

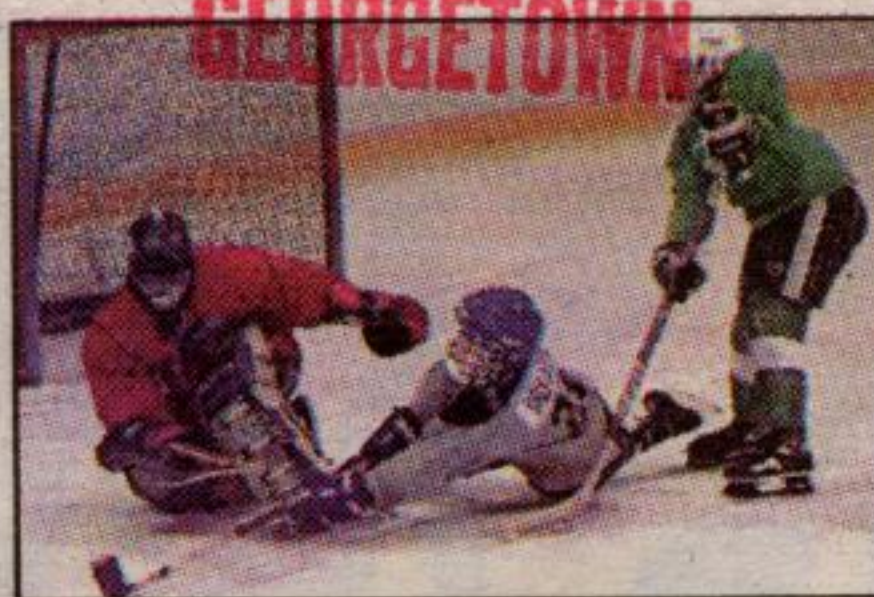
Officer honored

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57 teachers laid off by board

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Champs declared

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Weekend Edition

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NEWS AT A GLANCE

Woman hurt

A 61-year-old Mississauga woman was seriously injured in a two-car crash at Mountainview Rd. and Argyll Rd. at 5:40 p.m. Wednesday.

Jeannine Bavidge was taken to Georgetown Hospital and later to Hamilton General. She was reported in stable condition Thursday.

Police say a Ford Taurus driven northbound on Mountainview Rd. by David Bavidge was struck while turning left by a southbound Ford Bronco driven by Eric Vaz of Cambridge.

Witnesses should call Const. Steve Martin at 878-5511 ext. 5169.

Warning issued

Halton Police recommend area residents, particularly women, not walk alone or in secluded areas in light of two incidents reported recently in which women were grabbed while walking.

One incident occurred in the Main St. and Dufferin St. area and a second one being investigated occurred at about 6:30 p.m. on the Eighth Line near the ravine March 21. The women weren't injured.

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Eager for Easter

With the Easter Bunny making his rounds this weekend, Chris Hinds 8, his brother Matt 10 and sister Kait, 7 were checking out some of the goodies at Richard's Fine Chocolates at 232A Guelph St., Unit 10 in Georgetown. Not only is the Easter Bunny dropping by Richard's to stock up his supplies, Craig Johnston, owner of the store, will be holding a draw Saturday, at 5 p.m. for the winning ticket in the store's Easter draw, in which the winner will take home a 36-inch chocolate bunny. Proceeds from the draw will go to Georgetown District Hospital.

Photo by Ted Brown

Homeowners likely to feel \$133 tax hit

Halton Hills budget committee approved the town's budget Wednesday night which should result in about a \$42 annual hike in taxes on the town portion of the tax bill for the average homeowner.

When that increase (about 6.9 per cent) is combined with the expected hike from the region (the region budget hasn't been finalized yet) and offset through reductions in the education tax levy the average urban homeowner in Halton Hills is expected to face a total increase of about \$133 and rural residents about \$137. That doesn't include changes resulting from the recent reassessment.

The bulk of the increase at both levels is due to the cost of covering provincial downloading. The town's budget committee only increased the portion of the budget that wasn't affected by downloading by .83 per cent.

