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Halton wants to aid meter reading

Halton Region and local hydro companies are investigating ways to improve the water meter reading and billing process. It is the Region's hope to make the process less intrusive and to ensure that your bill reflects the most up-to-date consumption level.

Many households in Halton may not have a remote water reading device (located on the exterior of the home). In order to accurately bill these residents for the water they consume, a meter reader from the local hydro company must enter the home to read the water meter.

However, many residents may not be home when the meter reader comes to call. When this happens, a card is

left with instructions on how to read a water meter and a request to call the local hydro company with the meter reading. If a resident's water meter has not been read for some time, their bill will be estimated. This estimate may be higher than actual usage.

To ensure residents are billed accurately, Halton Region urges residents who receive a card to take the time to read their meter and telephone in the reading.

In addition, if residents have a remote reading device (normally located by the hydro meter), it's a good idea to periodically (at least once a year), compare the digital reading registered on the remote reading device with the dial reading displayed on your home's internal meter. The two should match. If they do not, contact Halton Region or the local hydro company at the telephone number listed below. Your bill will be adjusted to the consumption registered by the meter inside your home, and the remote will be either re-set or replaced.

Recently, the Region changed the type of reading device it installs outside homes from a digital read dial to a touch pad type.



THE BEES KNEES? When were mini-skirts invented? David Chapman says he always thought they were the product of the 1960's but when he and his dad John were sorting through old photos recently they came across this one, taken on Knox Ave. around 1942. In the photo are Len Lambert flanked by Betty Mooney, later Hardy, left, and teacher Irene Michaels, right. It indicated to him that the origins of shorter skirts was much earlier.

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James Vaupel, Executive Director of the Max Planck Institute for demographic research, recently made this astounding observation: "half the girls born today in the developed world will live through the entire 21st Century."

The rapid increase in lifespan over the past 100 years for those in the industrialized world is nothing short of remarkable, yet our knowledge of the aging process is still in its infancy. That's partly because human longevity is a very recent phenomenon. Prehistoric remains indicate that until quite recently humans very rarely lived longer than to the age of 50. In fact, throughout more than 99.9 per cent of human history we have survived with an average lifespan of less than 30 years!

Only three decades ago, 100 years was thought to be the outer limit of age for humans. Yet in North America, the average human lifespan is now nearly 80. The verified longest-lived person is still alive at 122 and, as James

Science Matters
d by David Suzuki

Vaupel suggests, reaching 100 and more could become relatively common in this century if present standards of living continue. Indeed, the fastest-growing group in society is centenarians.

In spite of this dramatic increase, scientists still don't really know what exactly determines how long humans or other animals can live.

The process of aging is likely a result of natural selection in sexually reproducing species. But what biological processes are responsible for aging, and why do some people live so much longer than others?

One factor that influences lifespan is metabolic rate - that is, the amount of energy an animal expends to stay alive. Animals with fast metabolic rates, such as mice, tend to have shorter lifespans than those with slower metabolic

rates, like humans or elephants. But obviously, high metabolic rates tend to be found in smaller creatures. In fact, there is a surprising correlation between body mass and metabolic rate known as the quarter-power scaling law, that can quite accurately determine a species' expected lifespan based on body weight or vice-versa. Why the quarter-power rule works is a bit of a mystery, although recent research suggests one reason may be the way nutrients are distributed through the body.

But metabolic rate alone does not explain why some animals, like bats, may live five times as long as others of similar size, like mice. Recently, research has focussed on bits of DNA called telomeres that cap the end of our chromosomes. Telomeres shorten every time a cell divides, and when they reach a certain size, cells stop dividing altogether. Normal, human cells divide about 75 times during our lifetimes. However, an enzyme called telomerase helps chromo-

somes repair their telomeres, and in lab tests, cells given telomerase have increased the number of divisions up to 220 times. Further, mice engineered to lack the enzyme exhibit typical signs of the aging process, including graying hair and hair loss, and increased incidence of cancer.

But telomerase is unlikely to be a magical elixir that provides us with endless youth. Even if new research leads to extended life, would we want it? Can lifespan be extended along with good health or would we simply be decrepit longer? In a time undergoing explosive change, elders already find themselves increasingly marginalized. Surely we ought to devote more attention to improving the quality of life for elders in their final years than simply trying to add more years. Living well in our advanced years is one thing, but significantly extending our lifespans would put an even greater strain on an already overburdened planet.

