

# Crowded Depot still home for Acton ambulance

The search for a new ambulance station in Acton is on the back burner as the Region sorts out the land ambulance service, which it takes over from the province on January 2001.

"It (the search) is not on hold," Halton ambulance director Jim King said when asked how soon the existing cramped, leaky depot at the rear of the Becker's plazas will be abandoned for a new station.

"We're still working on it but it's not on the front burner. We really want to get them out of there, but we don't want to rush out of one location into another that's not really what we

need for our long-term goal, either," King said, adding there may be some opportunities with the Town for a new Acton ambulance location.

Layoff notices went out to 42 ambulance employees in Halton last week, but many that got pink slips expect to be rehired as Halton takes over and goes through a regular hiring process.

Currently ambulance service is provided by the District of Halton and Mississauga Ambulance Service, a private operator owned by Laidlaw Inc. If Halton isn't ready to take over

when Laidlaw's contract ends mid-August, King said ambulance users wouldn't notice, because the province will operate the service in the interim.

King is confident response times will be better in Acton since full-time daily ambulance coverage began last fall, but can't prove it until he gets the 1999 statistics from the province.

"We'll isolate the last three-and-a-half months of the year in the Acton coverage area and we'll be able to identify what type of an impact it is having, but I anticipate we're go-

ing to see a major reduction in response times in Acton."

Halton Council recently approved an ambulance budget that includes money for upgraded defibrillators, improving existing stations and adding new ones, increase staffing levels and creating new paramedic positions in Halton Hills.


"I believe at the street level, for the person who is going to call an ambulance in the next few months, there will be a major benefit by Halton taking over land ambulance services and the change should be seamless."

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## What's Inside



Dedicated volunteers with Halton Hills Community Support and Information received some much deserved recognition and thanks last week. See photo Page 3.

The potential sale of school playground and sports fields at McKenzie-Smith Bennett School will be on the Halton District School Board agenda on May 17. See Page 9 for story.



There were great deals at the Rotary Club of Acton's three auctions at the Legion on Friday. See Page 12 for story and photos.



The Halton Hills Minor Lacrosse League began play in Acton on Saturday. Games results and photo on Page 13.

## Politician urges vigilance to fight Acton vandalism

### MSB teaching assistant gets shorne

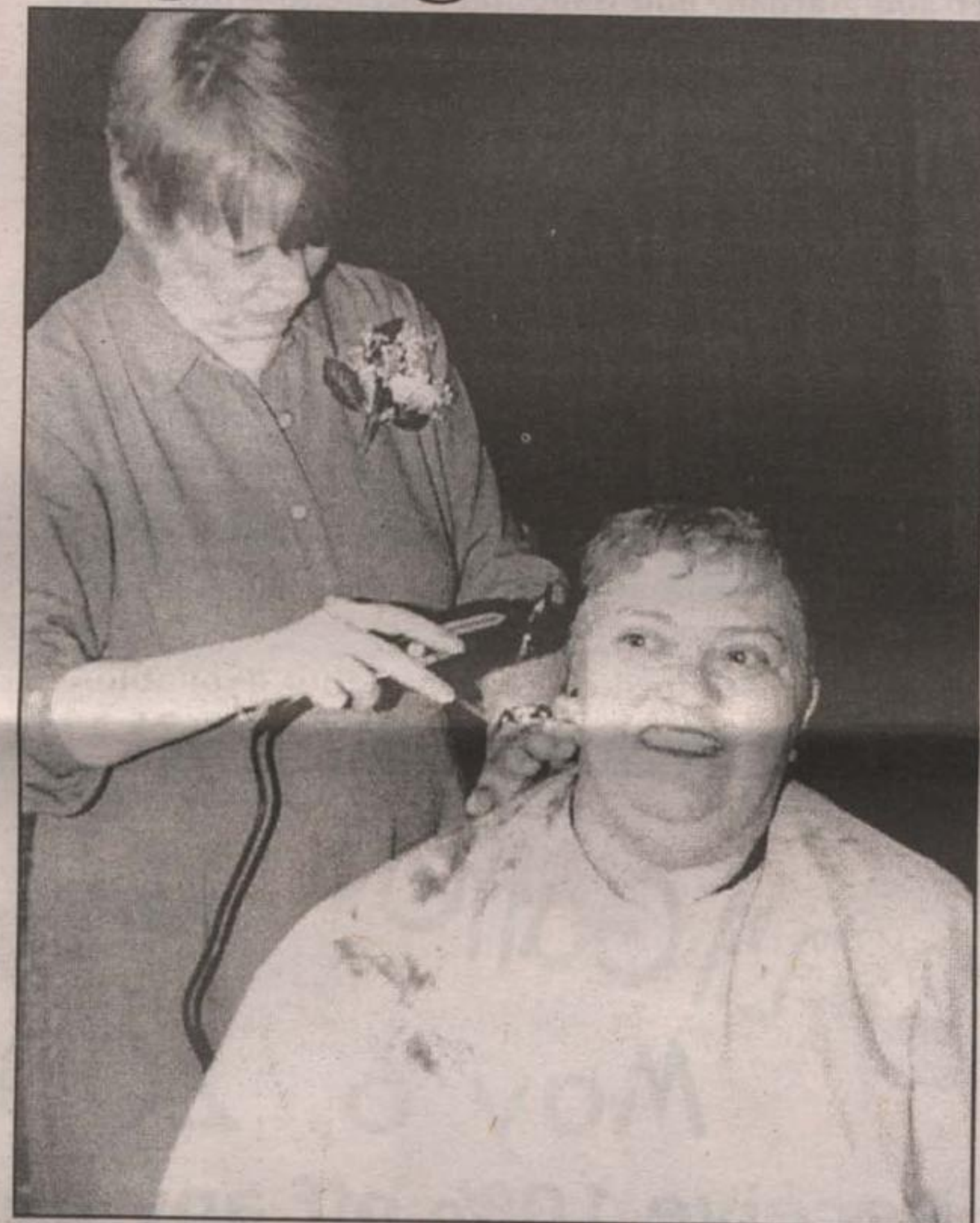
There was near pandemonium among the 500-plus students and staff at McKenzie-Smith Bennett school as instructional assistant Linda Bowen had her hair buzzed - except a little fringe at the front - off during an assembly on Monday.

