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# The Independent

## Weekend Edition & Free Press

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### NEWS AT A GLANCE

**Teen charged**  
■ A 16-year-old Terra Cotta girl was charged with possession of a controlled substance after police seized a quantity of methamphetamine from her in the Guelph St. and Normandy Blvd. area Monday night. She is to be in Milton court on Jan. 7.

**No cause yet**  
■ Halton Hills Fire Department has completed its investigation of the November 10 fire at a 17 Sideroad home, and has been unable to determine the cause. The blaze caused about \$325,000 worth of damage.

**Cops recruit**  
■ Halton Regional Police Service is now accepting applications for future openings as police constables and is hosting a recruiting information night next Wednesday. Seating is available on a first-come first-served basis. Call 878-5511 for more information.

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**Sprucing up the locals for the party**

With the annual Montgomery Christmas celebrations taking place tomorrow (Saturday) in Norval, local merchants and organizers like Julie Pomeroy of Canoe Country have been working overtime to prepare for the event. A little garland and some well placed bows give the carved bear in front of her store a festive look, to greet those visitors to the village.

Photo by Ted Brown

## Council delays hydro decision for public input

Halton Hills council has postponed a decision to take over the hydro business in town until the public has a chance to have their say.

Council decided, at last week's meeting, to hold two public meetings— one each in Georgetown and Acton— to gauge public opinion on a plan to operate Halton Hills Hydro as part of a town-owned company.

Dates for the meetings are: Tuesday, Dec. 7, 7 p.m. at the Civic Centre and Wednesday, Dec. 8, 7 p.m. at Halton Hills Hydro, 43 Alice St., Acton.

Last year, the Ontario government passed the Energy Competition Act which in effect deregulates the hydro industry and introduces competition— starting in 2000. Hydro customers will have a choice of who will supply their electricity, much like the telephone and natural gas industries.

electricity from generating stations to municipal electric utilities like Halton Hills Hydro, will be maintained by the Ontario Hydro Services Company,

With deregulation there's about a \$21 increase on hydro bills.  
— Dan Guatto  
Halton Hills Hydro

Halton Hills Hydro board and staff formed a steering committee earlier this year to determine the direction this town should take.

It recommended unanimously to council that the town should operate the regulated utility called Halton Hills Hydro Inc. which will distribute electricity within the town and be the "default" supplier— the one who supplies hydro to a customer who doesn't choose a new supplier.

That company in turn would operate three companies: Halton Hills Fibre Optics to market that burgeoning technology; Halton Hills Energy Services Inc. to perform services such as street lighting, design and maintenance, water heater rentals, water billing services, etc; and Halton Hills Energy Inc. which will remain dormant initially but has been set up to allow possible future entry into the marketing of energy.

Members of town staff, council and

The wires and the towers that carry the

regulated by the Ontario Energy Board.

But the distribution and retailing of such things as electricity, fibre optics and water heater rentals is now open to competition and it means the dismantling of Halton Hills Hydro in its current form.

See HYDRO, pg. 9

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