

EDITORIAL

With Hartley Coles



Geese fly; taxes rise

As I write this there is an unearthly sounding goose chorus coming from Fairy Lake, which hundreds of big Canadas are using as a way station as they wing their way south to more salubrious climes.

It's a hazardous time for the birds because hunters, anxious to have one or two of them, line the route south for pot shots at them. However, the geese feel relatively secure here and chatter amongst themselves like hundreds of rusty gates opening and closing.

It's the time of year when football widows, church bazaars, Santa Claus parades, leaf clean-ups and plummeting temperatures dominate our daily lives as we prepare for the passage from fall to winter. Oh yes, and since it is not an election year, the first warnings of tax increases come from local and regional taxes.

Taxes? You bet. Last week's *Tanner* featured a story noting the Town budget committee was soon to sit down with staff and map out plans for the 1997 operating budget. Of course, their sights are set on a zero tax increase, or a very small one, if deemed necessary.

However, the Town of Halton Hills faces what the treasurer calls a "fairly significant" reduction in grants from Queen's Park next year, an amount that could balloon to as much as \$700,000. Coming on top of a 30 per cent cut, or \$900,000, from the "Common Sense Revolution" government, it means Halton Hills will receive \$1.6 million less in government assistance than in 1995.

Not a small sum in municipal politics. Not exactly a kick in the teeth but certainly one on what I will politely call our posterior. In Town Administrator Ray King's view, the expectation of a zero tax increase means Council will really have to hammer out a tough budget to deal with the hundreds of thousands of dollars lost in provincial grants. And he's right. However, if your correspondent is like other taxpayers then the message falls on deaf ears because even in the years of plenty we heard the same refrain.

We like to hear that councils and boards have held the line on spending but there are other ways they can wheedle money from you. For instance, this year as everyone boasted about how they held the line on taxes, your correspondent's taxes on his modest home increased by about \$160. Others, especially some businesses, were kicked in the teeth for thousands more. It was called Market Value Assessment.

To be fair, there were others who received a tax cut but in our neighborhood the only way was up. So, in the time honored manner set by councils and boards of every stripe, your correspondent is sending notice that it is really going to be difficult to hammer out our personal budget for next year because of the extra money the Town, school boards and the Region are now demanding each year.

In the face of the large figures the Region and the Boards of Education as well as the Town are working with, my paltry tax increase of about 8% is peanuts to them. But the Region is already talking about increasing taxes "significantly" or cutting services and raising utility rates. The Region is responsible for sewers and water.

The Board of Education, almost emasculated by threats from John Snobelen to do away with school boards, or reduce them to skeletons of their former selves, is talking about cutting back on instructional staff by 20 per cent. Which will mean cuts in programs such as French Immersion and Special Education. The recommendations come from senior administration where, in this corner's estimation, the cuts should be made, not at the classroom level.

Anyway, all these cutbacks and threats of tax increases are so we can all enjoy the first 15 per cent of a 30 per cent cut in provincial income taxes. Downloading, it is called.

Do you get the impression that the only people who are going to benefit from the income tax cuts are the well heeled, that the poor and those described as the "middle class" will end up paying more than they did before?

