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# The Independent

## Weekend Edition & Free Press

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### NEWS AT A GLANCE

#### Sides to meet

■ The town's unionized outside workers and the town are going back to the bargaining table Tuesday.

Steve McKnight, president of Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 73, said the town's personnel officer contacted the union representative last week to set a date for negotiations.

The union represents about 40 town employees including public works employees who plow roads and clear sidewalks and arena, pool, parks and cemetery employees. They have been without a contract since April.

Talks between the union and town broke down on October 20 and the union filed for conciliation.

#### Truck stolen

■ Halton Police are investigating the theft of a 1988 GMC blue pickup truck from Truck Town Terminals on Steeles Ave.

The truck, valued at \$5,000, was stolen from the lot sometime between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. Tuesday.

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### Making friends

Richard Faber, 2, of Acton wasn't too sure about one curious duck at Fairy Lake as he fed the waterfowl at the lake with a little help from his mom. It was a mutual situation however, since the duck was equally apprehensive about Richard's presence.

Photo by Ted Brown

## Halton unlikely to be exempt from tax cap

They've dubbed it 'Nightmare on Eves Street.' As the province's seventh attempt at fair tax legislation sprints to the finish line, regional council is holding out little hope Halton will be considered for exemption.

"What seems to be pretty clear to me is the likelihood of Halton being exempt is pretty low, if not nil," Joe Rinaldo, Halton's finance commissioner, told regional council Wednesday.

Halton has been fighting the tax cap legislation on the grounds that local final tax bills have already been sent. The region used tools such as phasing increases and rebate plans to moderate property tax swings caused by current value assessment.

To scrap those bills now is the stuff of bad dreams, said Oakville Councillor Liz Behrens. "I'm looking at this as an administrative nightmare," she said.

That prompted Halton Hills Councillor Rick Bonnette to dub the legislation, The Nightmare on Eves Street, in reference to Ontario's Minister of Finance, Ernie Eves.

If passed, the legislation would enforce mandatory province-wide tax caps on industrial and commercial properties to the tune of 10 per cent in 1998, and 5 per cent for both 1999 and 2000.

In Halton, that means 2,122 properties that had tax increases of more than 10 per cent prior to this legislation would be capped, creating a \$9.2 million 1998 shortfall for the region.

To make up the loss, the region would have to raise taxes on 1,919 properties that had been given decreases on what was meant to be their final tax bill.

The legislation will likely also cap apartments. That will affect 65 properties at a loss for the region of \$402,672.

Clawbacks to 53 properties are expected to make up that loss.

The region expects to have two more meetings with the province before December 10, when the

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