

New principal at MSB...

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– into the school's new attitude of the place being all about success.

Parents have been very active over the summer fundraising to replace playground equipment that had to be removed and French applauds their efforts and commitment.

"We hope to work with

everyone, get the whole community involved," she says. "A lot of our role is look at getting it right. We'll work slowly, make a fresh start. That's what good relations is all about. We'll have high expectations for the pupils, behaviourally and academically."

As well as spending money on the school itself, the board has also provided funds for an extra primary class teacher even though pupil numbers have not increased to a level that would normally trigger a staff increase.

"They know class size is a real concern with parents here and they've given us an additional teacher to address that concern," she adds.

New staff faces include Sue Lamarre (secretary), Monica Churchill (Kindergarten), Debbie Mashinter (Gr. 1), Carolyn Neilsen (CERT),

and Katy Leask, Ashleigh Schutte, Tanya Ferro and Tony Robinson (all teaching French). Robinson will also do boys' physical education.

The appointment to McKenzie-Smith-Bennett is not French's first stint as a principal; nor is it her first acquaintance with Acton.

A long-time resident of the Rockwood area, French taught art for 10 years at Acton High School and her sons attended the school and participated in the town's sports programs. She has served as vice principal and principal at several other Halton schools and comes here from a term as principal of Georgetown's Centennial Middle school.

Her vice principal, Paul VanderHelm was a vice principal with the Peel Board of Education for six years before moving to Halton.



JUST JAMMIN: *Nelson Gage*, made up of Riley McGillonay, Kevin Vicery and Mike Brown, treated people to some tunes at the Bethel Church skateboard park in Acton on Sunday. Check them out at www.myspace.com/nelsongage. *Rebecca Ring Photo*

Georgetown crow WNV positive

A dead crow found in the area of the 9th Line and Guelph St. in Georgetown has tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV) showing Halton is at the season's peak risk weeks for human infection, the Region's health department says.

Mosquitoes trapped in the area of Dundas St. and Highway 407 in Burlington also tested positive for WNV, the first found in the city this year, show the risk of infection for humans extends through the region.

To avoid infection, the Region's health department suggests residents take these precautions:

- Cover up. Wear light-coloured, long-sleeved shirts and pants with tightly-woven fabric.
- Avoid being outdoors in the early evening to morning. This is when mosquitoes are most active and likely to bite, as well as at any time in shady, wooded areas.
- Use an approved insect repellent, such as one containing DEET.

Tax increase certain...

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tenance agreement and data transmission costs. A couple of funding sources available to the town in the past have been eliminated by changes to provincial eligibility criteria. On the other hand, debentures for the Acton arena will be paid off in 2008 leaving the municipality practically debt-free, so the picture wasn't all black.

One big item in the list of municipal expenses is the inclusion of \$260,000 (1.3 per cent of the operating budget) to cover the cost of hiring four new full time firefighters. This will be the first step in an ongoing process aimed at giving the town

a basic complement of staff to augment its volunteers. Fire Chief Bob Meads said it will take several years of hiring at this rate to meet the department's needs. Council decided in May to begin the process next year.

DeSousa confirmed that funds allocated to reconstructing Main Street South in Acton are in place and the project is still expected to happen next year.

The most serious complaint was over the disproportionate funds allocated to the town's Public Works and Engineering department as compared to those for Parks

and Recreation.

"I know we need roads," Coun. Jane Fogal said, "but people expect new parks and trails and cultural services, too."

Engineering, Public Works and Building Maintenance director Rick Henry pointed out that federal and provincial money is available for infrastructure projects but the town has to contribute its share in order to get the grants. There is no funding for soft services.

Parks and Recreation director Terry Alyman said the federal government has rejected overtures from municipalities seeking recreational grants and advised them to go to the province for their funding. The government needs to get a louder, more consistent message that people have priorities other than health care and roads before it will consider changes to its policies, Alyman was told.

Coun. Bryan Lewis reminded council that they started their budgeting process with a proposed increase of around seven per cent. By the end, they had whittled that down to 4.7 per cent.

"Six point four per cent does put people's hair up," Mayor Rick Bonnette said, "but nothing's etched in stone."

The process begins seriously in January after the new council takes office. The budget will be finalized and approved in February.

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