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# The Champion

Wednesday edition

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VOLUME 131, NUMBER 39

MILTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 12, 1990

50 CENTS

40 PAGES

## Town finances tangled in web of GST uncertainties

By ROB KELLY

The average taxpayer is in good company if he or she doesn't fully understand the proposed Goods and Services Tax. The top financial people in municipal government are apparently having a tough time figuring it out too.

### Fund inching closer to goal

Every little bit counts when it comes to donating to The Champion Christmas Bureau Fund.

The spirit of giving can't be measured in monetary terms and that's what this season is all about. With each donation, the prospect of a happier holiday season is closer to reality for the many needy families in town.

The Salvation Army needs \$20,000 this year to meet the needs of the growing number of financially disadvantaged Miltonians. Sadly, many families that were on the giving end of the fund last year are on the receiving end this Christmas.

Those who can afford to donate to the fund are responding to the needs of this community. The fund reached close to \$5,000 at press time Tuesday.

Leave donations at The Champion office, 191 Main St. or mail a cheque to The Champion Christmas Bureau Fund, Box 248 Milton, L9T 4N9.

The Town will spend \$7,000 on computer system updates to help it cope with new accounting systems for Ottawa's controversial tax, municipal councillors decided Monday night.

But even with the extra computer power, evaluating the GST impact is "one of the most difficult things our department has been involved in for the last couple of years," said Town finance director Jim McQueen Monday night.

And, he recounted, at a recent meeting of senior public sector financial planners from throughout Halton and Peel, interpretations of the GST varied to such an extent that five finance directors said they would charge it on a given service while four said they would not.

The major stumbling block has been "a lack of federal government information that allows us a neat and clean transition into 1991," he told town council's general committee.

As things are, Milton finance department workers are "prepared in a fashion" for the GST, Mr. McQueen said. But other municipal departments "will have to be

see GST on page 3



Jim McQueen



Photo by JOHN WARREN

### Deck the mall

The halls of Milton Mall were decked out for Christmas last Saturday as dozens of groups took part in the annual community bazaar. Among the participants was Timberlea District Girl Guides. Stacey Osbourne of 9th Milton Guides shows off some of the handmade Christmas ornaments her organization was selling.

## Winter Carnival cancelled for 1991

By KAREN SMITH

For the second year in a row, the Town has called off the traditional Milton Winter Carnival. But this time, it wasn't because of spring-like weather.

Instead, opting to focus its efforts on the capital campaign for the new leisure centre, the Town cancelled the 1991 version of the event annually held in February at the Mill Pond and Rotary Park.

Earlier this year, the Town was forced to cut back on special events in order to accommodate the fundraising campaign, explained Bonnie Ward of the leisure services department which organizes the carnival.

"We decided one of the special events that couldn't be undertaken was the winter carnival," said Mrs. Ward.

Limited Town staff won't allow for the operation of both the capital campaign and carnival, she added.

Mrs. Ward remembers last February's annulment of the carnival very well. After three months of planning, mild temperatures prompted Town officials to axe the event just days before it was to be held.

The warm weather caused unsafe conditions at the Mill Pond, and crowds of people walking on the soft and mushy grounds of Rotary Park would have severely damaged the surface of the baseball diamonds.

Although the special event was cancelled last time around, a few events organized in conjunction with the carnival went ahead anyway.

And that may be the case again this year, said Mrs. Ward. The broomball

see CARNIVAL on page 3

## Scrooge-like economy doesn't kill Christmas tree tradition

By NORMAN NELSON

Recession? Not in Stan Price's line of business. The Christmas spirit, unlike the economy, is very much alive and well.

"This past weekend was as busy as it ever was," said the local Christmas tree grower, who added that about 300 were sold.

By the time Christmas arrives, he expects to have sold 1,000 trees at his 22-acre farm on Guelph Line just north of Derry Road, and that doesn't include the wholesale part of his business.

A handful of other area growers also have similar operations. Some are open only on weekends and some offer additional winter fun such as sleigh rides and apple cider — so check before heading off.

Most of Mr. Price's trees — Spruce, Balsam,

Scotch Pine and Austrian Pine — were grown right at his Milton farm or at a Nassagaweya woodlot he looks after. It's something he's been doing for 40 years.

"I think I sold 20 trees that first year," he recalled.

Scotch Pine, he said, is the most popular tree, accounting for half the sales.

"Most people are looking for a tree between six and eight feet tall. The tallest would be 22 feet — for schools and even the odd home."

One 20-footer he delivered, ended up in the middle of a spiral stairway in a home.

As expected, weekends are busiest with sales in the hundreds. Weekdays it can fall off to about a dozen.

Retired for three years from Leaver Mushroom rooms, Mr. Price remains as active as ever. In

addition to looking after his own woodlots, he also manages some tree farms for a couple of other people and is also a market gardener.

While a lot of retired seniors dream of spending winter in the south, Mr. Price said, chuckling, that "as far as I'm concerned, I'd rather be here... and my wife (Mary) doesn't care to travel."

About a million Ontario residents still put up natural Christmas trees, and the Christmas Tree Growers Association of Ontario have some tips for families who'd like to join those numbers.

According to studies, a continuous water supply is sufficient to maintain the freshness and flame resistance of cut Christmas trees indoors. A fresh tree is naturally fire resistant because it has a high moisture content and

will not sustain a fire.

Common sense, however, applies. Avoid use of combustible decorations, check all electric lights and connections. Do not use lights with worn or frayed cords and never use lighted candles.

Place the tree away from fireplaces, radiators, television sets and other heated sources which will dry the tree prematurely. Be sure to unplug tree lights before retiring at night and any time you leave the home.

The basic rule of thumb when purchasing a tree is to buy a fresh tree and keep it fresh.

Keeping it fresh basically means ensuring the trunk is immersed in water.

If the water level drops below the fresh cut, a seal will form and a new cut will be necessary.