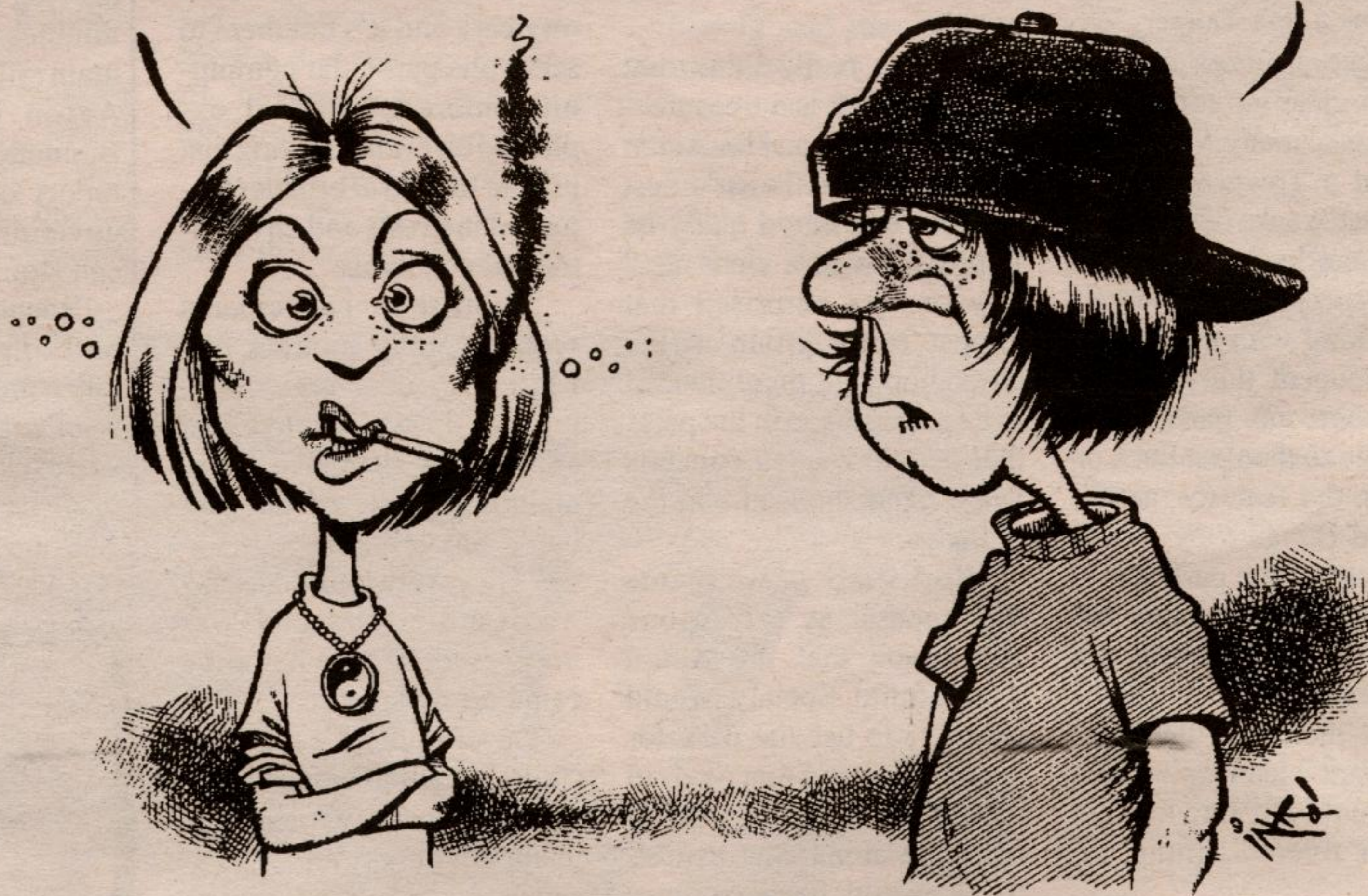
Figure it out for yourself. Paying Peter instead of Paul.

Same time last year ...

Robert Little School takes top honours for its float in the Santa Claus Parade ... An open house on **Market Value Assessment** is scheduled for Actonites ... Acton High student **Emily Savage** wins two awards and is recognized for her many achievements by the Optimist Club of Georgetown during Youth Appreciation Week.

Ads show **HACK COUGH** smoking greatly increases your **SNORT HACK** sophistication and sex appeal..... What do you think ?

I think Cigarette Manufacturers are allowed far too much creative licence.



Your LETTERS

Player shows class

To the Editor,

This letter should have been written last spring when the 95-96 hockey season was over.

Our Midget Travel Team played some exciting games against your Acton Midgets. We did win the best of five series, but that is not my point for writing.

On your Midget team, there was a set of triplets, one of which was Derrick, who wore the No. 19 sweater. A very good sport he was, who visited my husband and me

(we're the time and score keepers) in the penalty box a few times.

Never, at the end of a series like this, have we ever had an opposing player come and shake hands with us and thank us for doing what was our job. This player has to be one, if not *the* best sport we have had the pleasure of meeting in our long years associated with minor hockey.

Not knowing Derrick's address, this was the best we could do to let him know how much we appreciated his conversation in the penalty box, and his thoughtful gesture after the series was over. His parents have brought him up the right way and his positive attitude will take him a long way.

We wish you the best in the 96-97 season Derrick, and hope some day to see you again.

*Bev and Thelma Riley
Ingersoll time and score keepers*

We will never forget

To the Editor,

Mike O'Leary's column about our need to keep Remembrance Day alive was bang on. Parents, we need to let our schools and school boards know that we *want* to remember. Peace and unity are just as important as ABCs.

I believe that today's youth *does* care. Our choir of 40 youngsters, aged 9 to 15, enthusiastically joined

the Georgetown Choral Society to sing songs of peace and remembrance to veterans on Nov. 10. Three young people read poems written by 12- and 13-year-olds. This was the third year we have performed our Celebration of Peace concert and, as far as we are concerned, it is permanent.

We will *never* forget.

*Lois Fraser
Georgetown Children's Chorus*

Food drive gathers 10,000 lbs of food

To the Editor,

The good people of Acton have once again shown their kindness and generosity toward the people of our town who are feeling the welfare cutbacks and lack of employment opportunities.

Approximately 10,000 lb of food was gathered from the area by the Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and Calvinist Cadets for Acton FoodShare.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to each and everyone who was involved - Guides, Scouts, Calvinist Cadets, leaders, drivers and helpers.

Special thanks to the coordinators Andrew and Diane Kayess.

On behalf of the volunteers and directors of Acton FoodShare, thank you.

*Joan Waldie, Public Liaison
Acton FoodShare*



Write a Letter to the Editor!
Deadline is Monday at noon.

THE ACTON Tanner

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