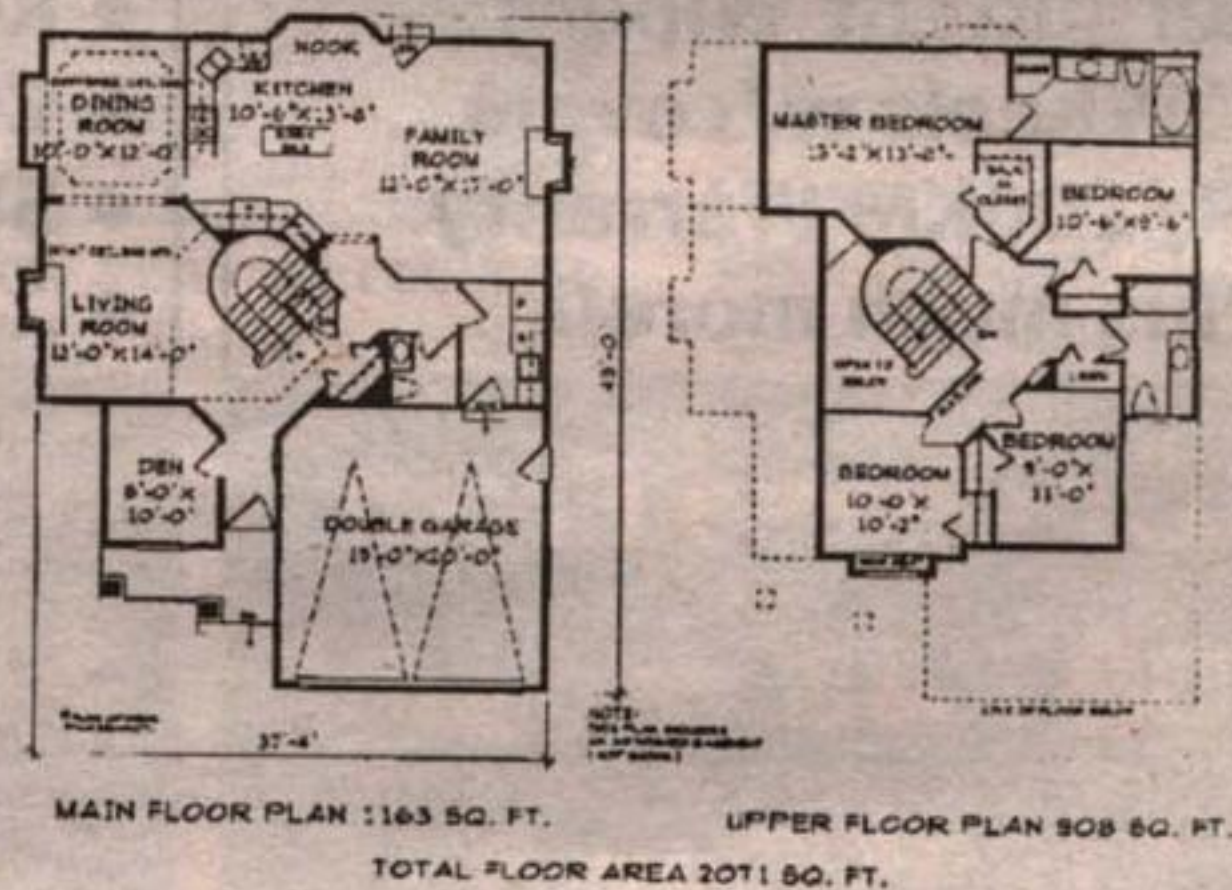
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Stylish "Neo-Heritage" design boasts many features

A contemporary board and batten exterior wall finish is combined with the more traditional finish of horizontal siding; a contemporary hip style roof features traditional gable accents with decorative shingles and brackets; a charming front veranda with ornate columns completes this look now commonly referred to as "Neo Heritage".

A den, just inside the front entrance, is ideally located for a home office. A spacious living room boasts a 9'-6" ceiling height and is partially open to the second storey. The dining room features a fashionable coffered ceiling. An open plan for the kitchen and family room creates a country style kitchen complete with a cosy gas fireplace.

An elegant curved staircase leads up to the bedroom area. The front left bedroom boasts a stylish win-

dow seat. The master is a good size and features a walk-in closet and a four piece ensuite.

An unfinished basement awaits your own creative touch.

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