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'ACTON'S OWN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER'

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 1997

BETWEEN THE COVERS...



The majority of Town councillors want to see a zero per cent tax increase remain for the sixth straight year
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Acton accountant Daniel Varanelli opens an office in Georgetown
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Next year may be the time Sixth Line road work is included in the Town budget
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Need to find something for your students to do next week? March Break activities are found on
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Eager and able: the 1st Rockwood Scouts are looking for odd jobs to help finance a Thunder Bay trip
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Relay swimmer competes in junior national swim meet
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Case dismissed against all five Halton trustees

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
 The Acton Tanner

Five Halton Board of Education trustees are relieved and feel vindicated after a tax watchdog group, Taxpayers Coalition (Burlington) Inc. (TCB) dropped conflict of interest charges against them.

"I'm feeling very relieved," said Halton Hills Trustee Ethel Gardiner yesterday (Tuesday). "However, it's been a lot of long months of anxiety."

"It disappoints me tremendously that it was dismissed without costs because I'm vindicated as far as the court is concerned, but at a personal cost of tremendous stress and anxiety and \$4,000 or \$5,000 in legal fees," Gardiner said, adding having the case dismissed was tempered with the reality of the financial obligation.

TCB members alleged that Gardiner, along with trustees Flo Belford, Joe Pavelka, Penny Siebert and Board Chair Linda Glover, violated the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act because they voted

on last May's Halton Board of Education budget while having family members employed by the Halton or another school board. TCB's application asked the courts to declare the five trustees' seats vacant and disqualify those holding the seats from being trustees for seven years.

Frank Gue of TCB, who was in the Milton courtroom on Monday when the application against the trustees was dismissed, said TCB's concerns are largely answered by the Province's proposed Bill 104, the Fewer School Boards Act, so the group decided to discontinue the action and not tie up the courts.

"We didn't win Halton but we won in Ontario and that's more important," Gue said, adding that the group has submitted a proposal to the government asking that Bill 104 be even more restrictive by not allowing family members, and not just spouses of school board employees, to sit as trustees.

There's no word if the trustees will attempt to recover their legal bills.



LEARNING THE ART

Richard Comely, creator of the comic book super hero Captain Canuck (inset), spent time in each class at McKenzie-Smith Bennett school last week, teaching the students different things about art and drawing. On Friday, he helped Nigel Williams, 10, with the difficulties of two-point perspective. (Karen Wetmore photo)

Citizens' Band Town grant gets cut in half

A 50 per cent cut in Town grant money may force the 125-year-old Acton Citizens' Band to begin charging for performances in Halton Hills and may affect the Band's student music lessons.

Although Town staff recommended that the Band receive a grant of \$4,280 this year, Georgetown Councillor Anne Currie convinced her colleagues to reduce that amount by half during budget

talks last week. A later attempt by Acton Councillor Gerald Rennie to restore the full amount failed.

In arguing that the Band's grant money should be cut, Currie pointed out that the Band doesn't charge membership fees, Band members don't contribute to the cost of their uniforms and can rent out the Band Hall on Wallace Street for revenue.

"I feel that [the proposed

\$4,280 grant] is grossly unfair and I would suggest that [giving them] 50 per cent is being generous," Currie said.

Acton Councillor Norm Elliott's angry and passionate defense of the Band was not enough to sway councillors to support the full grant during the two debates on separate days on the issue.

"Whether or not members of Council want to say, '[the Band] doesn't matter,' it does

matter to the people of Acton. It matters a hell of a lot," Elliott said, noting traditionally the Band had received Town money to operate and there were plans to affiliate the band with the Town's Recreation and Parks Department so it would not have to come to Council, cap in hand, each year for money.

With 11 of 13 councillors at the first meeting, a 5-5 tie vote to cut the Band's fund-

ing was passed when Budget Committee Chair, Georgetown Councillor Moya Johnson, voted for the cut.

Two days later when the budget committee resumed its debate, Band member Gerry Paton, who said they were surprised by the substantial reduction, made a plea to restore the full funding for the community band.

"We recognize the finan-
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