Back in March, Bowen offered to shave her head if the school's Easter fundraiser generated a profit of more than \$7,500 profit. It did - \$7,523 to be exact with \$5,000 more expected - forcing Bowen to buy a few headscarves and submit to a very public shearing in the gym. (A colleague, Mary Robinson, paid \$100 for the honour of yielding the scissors.)

"It will grown back," Bowen said before she said goodbye to her short, grey hair.

"It will drive the kids crazy and turn the adults off. It's been fun and I've enjoyed the way the kids have come together," Bowen said, adding at first, no one (including her

*Continued on Page 2*



**HAIR TODAY:** McKenzie-Smith Bennett instructional assistant Linda Bowen received a buzz cut from colleague Mary Robinson during a school assembly on Monday. Bowen offered to shave her head if the school's Easter fundraiser made a \$7,500 profit. The students in fact raised \$7,523 and Bowen bravely gave up her locks.

### 'Mindless stupidity' costs Acton tax payers \$10,000

By FRANCES NIBLOCK  
The New Tanner

While not suggesting Acton residents become vigilantes to fight vandalism, Acton Councillor Norm Elliott said the "mindless stupidity that is costing us all money" has to stop.

"The public needs to wake up and say, 'enough is enough, lets try and go and do something,'" Elliott said at general committee on Monday, as he shared some disturbing Acton vandalism costs with councillors.

"If we don't start talking about this and getting the public outraged about what's happening in the community, we're asking for this to continue," Elliott said, detailing \$10,000 in vandalism repair costs in Acton in the past eight months, including \$3,700 at the Acton arena and \$6,100 at the Town-owned Boathouse in Prospect Park.

Elliott also mentioned the recent car fires at Yourway Muffler in Acton, saying the on-going vandalism has the owner questioning if he wants to stay in business. Councillor John Day, Council's representative on the Police Services Board, is working with the owner to make his site on Agnes Street at Highway 25, less of a target.

Acton Councillor Clark Somerville said the company looking after the adjacent vacant Beardmore property has been contacted about repairing part of a fence that has been ripped down in the area.

The repair bill at the arena - "mindless carnage in a brand new facility" according to Elliott - included:

- \$300 for plumbing after a puck was flushed down the toilet in the referee's dressing room
  - \$400 to repair the glass in a candy vending machine
  - \$832 to repair a washroom partition
  - \$1,200 to replace an exit door
- At the Boathouse the \$6,100 in repairs included:
- \$800 to repair and replace eaves and siding
  - \$1,040 to replace smashed windows

Councillor will ask about increasing patrols in the Yourway Muffler shop area and the vandalism issue is on the agenda of the Acton BIA (Business Improvement Area) meeting on Wednesday. Halton's deputy police chief will be at that meeting.

"Vandalism never makes sense, but it's about time we tried to get the message across to everyone that we're all paying for it," Elliott said, adding he doesn't want vigilantes, but for people to do their public duty and report anything suspicious.

## 'Fire play' has cops worried

### POLICE BEAT

Halton police are "disturbed" by a number of what they call "fire play" occurrences at Limehouse Public School. In recent weeks, a plastic playground slide was torched and a newspaper box in front of the school was set on fire. Someone also tried to set fire, apparently with the use of an accelerant, to three

trees at the rear of the school.

"Our concern is that the community be very watchful for anything suspicious out there," said acting detective sergeant Larry Brassard, adding fire play is used to describe incidents of young people who play with lighters and matches.

The most likely suspect is a young, pre-adolescent or adolescent male who is familiar and comfortable in the

school area, but not necessarily a Limehouse student. Brassard thinks someone probably knows who is responsible and urges him or her to come forward to prevent something more serious from happening.

"The three fires can't be dismissed as nuisance incidents, but are a symptom of a larger problem that would be dangerous to ignore," Brassard said.

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