

# Sidewalk construction angers homeowners

The construction of a sidewalk on Harriet St. in Georgetown South has angered some of the residents.

Margo Mathieu, who lives on the west side of the street, said she was "shocked" when she woke up Monday to find workers putting in a sidewalk on her side of the street, because when she bought her home she was told by the Fernbrook salesperson there would be no sidewalk there.

She said that was one of the main reasons they selected that side of the street for their home.

Mathieu said in July she was reassured again by Fernbrook and the town there would be no sidewalk on her side of the street. She checked the plan and there wasn't a sidewalk shown.

She said she wasn't worried until Friday when a neighbor told her the sidewalk was going in.

Mathieu's neighbor, Dragan Ristic, the owner of a Great Gulf home, said he was also told at that sales office there would not be a sidewalk on his side of the street. Gary Cole, another Great Gulf homeowner on the street, also said he was reassured by sales staff there wouldn't be a sidewalk.

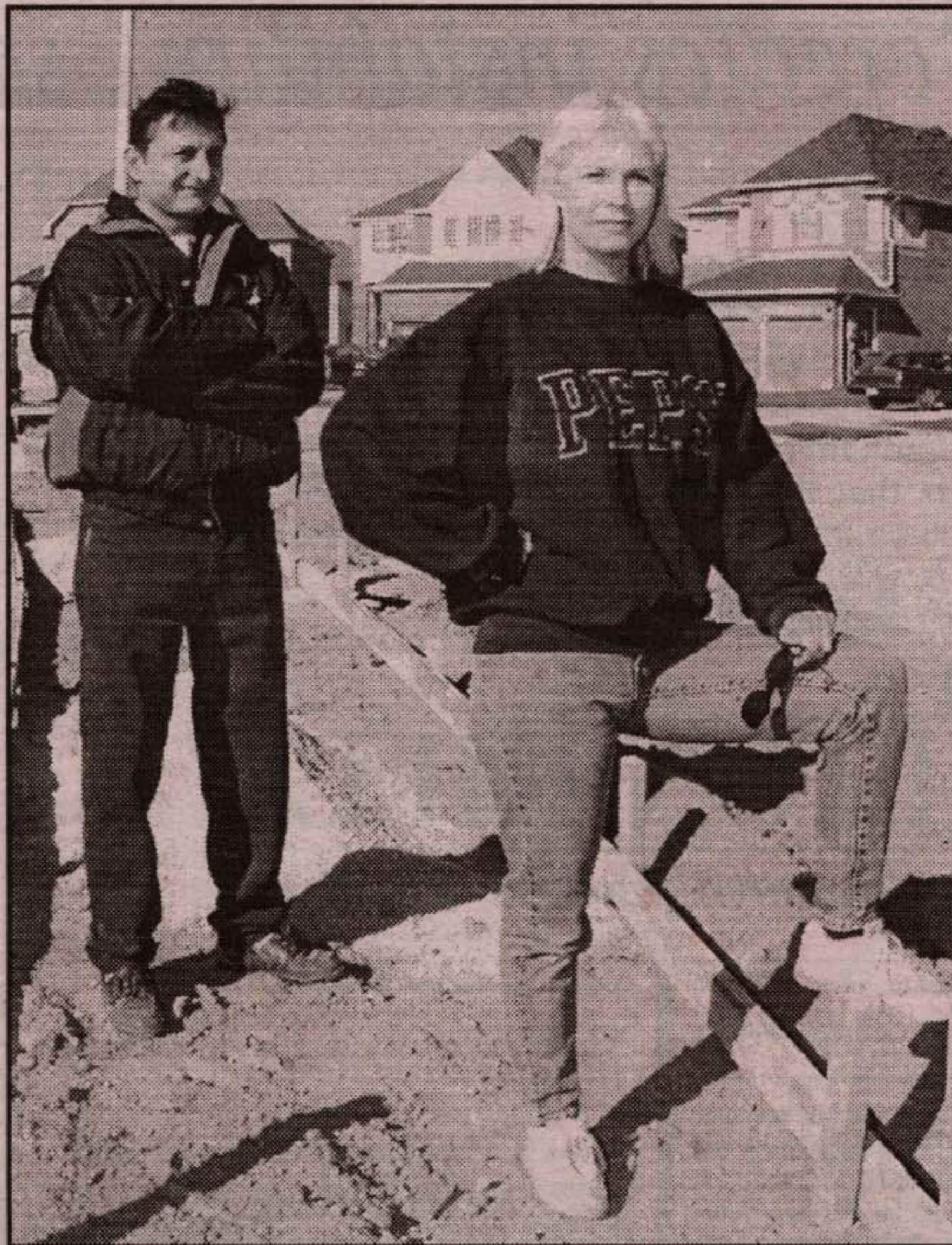
Chris Gates, another Harriet St. Great Gulf homeowner, said the fact there was no sidewalk planned for his side of the street was a major factor in his decision to buy there.

