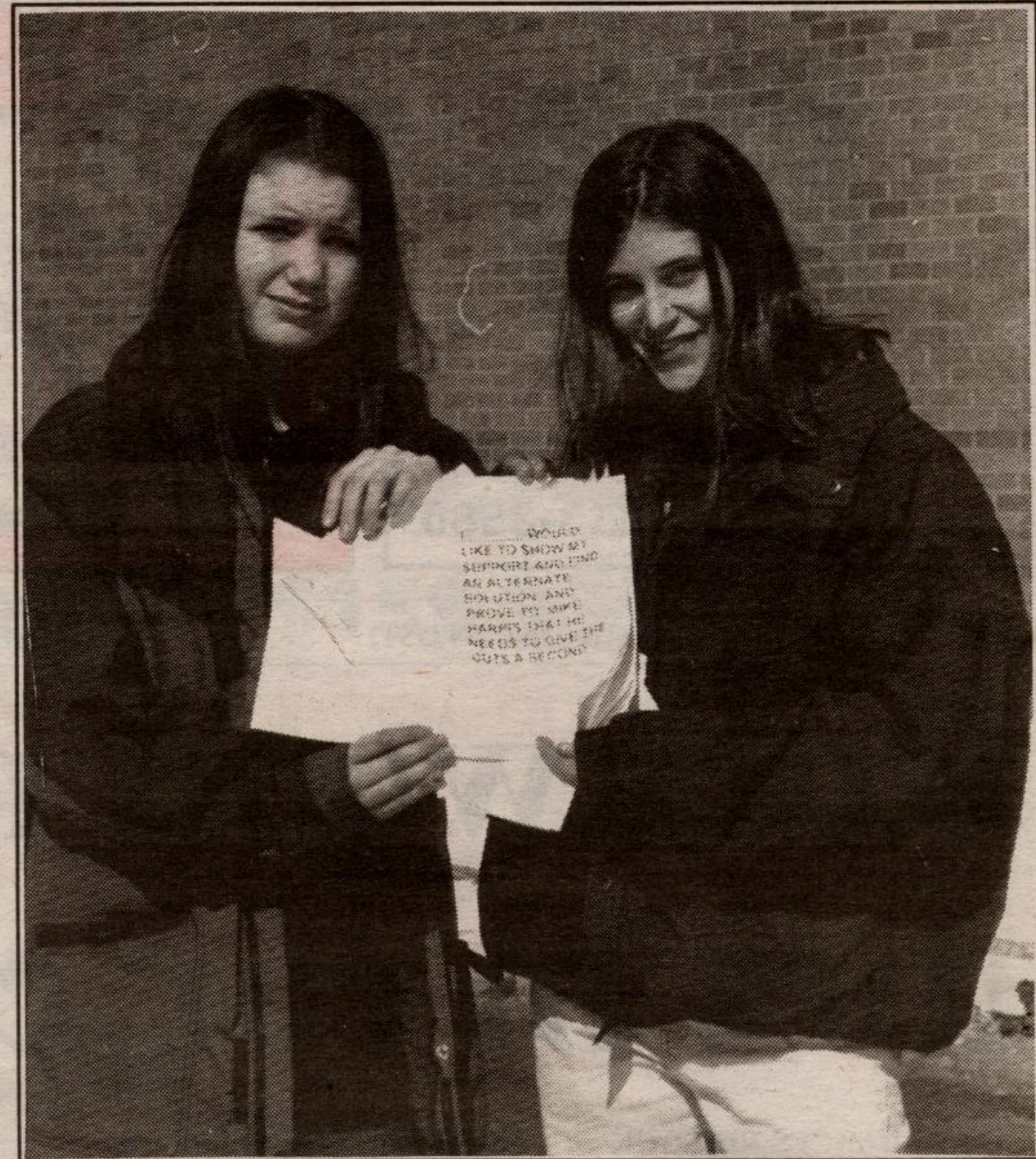
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PROTESTING LAYOFFS: Grade 9 students Jessie Brown, left, and Virginia Goddard have started a petition urging Mike Harris to reduce massive layoffs experienced by the Halton School Board.

## Students take on Harris

BY KAREN WETMORE  
The Acton Tanner

"I would like to show my support and find an alternate solution and prove to Mike Harris that he needs to give the cuts a second glance and realize what it is doing to us, the kids of Halton County."

With these words, two Acton High students hope to attract the premier's attention in an attempt to save some of their teachers' jobs.

Grade 9 students Jessie Brown and Virginia Goddard are collecting signatures for their petition, after it was announced last week the Halton Board will be laying off up to 1,501 jobs. By Thursday, the pair had well over 300 signatures and were predicting a total of 500 by the time they had visited all of the public schools in Acton.

The two 14-year-olds are frustrated with a government they see as damaging not only their teachers' futures, but their own as well.

"We know they're going to lay off people and cuts have to be made," Brown said. "But we hope they'll realize how much it's hurting us."

"None of our questions about the layoffs could be answered, so we decided to go ahead with a petition," added Goddard.

Included in the layoff list are 380 secondary school and 192 elementary school teachers in Halton. For Acton High it means 12 teachers, including all three French teachers, have received their notices.

"Our French immersion may be gone," Brown said. "My parents put me in the program nine years ago to help me get a job - what happens if that's all lost?"

Acton High principal Joyce Bradley said on Thursday although every French teacher had received a layoff notice, French may eventually be taught by Region teachers with more years experience. She also supports the students' petition.

"When young people feel strongly about something, they have to act," she said. "Something very important to us is being threatened, especially in Acton, where the school is also a centre for the community."

Brown and Goddard will send their petition to Halton North MPP Ted Chudleigh, school board trustees and to Mike Harris. The pair says they're also planning a protest to take place after the March Break, which may include a walkout.

Bradley said while she couldn't support students walking out of class, she supports their right to protest.

\* \* \* \* \*

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