

Cool reaction to new ice charges

By BRAD REAUME
The Champion

The complaints were iced. A decision to shift an additional \$9,700 to users of leisure services as part of municipal budget plans was confirmed recently.

Council sympathy produced a close vote, but in the end councillors stuck to the new fees.

The complaints, while mentioning increased costs, were actually directed at the late notice. Ice using groups in particular were concerned about the added difficulty in collecting from individual users.

Ice fees for adult groups will rise to \$120 per hour, councillors heard, roughly what other municipalities charge.

Councillor Wally Hunter acknowledged that the ice rates are comparable with other centers but said those places have much more elaborate facilities.

"Our issue is the timing of the notification," said figure skating instructor Tracey McQueen. "We've rented ice for 25 years and every year there is an increase to reflect inflation. The timing of this increase is inappropriate for our sport. It is difficult to collect money after the fact."

She added the town is not providing any more service in exchange for the higher fee.

"I'm sympathetic but I have a budget that has to be balanced," said Mr. Hunter. "I'm not increasing taxes to subsidize the cost of services which should be tied to user fees."

Mr. Hunter added that overall the Town of

Milton is still covering \$500,000 per year in costs for leisure services that could be coming from user fees. Councillor Colin Best said Milton is ripe for a private company to come in and build an arena.

Councillors debated the merits of moving the timing of the budget process for 1998 but were stymied by the municipal election slated for this autumn. Mayor Gord Krantz warned them that no matter when they set the budget they would be hitting some group after the fact.

Councillor John Challinor suggested setting an ice rate for a longer term and chastised colleagues for expressing concern but taking no action.

"You can't sit there and express concerns and then not do anything about it," he said. In the end council agreed to consider ice fees as part of the 1998 budget but balked at taking an early position.

Fashion not quite dead yet

By MERLE LANGERYT
Special to The Champion

Despite what everyone thought, the 77 students scheduled to graduate on June 23 from Sheridan College's highly acclaimed Fashion program may not be the last.

"A college-wide memo went out saying that the president (Sheldon Levy) has set up a committee to assess the possibility of re-opening the program," program coordinator Joy Morgan told the Oakville Beaver, The Canadian Champion's sister paper. "Their findings are due by September and the earliest the program could re-open would be the fall of 1998."

Both Fashion Management and Fashion Technique and Design were among 10 programs cut by former president Mary Hofstetter in December, 1995 in response to a provincial funding reduction to the college of \$7 million.

Mr. Levy was reached at the Brampton campus and confirmed that a committee has been struck and its decision is due in the fall.

Award winning designer and Sheridan graduate Linda Lundstrum is on the panel, along with members of the Sheridan community.

"It was a commitment made by the previous president," Mr. Levy said, adding that the program was suspended, not closed. "We are now honouring that commitment."

Should the committee decide to reinstate the program, the question of format will then come into play.

"All aspects will be looked at including cost," said Mr. Levy. "In other words, is it worth it?"

Fashion is still a part of the continuing education branch of the college and faculty and equipment are still available. The question surrounds the post-secondary level of instruction and the studio space used by those students has already been designated for other uses.

According to Mr. Levy, that will not be a problem.

"Other adequate space is available," Mr. Levy said, adding that faculty members have already approved alternate locations.

Mr. Levy indicates in the April 25 memo that since taking office in January, he has received many comments about the quality and reputation of the program, and this must be the first measure for any decision.

The terms of reference for the committee are presently only available on the college web site, but the memo states "Input from the community will be invited and is very welcome."

'Net grows

According to Kate Johnston, manager of the business development center at Halton Region, business internet use is growing.

The center is offering several avenues to understanding this growing medium including seminars, internet listings and important sites for business information.

Ms Johnston said a year ago only 30 companies listed in the Halton business directory had an internet address. Now there are more than 300 companies with an internet presence in Halton, representing about 10 per cent of the total number of businesses, she said.

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