Yesterday (Tuesday) morning a meeting was held on the street with concerned residents, town staff, councillors Ron Chatten and Bob Inglis, and Mayor Marilyn Serjeantson to discuss the issue.

"It's great to see the politicians coming out and caring for the people," said Margo's husband Brian.

Martin Bateson, development approvals co-ordinator for the town, said the town asked Great Gulf, which was constructing the sidewalk, to stop until the matter could be sorted out. He said on Great Gulf's engineering drawings submitted to the town a sidewalk was shown on the west side of the street, but it wasn't shown on Fernbrook's engineering drawings.

Serjeantson said due to an oversight at the town, the lack of the sidewalk in the Fernbrook section on the west side of



Georgetown South residents Dragan Ristic and Margo Mathieu are upset that construction of a sidewalk on their side of Harriet St. has begun when they were told there would be no sidewalk. Photo by Ted Brown

the street was overlooked. The town standard for a street like Harriet St. is sidewalks on both sides of the road.

Serjeantson said a meeting will be held at the Civic Centre at 6:30 p.m. Thursday with concerned residents and a recommendation on the issue could be brought to general committee. Before the meeting Mathieu intends to go door to door to survey her neighbors on whether or not they want a sidewalk. She said she's talked to most of them and they don't want the sidewalk either.

At press time no one from Great Gulf Homes was available for comment.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer

# Board to pay teachers, staff \$6.4M in gratuities

Retirement gratuities for Halton District School Board staff have reached \$6.4 million this year, more than double the 1996 total.

Superintendent of business services Wayne McNally said accelerating retirement rates have led to the increases. The payments are for unused sick days accumulated by retiring employees.

"We should stick some money away. I don't think retirements will be easing up," said McNally at last Wednesday's board meeting (Oct. 28). "There'll be fairly strong retirement rates in the future."

The board approved the treasurer's suggestion that a surplus from the board's 1998 short year budget (Jan. 1-Aug. 31) be placed in the general working reserve fund. He estimated the surplus at nearly \$500,000.

The board also approved an expenditure budget of just over \$262 million for the coming year (1998-99).

McNally said many more board staff than anticipated quit during the board's short year budget period, leading to the jump in retirement gratuity payments.

Retirements of school staff across Ontario more than tripled this year, following the easing of pension requirements.

McNally said the board will apply for a ministry of education special assistance grant to help cover the over-expenditure on retirement payments.

The treasurer said Friday that \$5.9 million of this year's retirement gratuities were paid to teachers, vice-principals and principals. This total compares to \$3.2 million in 1997 and \$2.8 million in retirement gratuities for the same group.

This year's total of \$6.4 million included retirement gratuities paid to other board staff.

In past years, the Education Act has allowed teachers 20 sick days a year, up to a cap of 400 days. Payment of retirement gratuities has been at the discretion of local school boards.

—By Dennis Smith, special

# What You Said

'In a recent survey, 45 per cent of Ontarians rated the quality of care in Ontario hospitals fair or poor. How do you rate the quality of care in our hospitals?'



