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VOLUME 3, ISSUE 4

"A RURAL PAPER TO CALL OUR OWN"

JULY, 2000

## Slots to reduce debt

Milton council rejects municipal tax relief

BY DONNA DANIELLI  
THE COMPASS

Any Nassagaweya property owner dreaming of tax relief woke up to debt reduction and infrastructure spending after Milton Council decided on a cautious approach to spending the Town's share of slot revenues.

When the slot machines were installed at Mohawk Raceway, the Town of Milton entered into an agreement with the Ontario Lottery Corporation (OLC) that will see the Town receive a portion of slot revenue proceeds each quarter.

So far, the Town has received \$4,556,859.00 into a temporary reserve since the facility's opening in August, 1999.

On June 19, Town of Milton Director of Corporate Services and Treasurer Jim McQueen presented a report to Council on recommended allocation policies to be reviewed annually by Council. At the base of the plan is the estimated \$6,500,000 to be received annually by the Town from the OLC.

Four separate motions were strenuously debated by Council before an agreement could be reached as to the disbursement of the monies.

One issue that came up again and again in the three defeated motions was that of tax rebates or reliefs. Inclusion of these rebates was hotly debated before finally being eliminated in the fourth motion. McQueen argued that using slot machine revenue for tax relief would be a short-sighted.

"From a financial viewpoint, it seems more valuable to use the money toward infrastructure and debt reduction, because debt is very expensive," he explained.

"First of all, the slot revenue is not property revenue and so cannot be called a property tax rebate. If you do a tax reduction, it's difficult to increase taxes in subsequent years if the cash flow is reduced... Next year, we have no guarantee on the revenue stream."

Another point of controversy that dogged the discussions was the lack of public input on any of the allocations. One defeated motion called for the public to be able to fax, phone or e-mail Town staff with their feedback on the portion of dollars allocated towards community funding. Instead, a public meeting will be held at a future date. Information on this meeting is scheduled to be presented to Council on July 24. Councillor Rick Malboeuf added his concern that money has not been specifically directed to charity bingos that have lost revenue since the installation of the slots.

The endorsed plan, made on the fourth motion to Council, will put \$3 million toward the elimination of Milton's \$25 million debt, accelerated infrastructure building and maintenance was allocated \$1.4 million and \$200,000 will go to policing costs. Town facilities and programs will receive almost \$700,000 with a further \$750,000 earmarked for a reserve to help pay for future capital expenses. \$500,000 was allocated to a community fund that will provide grants to local organizations.

It is on this \$500,000 only that residents will have any input.

The motion allocating the above expenditures passed in a 5 to 4 vote with Councillors Cindy

Lunau, John Challinor, Rick Day, Brian Penman and Mayor Gord Krantz voting in favour and Councillors Rick Malboeuf, Ron Furik, Wally Hunter and Art Melanson in opposition.

Regional Councillor Barry Lee was unable attend, due to a previous appointment and Councillor Lievan Gevaert was not in the country at the time. A weary Ward 3 Councillor Lunau quipped after the long and arduous meeting that "Sometimes it's as difficult to spend money as it is to earn it."

Lunau expressed satisfaction over the final motion. "I'm happy that the resolution does address reducing the debt and it also allows for some public input as to how community funds should be spent... How the money from the Mohawk Raceway is spent may be up for debate, but what is unquestioned is the powerful economic impact that the healthy, vibrant, successful racetrack has had on this community."

"The track has meant jobs, horseland in production, increased activity for related industries, and is part of an integrated rural community. It may well be the saving grace in keeping Nassagaweya rural."

As slot machine revenue fluctuates from year to year, so will the dollar amounts Council allocates in each category. As well, Council will have the option of reviewing allocations each year.

However, since no funds will be transferred to any category until January 2001, it's conceivable that the new Council, elected in November 2000, may revisit the motion and change slot revenue allocations.

AWARD-WINNING TEAM!



PHOTO BY DONNA DANIELLI

Congratulations to the Campbellville Post Office on their Achiever's Club award. They have been named one of the best retail postal operations in the country. "...We're very pleased to have one of our many fine offices recognized in this manner," said Wayne Harrison, Area Retail Manager. Pictured from left to right are Sharon Tsikas, Nancy Markou and Barb Senior. See story on page 3.

