

The Canadian Champion



A Metroland Community Newspaper

Vol. 138 No. 84

Tuesday, December 16, 1997

32 Pages

75¢ (GST included)



Santa's little helpers

Aidan Young (left) and Brittany Stark, of the Milton Community Nursery School, hold just a few of the many toys the school collected during their annual toy drive. The toys will go to the Salvation Army, to be distributed to less fortunate children throughout town.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Savoline expects property tax hike

By BRAD REAUME

The Champion

Halton Chair Joyce Savoline says tax increases are required to accommodate provincial downloading plans.

Halton Region must cut its budget nearly \$8 million in order to produce a tax freeze for 1998, according to official figures released by the province in a much-awaited announcement Friday.

The Town of Milton is facing a \$330,000 reduction in order to meet the promised goal of revenue neutrality.

Municipal representatives are saying the guidelines themselves make the provincial plan anything but revenue neutral.

"Just because someone says it is revenue neutral doesn't mean it is," said Ms Savoline.

Halton North MPP Ted Chudleigh offered the help of provincial staff to find reductions in local budgets.

"If municipalities can't find the cuts, they can use the services of municipal experts supplied by the province, who will go line by line over budgets to find the funds," said Mr. Chudleigh.

Ms Savoline said her experts could not make the plan revenue neutral and added that she expects a tax increase. She could not provide a possible range for the tax hike.

"If there were municipal experts at the provincial level, we wouldn't be in this predicament," said Ms Savoline. "We'll take any grant money they give us but it is not sustainable."

The cuts represent 1.7 per cent budget reductions to small



Joyce Savoline

municipalities like Milton, 3.2 per cent to medium sized centres such as Halton Region and four in Toronto and Ottawa.

Mr. Chudleigh said the province removed ambulance services, public health and child care from the strategy to pool Greater Toronto Area tax dollars. Only welfare and subsidized housing remain to be pooled.

"The announcements represent a step in the right direction," said Ms Savoline. "However, nothing in the provincial formulas allows for the efficiencies and substantial cuts we have already found."

Ms Savoline said Halton has

Sales steady; spectacular they're not

By KAREN SMITH

The Champion

Miltonians aren't beating down local stores' doors to shop this Christmas, but sales are reportedly steady.

The majority of downtown merchants, as well as department store managers, say sales are constant, but aren't breaking records.

"It's been steady, but there's been no big rush yet," said Lesley Goertzen, operator of Main and Martin Street women's designer clothing boutique Green Ginger.

She added that her male customers tend to shop at the last minute — as late as December 23 and 24.

Sales have been good and steady at Canadian Tire, said general manager David Shuvera.

He said the Market Drive store has attracted customers with special sales and draws for store merchandise. And he hoped the recent snowfall has put more people into the Christmas spirit so they will concentrate on what to put under their trees.

Harris Stationary owner Steve Bonin described a different sort of sales pattern.

He said shoppers seemed as if they were starting early, but then sales tapered off.

• see CHRISTMAS on page 17

Fund help still needed

The Christmas Bureau Fund continues to rise, but is still well below the \$20,000 goal.

To date, \$8,337 has been donated to The Champion's Salvation Army fundraiser.

Donations ensure all Milton families have a nice Christmas dinner and toys for the kids.

There are no administration expenses whatsoever associated with the collection of the money. It all goes directly to the Salvation Army for charitable work.

In addition, toys may be dropped off at the newspaper office.

Donors will be given receipts for income tax purposes.

To contribute, drop off donations by cash or cheque (payable to Christmas Bureau Fund) at The Champion office, 191 Main St. E.

NEWSLINES

BILL'S AUTO BODY SHOP



Working Harder to stay #1

Complete auto body and refinishing services
155 Nipissing Rd., Milton
(905) 878-2721

Bold robber held up gas station in early evening Friday

A bold robber held up the Esso gas station on Martin Street early Friday night.

The gun-toting culprit demanded money from the male clerk after entering the kiosk at 7:15 p.m., Halton Regional Police said.

The robber also ordered the clerk to hand over ciga-

rettes before he fled in a small, dark blue vehicle with an undisclosed amount of cash. He was last seen driving northbound on Hwy. 25.

The robber is described as white, six-foot-tall with a slim build. He wore dark-coloured pants and a white scarf over his nose and mouth. No one was hurt.

Shop Milton First for a

Hometown Christmas...
At the
MILTON MALL

Scratch & Win! You could instantly win a \$500 Shopping Spree. Over \$5000 in prizes!

With every purchase of \$10 or more you can win a valuable prize.

Valid from Nov 15 - Dec 23. See stores for details.

