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# The Canadian Champion

Weekend edition

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## Councillors still critics of the new Ontario budget

By NORMAN NELSON

While the province has balanced its budget for the second year in a row, more than a few Halton regional councillors at Wednesday's administration and finance committee meeting snickered that they're doing it "on the regions' backs."

### School play to help seniors deal with scams

Bishop Reding Roman Catholic Secondary School will take a theatrical approach to warn Milton senior citizens about criminals who target older people as victims.

Drama students will stage five one-act plays demonstrating scams used against seniors Tuesday, May 8 at the school from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

The event, called *Seniors on Guard*, was initiated by Halton Regional Police, who approached the school requesting its participation. Milton Community and Information Services is also involved.

"They (Bishop Reding drama students) jumped at the opportunity to do something like this," said Milton Village Constable Larry Masson, who expects approximately 300 seniors at the event.

He said a similar event held in Acton drew a large crowd of seniors.

The audience will also be entertained by the Halton Regional Police Chorus, which will sing at the free event. Refreshments will be served and transportation will be available for those in need. All Milton senior citizens are invited.

For further details, call Information Milton at 875-4636 or the village constable's office at 878-2401.



Larry Masson

Municipal politicians put a great deal of the blame for this year's hefty local tax increases on the province for shifting financial responsibilities down to municipal government.

It's not viewed as much consolation, but Burlington Mayor Roly Bird noted that Halton Region plans to document these provincially-caused increases on the pamphlet it sends out with the local tax bill.

With the budget being balanced and containing a reduction in public debt (of \$430 million) for the first time in 43 years, Halton finance commissioner Joe Rinaldo said there is "a lot good about it — to the province's credit."

While the budget contained only one new tax — a one cent increase per cigarette — Mr. Rinaldo noted that last year's budget contained a number of increases that didn't take effect until the beginning of this year, such as a one cent per litre increase on gas, and the employer health tax.

And while the province increased payments to municipalities by \$164 million, Mr. Rinaldo pointed out that they are conditional grants, requiring a percentage of funding from the municipality.

He listed some other highlights affecting local municipalities:

- The school capital grant program extends to a fifth year with an additional allocation of \$300 million.

- Water and sewage capital grants increase 14.4 per cent over last year to \$175 million.

- Municipal, institutional and industrial waste management funding increases 61 per cent over last year to \$71 million.

- Responsibility for the Niagara Escarpment Plan shifts to the Ministry of the Environment.

• see BUDGET on page 4



Photos by KRISTA GLADISH

### McMoney for charity

It was McHappy day at the popular restaurant chain Wednesday and a dollar from each Big Mac purchased went to charities. Celebrities across Canada turned out for the event, just as they did in Milton. At top left-Milton McDonald's owner Richmond Chandler flipped burgers, as did Milton Fire Chief Richard Playfair (top right). Howie Scannell (bottom left) toiled up in a limousine and Bruce Hood and village constable Larry Masson helped out (bottom right) too.

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