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Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Feelin' hot, hot, hot

Milton firefighters set the crowd ablaze with their dance routine — stripping down to their dalmation boxer shorts — which was part of the entertainment at the annual charity fashion show in support of breast cancer research. The event was held at Halton Hills Place Sunday.

No extra funds for mental health clinic

By IRENE GENTLE
The Champion

Signs of drastic underfunding are showing at the North Halton Mental Health Clinic, Regional Councillors heard.

But requests for increased funding from the Ministry of Health have been denied for two years running.

Most recently, Halton asked for \$732,000 for the clinic's 2000-2001 budget. It currently receives \$517,000.

The additional cash would have brought three more front-line therapists to the clinic, which is 100 per cent Ministry funded and serves Halton Hills and Milton.

The clinic handles about 800 cases per year, a number which could soar as growth hits Milton.

But the plumped up budget was denied. "Nothing has frustrated me more over the past 10 years than dealing with the Ministry on this issue," said Halton's Medical Officer of Health Dr. Bob Nosal. "There is less funding and less full time equivalents than there were 10 years ago."

Currently there are about five full-time therapists and four hourly psychiatrists working in the clinic.

"Nothing has frustrated me more over the past 10 years than dealing with the Ministry on this issue."

DR. BOB NOSAL

And for the past two years, the psychiatrists have accepted a 60 per cent pay cut for the month of March — a situation they say can't happen again.

But the workload isn't easing, and the coffers are empty, said Dr. Nosal.

Currently the clinic's staff-patient ratio, which should ideally be at about 1-30, is 1-70. And a two-month waiting list is in effect.

According to Dr. Nosal, the Province contends it has already sunk millions of dollars into Halton's health care. But that money hasn't eased the crunch at the clinic, he said.

"We're expected to pick up all the rest," said Dr. Nosal. "With the dollars we've been given now, that's just not possible."

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Guilty plea from Deoni

More than two years after Halton Regional Police charged Joe Deoni with fraud over \$5,000, the Halton Catholic school board trustee pled guilty in Superior Court in Milton yesterday.

The 61-year-old Miltonian was given a suspended sentence and three years probation at the morning proceedings.

He was also ordered to pay \$10,000 in restitution.

Mr. Deoni was charged after a two-month police investigation at the Milton business where he worked on contract as a bookkeeper.

Fred Sweeney, the director of education with the Halton Catholic School Board, said with the conviction, Mr. Deoni will be removed from his position as school trustee.

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