Town Treasurer Andrew Koopmans said Thursday the final tax impact picture for homeowners likely won't be available until June because Halton Region is waiting for final assessment figures.

"All of our tax rates that we set are dependent on regional policy decisions that are made," said Koopmans. He said the tax hikes are "based on information we have to date and the tax policies that are currently in place." Koopmans said the region could choose to shift the tax burden from one class of property owners to the other.

Budget committee members (all councillors and the mayor) made a few changes to the capital and operating budgets Wednesday. A \$42,000 expenditure for the construction of a sidewalk on Main St. S. from Maple Ave. to Cindebarke Terrace was put in the budget, and \$41,000 for repairs to the parking lot at Gordon Alcott Arena was removed.

The town's budget, which includes the \$4.6 million capital budget and \$19.8 million operating budget, are not official until council approves it, likely at the April 20 council meeting.

Utility workers walk off the job

Rejecting a tentative agreement reached Tuesday, 113 planning and public works staffers with Halton's Environmental Services division went on strike at 12:01 a.m. Thursday.

The workers, members of CUPE Local 2620, voted more than 70 per cent against the deal which was reached between union and region negotiators, with the help of a mediator, after a marathon 24-hour bargaining session.

Regional chair Joyce Savoline expressed regret the workers turned down the deal saying, "The agreement was both fair and reasonable and was within the mandate supported by regional council."

Gerry Dean, CUPE Local 2620 president,

said Wednesday night he knew the offer "was going to be a hard sell" and it didn't meet the minimum demands of the membership.

Under the proposed deal employees, who have been without a contract since December 1996 were to get a 17-cent an hour raise as of December 31, 1997, a 34-cent an hour increase as of February 16, 1998 and 34 cents an hour more in January 1999.

Dean said there was to be no retroactive pay for 1997. A number of regional facilities and services will be impacted by the walkout including: water purification plants, waste water treatment plants and water distribution systems.

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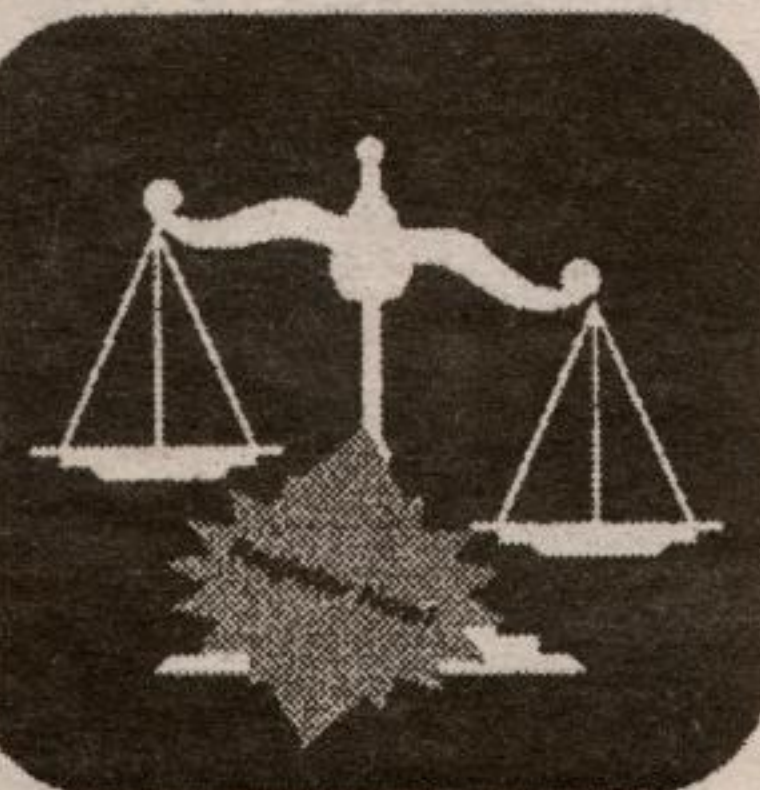
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