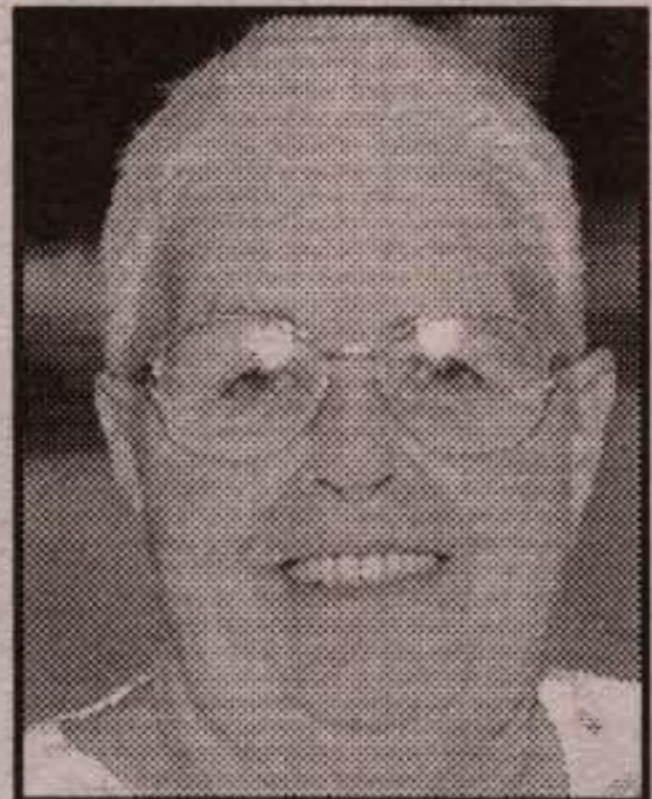
Bonnie Charter, housewife, Georgetown

"I feel it's better quality care in the smaller hospitals than in the larger ones. I was in the hospital for five weeks, in both a large one and a small one. Believe me, I'll take the smaller hospital any day."



Lew Ward, retired, Georgetown

"I think it's good. I can only go by my own direct experience, and they (the hospital staff) have gone out of their way to accommodate me, not beyond the norm, but they certainly wanted to help."



Lois Kowalchuk, retired, Georgetown

"My husband was in Georgetown Hospital for two weeks, and you couldn't ask for better care. He was also in two years ago, and received excellent care then as well. I realize they (the hospitals) could use more help, but they still give great care in spite of it."



Steve Gemesi, retired, Glen Williams

"I think it's pretty good. My needs have been met, and they seem to look after me. I haven't been in (the hospital) for a while, but recently attended day surgery every three months, and after, they would call me every time, to see how I was doing."



William Braithwaite, retired, Inglewood

"I haven't been in one, but I think it's poor from what the newspaper says. Mike Harris maybe cut a lot of money out of the system, but there was also a lot of waste in the hospitals."

Will start at 1:30 p.m.

# Santa Claus parade hits town Saturday

After a warm, sunny weekend it may be hard to believe but Santa Claus will be coming to town.

The 68th annual Georgetown Lions Club Santa Claus parade will roll through town on Saturday (Nov. 7). The parade begins at 1:30 from Sinclair Ave. and Guelph St. The parade changed its route last year and will follow that new route again this year. It follows Guelph St. from Sinclair Ave. to Mill St. then turns left and follows Mill St. to Charles St., where it turns left and finishes at the Georgetown Fairgrounds.



"The route worked well last year," said John Holland, one of the organizers of the event. "There was a lot less congestion downtown and logistically it was a lot better."

Holland said he expects 60 floats, about 10 of which are new to the parade this year. It should take the parade approximately one hour to pass one point.

Eight bands will take part in the parade including the Acton Citizens Band, Oakville Shriners Band, Arthur District High School, Guelph Sea Cadets, Georgetown Air Cadets, Georgetown Pipe Band, Emerald Knights Drum Corps and the Black Forest Air Cadets.



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