

Ex-school treasurer sentenced to six months house arrest

STEPHANIE HOUNSELL
Special to The IFP

A local woman who swiped more than \$20,000 from two Milton school councils and one in Georgetown when she served as treasurer will spend the next six months under house arrest.

Brenda Pickering, 43, pleaded guilty to three counts of theft over \$5,000 earlier this year.

Pickering— who has no previous criminal record— served as the volunteer treasurer for the school councils at J.M. Denyes and W.I. Dick as well as at Georgetown's Stewarttown Public School between 2002 and 2005.

A police investigation was initiated after a complaint by the Halton District School Board that irregularities had been discovered in the school councils' accounting practices.

Pickering was charged in February of 2006.

Last Friday at Ontario Court of Justice in Burlington, Justice Allan Cooper sentenced her to an 18-month conditional sentence, with six months' house arrest.

Pickering will be permitted to leave her home only for employment and for a few hours every Monday to shop for necessities. After the 18 months, she'll be on probation for a year.

For those two-and-a-half years,

Pickering won't be permitted to serve in a position of trust for any not-for-profit organization.

At the time of the thefts, Pickering lived in Halton Hills. She now resides in Milton.

The sentencing had been delayed numerous times, with Pickering waiting for a tax return that would allow her to pay the balance of her restitution.

She was still waiting Friday, and has almost \$8,000 left to pay. Cooper gave her until October 15.

The court heard earlier in the proceedings that Pickering used the stolen money— about \$10,000 from J.M. Denyes' council, \$5,500 from W.I. Dick and \$9,000 from Stewarttown- to pay off credit cards and property taxes.

She has two children, aged 15 and 17, for whom she's the sole provider.

Cooper's sentence was in accordance with a joint submission made by Crown attorney Grace Romano and defence lawyer Thomas Hicks.

There for the sentencing was Debra Jolivet, who was vice-chair of the J.M. Denyes school council when the theft occurred. She said she's happy the ordeal is over.

"I've been anxious to see a resolution for a long time," she said.

When the theft was discovered, Jolivet said she felt "really betrayed" by Pickering.

Pickering declined comment.



The Regional
Municipality of Halton
www.halton.ca

WE'RE MOVING FORWARD ON SUSTAINABLE HALTON PHASE II – GROWTH CONCEPTS

Halton Region is developing a plan for building sustainable and healthy communities for generations to come. This growth management initiative is called **Sustainable Halton**. Halton Region's efforts will mean less sprawl, greater protection of farmland, better infrastructure, and more liveable communities.

In June of this year, Halton Region released five Growth Concepts that show where future homes and jobs could be located.

In September, the Region is hosting **four open houses** to discuss the five Growth Concepts. Come to an open house to learn about how the Region is planning for sustainable and healthy communities and how we will meet the Province's population and employment growth forecasts for Halton Region. We want to hear your views of the Growth Concepts. Your comments are important as we move forward on Sustainable Halton and further refine the concepts in the next phase of work.

If you are unable to attend, or want more information, please visit our website at www.halton.ca/sustainablehalton. Follow the links to the online workbook and give us your thoughts.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sustainable Halton Meeting Schedule

Date	Location	Venue	Time
Monday September 8	Burlington	Appleby Ice Centre Multi-Purpose Room 1201 Appleby Line	6:15 to 9:00 p.m. *presentation at 6:45
Tuesday September 9	Milton	Milton Sports Centre Banquet Room 605 Santa Maria Blvd	6:15 to 9:00 p.m. *presentation at 6:45
Wednesday September 10	Oakville	River Oaks Community Centre Community Room A 2400 Sixth Line	6:15 to 9:00 p.m. *presentation at 6:45
Tuesday September 16	Halton Hills	Georgetown District High School Cafeteria 70 Guelph Street Georgetown	6:15 to 9:00 p.m. *presentation at 6:45

For more information, please contact either:

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Kids are back in School - Drive SAFE

Labour Day weekend signals back to school for Halton students. The roads and neighbourhoods in our community will be busier with children walking, bicycling, or taking the bus to and from school.

We would like to remind all motorists that when driving your vehicle, be aware of the speed limit at all times, particularly in school zones. Remember when approaching a stopped school bus with its upper red lights flashing, vehicles travelling in both directions must stop.

Drive SAFE (Safety Awareness For Everyone) is a partnership between Halton Region and Halton Regional Police Service to promote road safety. To learn more about the Drive SAFE program visit our website, www.halton.ca/drivesafe.



Gary Carr
Gary Carr
Regional Chair

Halton Regional Meeting Schedule

September 9 9:30 a.m. Health & Social Services Committee
September 10 9:30 a.m. Planning & Public Works Committee