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VOLUME 6, ISSUE 3

JUNE 2003

Halton launches legal action against Ontario government

By GLORIA HILDEBRANDT

The proposed mid-peninsula highway, which would go from the QEW near Niagara Falls, around Hamilton and to Highway 407 in Burlington, is expected to have profound indirect implications for north Halton. The concerns are so significant that on May 28, the Region decided to allocate \$75,000 to support the City of Burlington in legal action against the province. The intention is to prohibit the Minister of the Environment from approving the environmental assessment terms of reference.

The new transportation project has three declared goals that follow Smart Growth principles: to improve safety and efficiency, support economic growth, and promote a healthy environment. Yet Conservation Halton states that the highway "will lead to urban sprawl, increased traffic congestion, increased air pollution, loss of natural heritage features and loss of prime agricultural lands."

An initial study having been done, the project has now moved

into the second phase, which sets the environmental assessment terms of reference. The City of Burlington, Conservation Halton, the Niagara Escarpment Commission and the Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment (CONE) have all called for a full environmental assessment on the proposed highway to include an examination of such alternatives as rail and transit.

Patrick Murphy, Halton Region's Commissioner of Planning and Public Works, has recommended that Halton's municipalities other than Burlington also be consulted. Furthermore, he has called for "a transportation work plan to assess in greater detail the various alternatives/combinations of alternatives and impacts of transit, goods movement, and tolling in the Halton portion of the study."

Yet the government's Transportation Needs Assessment Study dismisses public transit: "Bus, rail and ferry services provide transportation choice and the

means to reduce automobile use, however these modes cannot address the diverse user needs nor significantly alleviate QEW traffic congestion."

M.P.P. Ted Chudleigh is of a similar mind. In a recent column for the Milton Chamber of Commerce's publication, he declares: "Alternative types of transit, such as ferries or a rail corridor, do not provide the development potential that this project will achieve. The real benefit is the economic growth that will occur along the entire route."

When asked about these comments, Mr. Chudleigh discusses the various highway options, saying his preference is the one that joins the 401 west of Mountsberg and keeps the 401 as the route through Halton. Public transit alternatives no longer seem to be under consideration by the government, despite concern by others.

"CONE is not satisfied that the Needs Assessment has justified the need for a new highway," states

continued on page 3



PHOTO BY DEBORAH QUAIL

The Garden Centre of Eden

Wendy Evans, owner of Eden Place in Eden Mills, displays some of the luscious spring flowers and Easter Island statuary available at her new outdoor garden centre.

Inside this Month's Compass

SHOEBOX MEMORIES

John and Amillia Scott were married in Esquesing about 1834 and raised a family of five: John, Graham, James, William and Isabella. According to township documents, John and Amillia had acquired the west half of Lot 24, Concession 4, on May 26, 1842.

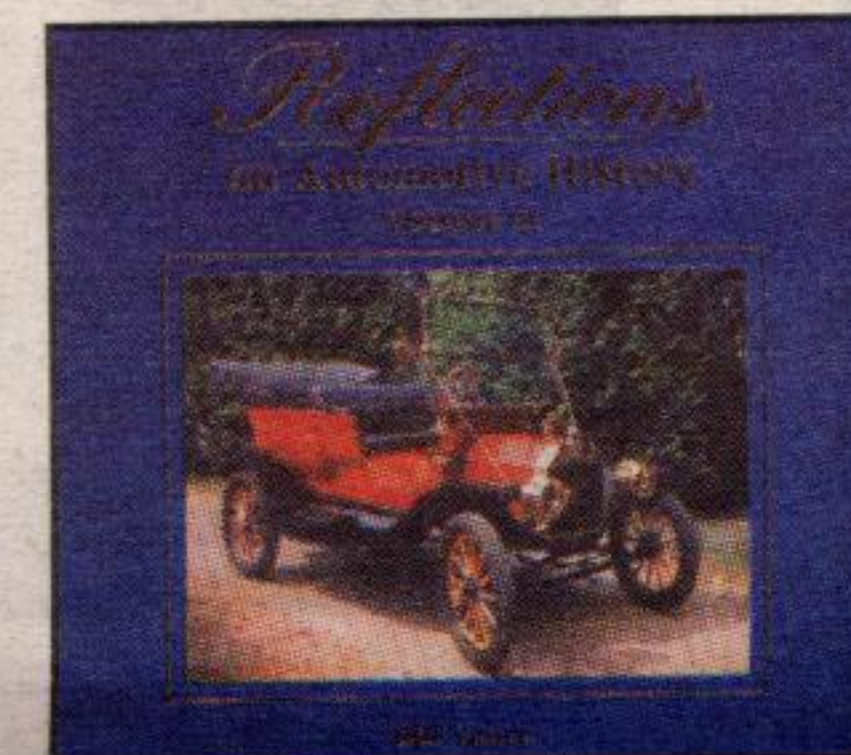
page 14



IDLE PURSUITS

Bill Vance's third volume of *Reflections* has an easy, relaxed style of writing that reads as if he were chatting about the merits of a straight-8 or V-16 with you over a cup of coffee and, best of all, you can get the gist of the conversation.

page 21



COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE

In April 2003, Harry Barnes was presented with a Canadian Service Medal for his peacekeeping efforts by Town of Milton Mayor Gord Krantz. A native of Cornerbrook, Newfoundland, Mr. Barnes settled in Milton 15 years ago and is a well-known triathlete.

page 26



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