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'HOMETOWN PAPER, NEIGHBOURHOOD NEWS!'

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THE EASTER (SNOW) BUNNY!

Seven-year-old Jordan Kuenzig and his brother Jessy, 4, worked hard to create George, the six-foot Easter bunny made of snow on the front lawn of their Peel Street home last Saturday. The boys wanted the real Easter Bunny to be able to find their house easily and the late snow made it easy for them to come up with something big enough for 'any-bunny' to see. (Eve Martin photo)

Halton trustees begin search for \$16 million

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
The Acton Tanner

Halton teachers may be asked to take pay cuts by school board trustees who appear ready and willing to make spending cuts, rather than raise taxes to balance this year's budget.

After listening to more than 25 delegations last night (Tuesday), Halton trustees are now searching for a \$16 million dollar shortfall in the \$286 million budget.

If the cuts were not made an Acton taxpayer with an average assessment of \$6,400 would pay \$104 more in school board taxes this year for a total of \$1,468 - a 7.6 per cent tax hike.

On the table are 50 amendments proposing spending cuts by trustees and staff. It appears that everything is possible, including a pro-

posed \$6 million reduction in the amount spent on benefits for teachers, principals, vice-principals and other staff.

The Board's announced layoffs of 250 teachers and 800 other staff in response to reductions in provincial transfer grants aren't enough. The Board is expected to ask staff to consider wage rollbacks or a return to unpaid days off to save more money.

Finance committee chair Tim Kingsbury gives fellow trustees full marks for having the resolve to research and study the budget.

Kingsbury said trustees will try to make cuts that have the least impact on students in classrooms, but there's no other consensus on where to make the cuts from the parents' groups, teachers and students who have made recommendations to the Board

during the budget process.

Approximately 4,500 Halton students signed a petition presented to the Board urging trustees not to sacrifice their education in the name of a balanced budget. Kingsbury said more suggestions are coming in all the time.

"We have heard delegations tell us to cut 'X' and the very next delegation tell us to spend more money on 'X'," Kingsbury said. "We face some very tough decisions."

Ward 1 and 2 trustee Ethel Gardiner submitted a list of proposed spending cuts, including spending less on cellular phones, discretionary library budgets in the schools and printing and duplication.

"We know cuts of this magnitude will affect students so now the job is to minimize that impact," Gardiner said.

Arena users to list needs

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
The Acton Tanner

The wants and needs of Acton's arena user groups will be compiled during the coming weeks and presented to the Town at an upcoming Acton East arena building committee meeting.

Following an initial meeting with the committee last week, representatives of Acton's main arena users said they were pleased that they are finally talking about what will be included in the new \$4.1 million arena, to be built on the north side of Hwy. 7, east of Churchill Road.

Barb Metelka, President of the Acton Figure Skating Club, said they were briefed on the parameters of their

wants and needs and asked to come back with a list of what each group would like.

"Our main concern about the size of the rink is not an issue because the proposed 190' x 90' ice surface is big enough for what we need," Metelka explained, noting that the Acton Club had lost good skaters because of the poor conditions at the aging Acton arena.

Metelka said a new facility would also allow the Club to expand and stage higher levels of testing and host competitions.

Metelka said they already seem to be in agreement with the Town concerning the need for an off-ice training area, a community room with a

kitchen and adequate storage space.

"We realize that we will need to raise funds to help pay for this new facility and I think the Club will focus on raising money for a good quality sound system," Metelka said.

"I'm just so thrilled that these talks are going on and we're getting going because the Town is behind it and that's a good felling."

"I just hope the money the Town has allocated is enough for them to be able to do it (build the facility) right."

Daryl Strong, ice scheduler for the Acton Minor Hockey Association, was also pleased following the meet-

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