

Music teacher's composition to aid refugees in Afghanistan



Music teacher Dale Wood and student Robyn Hyndman have combined to produce a CD of Wood's composition, *Let Us Hold On To Each Other*. Proceeds will go to Afghan refugees. Photo by Ted Brown

The September 11 World Trade Center tragedy affected many people in different ways. Local music teacher Dale Wood was inspired to write a song to deal with his feelings.

But, out of the composition of his music, refugees in Afghanistan will benefit from Wood's inspiration.

"I guess it was my way of dealing with the tragedy," said Wood, "People deal with these events in many different ways, and I used my music to express my feelings."

The song, *Let Us Hold On To Each Other*, was composed and Wood had one of his music students Robyn Hyndman, 14, sing it at the September 16 vigil that was held at Holy Cross Church, to allow people to deal with the enormity of the terrorist attacks.

"I knew as soon as I wrote it that Robyn was my first choice to perform it," said Wood. "I called her and she agreed to do it."

Hyndman was pleased to be able to perform the song, and readily agreed to take part in the project.

"I was surprised," said Hyndman, "There was no applause all night at the vigil, but after I sang, the people applauded. It was a really nice feeling

that I was able to make them feel better."

After that performance, some people approached Wood with favourable comments, suggesting the idea of creating a CD of the song, and using it as a promotional piece, to help victims of the tragedies.

"When I wrote it, I figured any monies raised by this song would go to the disaster relief funds," said Wood, "But since then, we see that the refugees in Afghanistan are in need too, so we decided to donate any monies raised to UNICEF, to aid those less fortunate."

As a result, the CD is now a reality, and it will be offered for sale at \$10, with all proceeds going to UNICEF.

The song will be performed by Hyndman at the Georgetown Choral Society and Georgetown Children's Chorus' annual Remembrance Day concert at Holy Cross Church, November 11. The CD will be on sale at that time, too.

In addition, it can be purchased at the Lottery Kiosk in Georgetown Market Place, Delrex Variety in the mall, Canada Trust on Main Street, and both Georgetown branches of the Royal Bank.

—By Ted Brown, staff writer

Chamber wants business expansion fee eliminated, not reduced

Halton Hills council hopes a reduction in the town's cash-in-lieu parkland requirement will encourage businesses to stay in town, but a Chamber of Commerce representative says it doesn't go far enough.

Council voted to approve policy amendments to the cash-in-lieu of parkland for industrial and commercial expansions at a recent council meeting.

The cash-in-lieu of parkland policy is provincial legislation in the Ontario Planning Act that is applied to anyone who plans to develop or expand a property. The previous cash-in-lieu fee for industrial/commercial (I/C) expansions was 2 per cent of the total value of the property while the fee for residential homes remains unchanged at 5 per cent. The money goes into a special town reserve fund for land acquisition for parkland purposes.

Ward 4 Councillor Bob Inglis, who asked that the policy be reviewed, said a number of people had expressed frustration about it to him, including one business owner who had threatened to leave town.

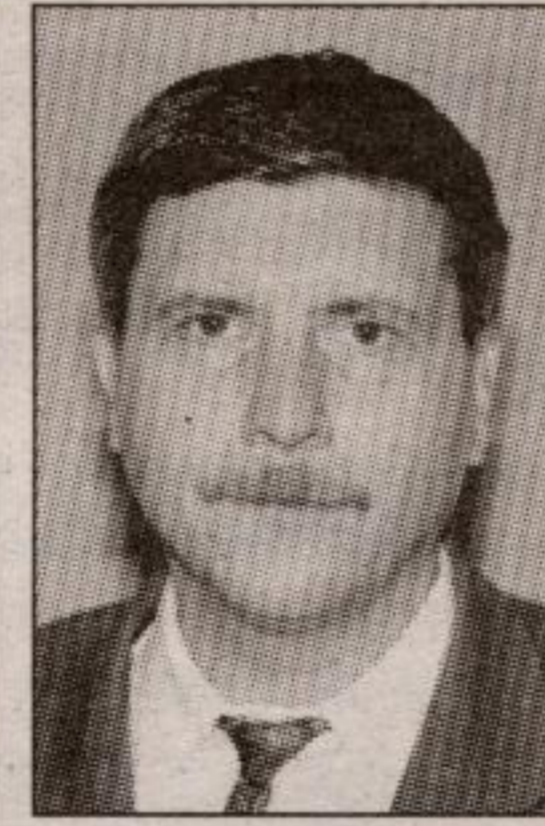
"This (the amended policy) speaks well towards retaining our businesses," said Inglis, "and it's a big step forward to keeping them here and encouraging them

to expand especially in this time of economic uncertainty."

Past president of the Chamber of Commerce Tom Sikatori, who has been lobbying the town to reform the policy, agreed, "it's a step in the right direction, but they should be looking at it closer, and determining whether or not they can do without it or could make more concessions."

The new policy now gives an exemption to I/C expansions less than 25 per cent of the site's total buildable area. For applications greater than 25 per cent, the 2 per cent fee will be pro-rated considering the area of the expansion relative to the total land value.

For example, if a business on a four-acre site wanted to expand by 25,000 sq. ft. to its full buildable area of 50,000 sq. ft., the old policy would require a \$12,000 cash in lieu payment (2 per cent of \$600,000) of the total value of the proper-



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—Tom Sikatori, past president Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce

(25 per cent), there would be no charge.

"They should be revisiting the calculation process to further entice companies to expand," said Sikatori, suggesting instead a charge related to the increase of building's value only.

"The parkland dedication should not be a cost factor, because many companies who are expanding are donating to the community in other ways, so why should they pay twice?"

He pointed to the recent refurbishment of Remembrance Park to which many companies donated as well as to local motion—a town-led campaign to raise money for new recreational facilities.

"If I'm (a company) putting on a

\$100,000 addition, I don't want to pay any more than I have to. I want to put my money into my expansion, not into parkland dedication, because when I expand I'm going to hire more people and do more things," said Sikatori, who represents about 450 chamber members.

Since 1996 the town has collected about \$931,000 in cash-in-lieu payments—of which only \$52,000 related to I/C expansions. Parks manager Warren Harris said I/C buildings are included because it's felt the employees use the parkland.

But, according to a town report, Economic Development Officer Al O'Neill has advised this has been creating a "significant disincentive to industrial or commercial expansion."

In a memo, O'Neill stated that he is working with three existing businesses about expansion, but all have indicated to him that the 2 per cent dedication may be a factor in their decision to go elsewhere. The cities of Brampton, Guelph, Mississauga, Waterloo and Oakville all provide exemptions to I/C expansions.

"It should not be our obligation as business owners to pay for parks, we donate," said Sikatori.

—By Cynthia Gamble, staff writer


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