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'ACTON'S OWN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER'

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 1997

## BETWEEN THE COVERS...



**T**rustee starts up trust fund for five Board of Education trustees who are in court on conflict of interest charges

...Page 4

**A**mericans make the best neighbours and should not be criticized, writes a reader

...Page 6

**N**ew bakery, the Bread Basket, prepares to open in downtown Acton on February 1

...Page 8

**N**umber two of three in a series of SMILE musicals, *Me and My Bike*, comes to Acton next month

...Page 10

**E**ramosa's first Firefighter Pageant organizers begin plans to crown winner in June

...Page 14

**R**eady for a good time? Acton Lanes is hosting its third company challenge bowling tournament

...Page 16

# Halton Board survives major cut

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK  
The Acton Tanner

The Halton Board of Education has made the cut and is not one of the boards to be abolished by the Province in its education revolution announced on Monday at Queen's Park.

More than half of the school boards in Ontario will be cut - to 66 from 168, - trustees will be cut by two-thirds to 700 from 1,900 and their salaries will be rolled back to a maximum of \$5,000. Currently Halton trustees earn \$12,250 a year.

On Monday, Education

Minister John Snobelen introduced legislation that will also change the way we pay for education. The \$5.4 billion currently raised through property taxes for education will now be paid for by the Province, but homeowners should not necessarily expect lower taxes because some services currently paid for by the Province will be shifted to municipalities.

Acton-Esqueing trustee Ethel Gardiner said although she is taking a wait and see attitude until details of the announced changes are released, she is pleased that,

"The Minister is focusing on teaching and learning and meeting the needs of students - who can argue with that?"

On Tuesday Gardiner said the size of the Halton Board - currently 18 trustees - could be reduced to between six and nine based on the proposed representation based on electoral population.

"I suspect that north Halton will go from our current four trustees to just one or two and that will be a tremendous responsibility, but I think we will still attract people who are honestly interested in quality education for

children as the trustee's role moves from a political one to one of advocacy," she said.

At Monday night's Town Council meeting Mayor Marilyn Serjeantson said they'll have a much clearer perspective of what the changes will mean at the end of the week, and that she is looking forward to the changes that will be announced by Queen's Park this week.

"I believe positive changes happen and as long as we have a fair, accessible, accountable and cost-effective government, then we shouldn't complain," she said.

On Tuesday sweeping changes to the General Welfare Assistance and family benefits programs were announced. Today (Wednesday) announcements are expected about programs that will be transferred to the municipalities, including operating GO Transit and capital and operating costs for provincial highways, water and sewer systems and police and fire services.

On Thursday there will be a major statement on property tax reform and on Friday a summary of the changes and the rationale for them.



## HAPPY NEW YEAR, BABY!

Braeden Vidler is Acton's first baby to be born in 1997. He entered the world on Jan. 6 at 5:59 pm, weighing in at 7 lbs, 2 oz. Braeden is the first child for parents Jason and Leanne Vidler, life-long residents of Acton. (Eve Martin photo)

## Cable rates to increase

Halton Cable Systems Inc. subscribers in Acton, Rockwood and surrounding areas face an almost 12 per cent monthly increase for basic service effective March 1. The basic rate will increase \$1.68 to \$15.78 from \$14.10 (before taxes) if the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) doesn't intervene to disallow all or a part of the capital expenditure portion of the rate change.

Halton Cable spokesman John Ollivier said the requested rate increase is "reasonable."

"Given the fact that we are dropping some channels down to the basic service and given the fact that we've spent a ton of money in the past six or seven months on the system - that increase is pretty reasonable," Ollivier explained last Thursday, pointing out that the Rockwood, Acton and Milton systems have been upgraded to provide subscribers with better reception and clear channels.

Since Western Co-Axial Limited purchased Halton Cable Systems Inc. in June it has been rebuilding the entire system and in March will increase the number of channels it carries to 63 from the current 41.

Ollivier said they are also changing over to the Western Co-Axial terminology for services that they offer.

See ADDITIONAL, Page 2

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