

Penman: HRCA now has the room to manoeuvre

By IRENE GENTLE

Special to The Champion

Strict cost-cutting over the last six years has won the Halton Region Conservation Authority (HRCA) a \$100,000 bonanza from Halton Region.

The money will go towards repairing neglected infrastructure.

In 1992 it looked like the end of the line for the HRCA when the Ministry of Natural Resources cut their funding by about \$2 million.

Suddenly it was sink or swim time for the authority, which battled back by implementing an aggressive user fee program to help make up lost revenue.

The HRCA also froze staff wages and cost of living increases, didn't replace departing staff and froze all building and maintenance programs.

Wage hike planned

Today that aggressive plan has bought the authority enough leeway that a 2 per cent cost of living increase is planned for the 1998 HRCA budget.

Also a one-time \$100,000 grant from Halton Region will be used to repair sagging infrastructure.

"We haven't maintained our infrastructure, things like buildings, trails and road repair," said Milton's Brian Penman, chair of the HRCA.

"You can't have an asset like this and not keep it up."

For 1998 the authority is looking at a budget of \$7.9 million, made up from user fees (\$4.5 million including the take from Glen Eden), municipal levies (\$319,000), Ministry of Natural Resource funding (\$319,000), municipal financing (\$1.6 million) and partnership projects funded jointly by federal, provincial and municipal governments (\$171,000).

This money will go toward:

- Expansion of education programs at Mountsberg (\$66 000)



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BRIAN PENMAN

- Summer student employment (\$20,000)
- Maintenance and patrol of Halton Region
- Replacing the roof of the long house at Crawford Lake (\$5,000)
- Grindstone Creek watershed studies, (\$47,000)
- Staff salaries and benefits for land and property management employees (\$660,000)
- Assorted costs such as utilities, insurance, property tax and maintenance

Service agreements

In return for the money the HRCA welcomes half a million visitors to conservation areas per year.

The HRCA has also learned to earn their dollars by entering into service agreements.

For duties such as landscaping the Halton landfill site on Highway 25 the authority has managed to create better relationships with funding partners while increasing self-sufficiency.

"This is a classic example of not only survival but success," said Mr. Penman.

"What you've seen happen in the absence of funding is we've managed to provide services and maintain educational programs, which is thrilling because the whole philosophy aside from conservation and protection is to educate."

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Junior/Senior Kindergarten Registration For September 1998

Halton Catholic District School Board

ADVANCED registration for those children who will be attending Junior and Senior Kindergarten (*not currently registered*) in the Catholic Schools in Burlington, Oakville, Milton, Georgetown and Acton will be held at all schools on

WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY

April 15 and 16, 1998

9:00 a.m. to noon

1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

AGE OF ADMISSION AND REQUIREMENTS

Junior Kindergarten

Children are required to be 4 years of age on or before December 31, 1998.

Senior Kindergarten

Children are required to be 5 years of age on or before December 31, 1998.

- ♦ Roman Catholic Baptismal Certificate required.
- ♦ Before registration is finalized, a child will have completed the prescribed program of immunization for diphtheria, tetanus, poliomyelitis, measles, mumps and rubella.
- ♦ Families registering for the first time at a school are requested to provide the child's medical card at the time of registration.
- ♦ For further information or alternate registration date, please contact the principal of your nearest Catholic School.

James V. Sherlock
Chair of the Board

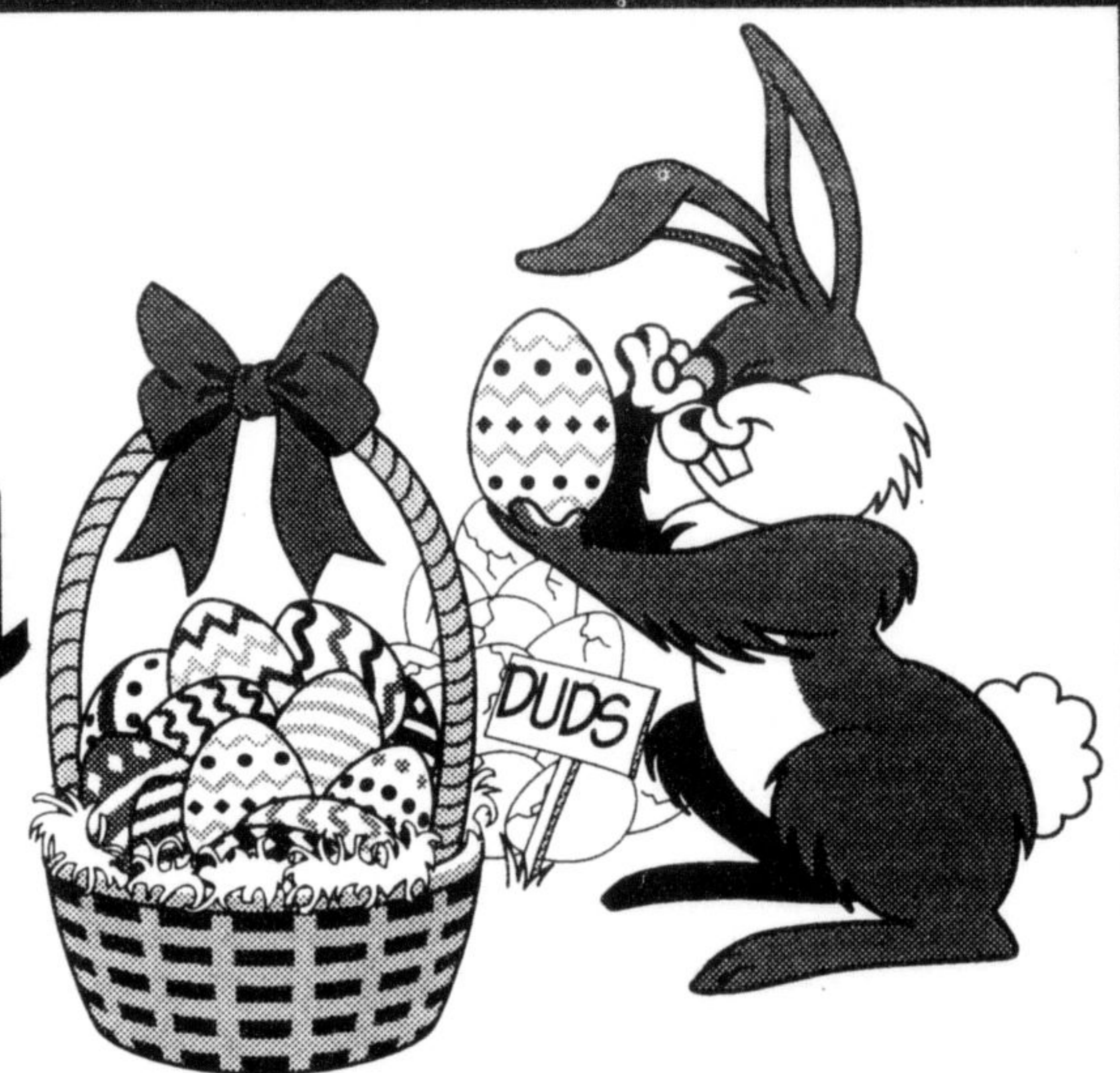


Fred L. Sweeney
Director of Education



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