

THE INDEPENDENT

& FREE PRESS

Graduates and award winners

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Voted Ontario's best newspaper

Recipe of the week:
Caramel brownies

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Local man helps out in paper clip-for-house swap

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Humane Society needs home for cats

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WEDNESDAY...

Georgetown's Holly Williams has accepted a hockey scholarship offer from Neumann College. See Wednesday's *Independent & Free Press* for details.



Region predicts 3.7% hike in taxes

MELANIE HENNESSEY
Special to The IFP

A tax increase that could be quite similar to this year's is on the horizon for Halton residents in 2007.

Region staff is forecasting a possible 3.7 per cent hike for next year, or an extra \$45 for the average homeowner based on a \$300,000 assessment— up slightly from the 3.6 per cent increase approved for 2006.

The numbers went before regional council Wednesday and were also presented to the Region's budget review committee Monday, where Director of Financial Planning and Budgets Mark Scinocca explained the details.

He highlighted the items that are driving taxes up, including an additional \$3.7 million needed for staff compensation, \$6.4 million for the Best Start childcare program, \$1.5 million for GTA pooling and \$1 million for waste management operations.

The committee also learned that funding the Region recently received from the Province, which lowered the ultimate 2006 tax hike from 3.6 per cent to 3.1 per cent, helped keep next year's projected tax increase down to 3.7 per cent.

Scinocca went on to list the top 10 most expensive projects to be covered in the 2007 tax capital budget. Topping the list is the widening of Trafalgar Road from two lanes to four from Britannia Road to south of Hwy. 401 for \$8.2 million, followed by Derry Road's widening between James Snow Parkway and Ninth Line for \$5.3 million.

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Mighty mite

Rachel Bridges of the Halton Hills Hawks Mites releases a pitch during the Hawks' 10-2 win over Stratford in the bronze medal game at the Hawks 10th annual fastpitch tournament at the Georgetown Fairgrounds Sunday. For details see page 18.

Photo by Sabrina Byrnes

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