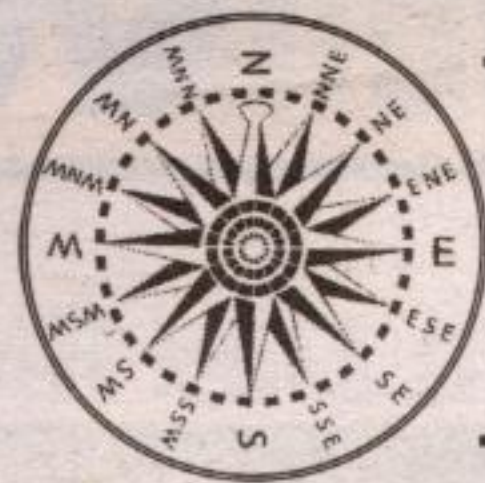


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# THE HALTON COMPASS



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## Ontario Gas Tax a Rip-off for Rural Residents, says MPP Arnott

With gasoline prices now over a dollar a litre and consumers fuming, Waterloo-Wellington MPP Ted Arnott is again calling upon the Provincial Government to share a portion of the gas tax with small town and rural Ontario communities.

Ontario residents pay 14.7 cents in gas tax to the Provincial Government for every litre of gasoline they purchase. This adds up quickly – on 50 litres of gasoline, \$7.35 is added to the cost for the gas tax.

"In many cases, people don't realize how much gas tax they are actually paying when they fill up their tanks," said Mr. Arnott. "A big part of the price of gas is tax, and this is the part that the federal and provincial governments have direct control over."

Some time ago the Provincial Government announced a plan to share a portion of the gas tax with large municipalities that operate municipal transit systems. Rural Ontario was left out in the cold.

The Federal Government is also committed to sharing its gas tax revenue with municipalities, but has promised to include communities large and small, recognizing the transportation needs of rural municipalities.

"Unfortunately the Liberal Government at Queen's Park made a conscious, deliberate decision to exclude small towns and rural Ontario from this sharing of the gas tax revenue, and focus their attention only on cities," Mr. Arnott added. "They are ripping off rural Ontario, and it makes the current high gas prices even harder to take. I see this as a simple matter of fairness, and we need to continue to speak up until the Government begins to listen," Mr. Arnott concluded.



PHOTO BY MANDI HARGRAVE

### Westwood-Ho!

Jim Barton from Brantford shows how the old West was won in a covered wagon pulled by his two Percherons. Jim was taking part in the Heavy Horse Field Days demonstration at Country Heritage Park in Milton. More on page 7.

## Federal Minister comes to 'Meet and Greet' in Erin in support of Rod Finnie

BY JENNIFER ENRIGHT

The financial burdens borne by university students, a supposedly thriving underground economy, Canada's role in Afghanistan and the timing of Canada's next federal election generated a lot of discussion during a recent meet-and-greet event in Erin attended by federal Minister of Revenue John McCallum.

McCallum came to boost the pre-election campaign of Erin Mayor Rod Finnie who is the Liberal candidate for the federal riding of Wellington-Halton Hills. And he was there as well selling his government and party, promoting the Liberals' track record on the economic front. McCallum credited his party with successfully vanquishing the deficit and creating a favourable economic climate. "I think the Canadian people know we have provided this economic stewardship."

But only part of the evening was devoted to promoting his party. Once he and Finnie completed their speeches, the almost inevitable question about when Canadians can expect to go the polls came up. McCallum said he had no definite answer at this

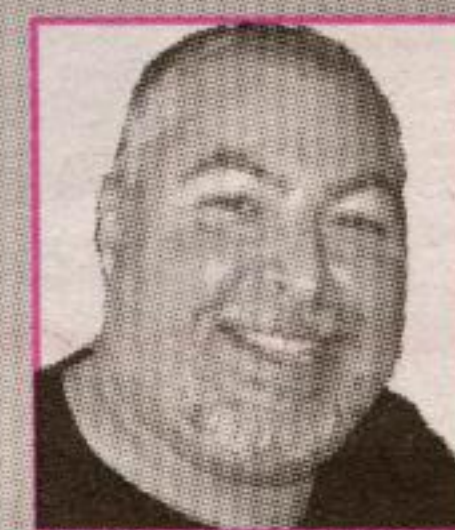
point and if he knew he wasn't telling the people gathered at Erin's Lions' Club Park.

Election questions aside, McCallum found himself defending Canada's role in Afghanistan as he stressed the difference between that country and Iraq. "The vast majority of people want us to be

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