



ENTERTAINMENT

Youngsters
have 'big' part

Page 10

SPORTS

Acton player
delivers
'Bigg' time
Page 14



PARENTING

Create a
haunted house
8-page
section inside



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Wednesday, Oct. 26, 2005

52 Pages Vol. 128 No. 32

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Town council sets precedent for closed-captioning of meetings

Starting in November, the Town of Halton Hills and Cogeco TV will offer closed captioning of council meetings—the first municipality in Ontario to voluntarily do so.

In an unanimous vote, members of Halton Hills council agreed to fund the closed captioning process—when the spoken word is translated to the written word at the bottom of the television screen. Council will draw on its contingency fund for \$6,000 for the remainder of the 2005 council meetings, and spend another \$4,000 from the tax stabilization reserve for the January and February 2006 council meetings. By then council will have discussed during the 2006 budget discussions whether to fund closed captioning for the remainder of the 2006 council meetings. Seeking funding from other sources such as service clubs is another option.



CHRIS KENOPIC

The issue was pressed by the Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee, led by member Chris Kenopic, who through an American sign language interpreter and a PowerPoint presentation outlined the importance of closed captioning to the deaf, hard of hearing and senior communities in Halton Hills.

Kenopic said Canadian Hearing Society statistics show that 25 per cent of adult Canadians have hearing loss (nearly one out of every four people) and that translates to about 12,500 Halton Hills residents, who may have some type of hearing loss.

Kenopic said ensuring communication is accessible to all is a legal right of the deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people.

"Council has an accountability in that we have got to make sure that our residents have accessibility to these meetings," said Kenopic. "Your decision will benefit not only those who want to watch and live and breathe politics today, but those who are going to grow up and want to see it at home with their families so they can debate community issues, who may in effect down the road become council members themselves."

See CLOSED, pg. 4



**Knit...
one,
purl two...
for a Cure**

Little Teagan Ruttimann, 1, helps mom Jenny Ruttimann of Georgetown knit during the Georgetown Yarn and Crafts's first annual Knit for the Cure. The successful event raised \$5,500 for the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation on Saturday. Sixteen ladies collected pledges and then came to the shop on Saturday and knitted or crocheted from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Ladies came from Georgetown, Acton, Rockwood, Milton, Brampton, Oakville, Waterloo, and Oakville. During the day they knitted/crocheted chemo hats, breast cancer ribbons and also worked on their own projects. The ladies also took part in mini-workshops and shared many knitting and crocheting stories. Local businesses donated to the month-long silent auction. Donations for Knit for the Cure are still being accepted until the end of the month at Georgetown Yarn and Crafts, 170 Guelph St. (905-877-1521).

Photo by Yves Desjardins

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