### Inside This Month's Compass

#### Marion & George Inglis

Campbellville lost one of its best-loved residents with the May passing of Marion Inglis. The Compass thanks Gail Currie for allowing a reprint of her excellent profile of George and Marion that first appeared in the St. David's Presbyterian Church newsletter.

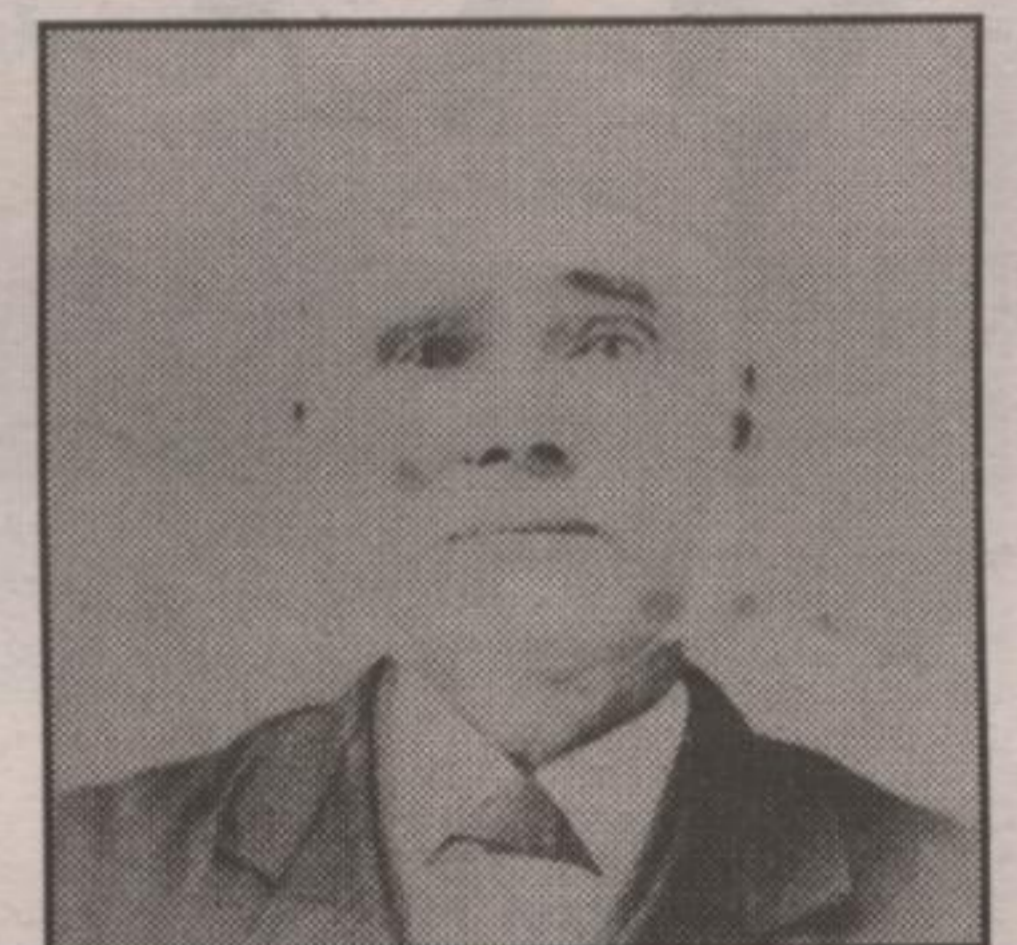
see page 2



#### Shoebbox Memories

Jeremiah, the youngest of William and Mary Fletcher's family, married Elizabeth Darby in 1848 and built a fine fieldstone house on Lot 20, Conc. 3 in Nassagaweya in 1852.

see page 8



#### Community Cornerstone

Darlene Kelsh is a fifth degree black belt in jiu jitsu and four time World Champion. She has taken over the bulk of the teaching and managing of the Milton Jiu Jitsu Club, founded over 25 years ago by her father and managed by her mother Donna.

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#### Business Feature

R.R. #1 Moffat's Heather and Frank Oudesluys of Label Design Ltd. are celebrating 10 years in the label business with a brand new facility in Guelph.

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