

The Canadian Champion

Weekend edition

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Town's tax debtors increase

By ROB KELLY

In yet another sign of the depth and ferocity of the recession in southern Ontario, Milton's tax arrears jumped by more than \$1 million in 1991.

The amount taxpayers owed the Town climbed to more than \$2.7 million in 1991, up from \$1.6 million the previous year. Similar increases in arrears have shown up "across the region and throughout the province," noted Jackie Turbitt, Milton's revenue manager, in a report to town councillors Monday night.



Jim McQueen

Town finance director Jim McQueen said the million-dollar shortfall "makes the difference between borrowing and not having to borrow" for Milton's 1992 operating budget — the fund that finances day-to-day municipal operations. "We're going to see borrowing costs in the 1992 budget," Mr. McQueen warned.

Milton has interest yielding investments in its portfolio, but with the ongoing decline in market rates, that money is currently parked in a fairly attractive place and Mr. McQueen would rather leave it there. "I could cash in some long-term investments but they're earning a higher interest rate" than currently prevails, he noted.

Ward 2 councillor Ron Furik asked how much money the municipality had actually written off. Mr. McQueen replied that the amount was "fairly small."

Bad debts in 1991 were no more than \$40,000 gross, Mr. McQueen noted. Because the tax pie is divided among various jurisdictions, such as the boards of education and Halton Region as well as Milton, the Town's net loss was only about 22 per cent of that amount.

Ms Turbitt said Milton's biggest problem in tax arrears comes from "owners of industrial-commercial buildings with empty units and tenants who are paying decreased rents, if they are paying."

Those owners "are simply telling us that they want to pay but don't have the funds," she noted, adding, "even the mortgage companies are reluctant to press too hard for payment."

As a final option, the municipality can seize and sell properties on which taxes are owed. Currently

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Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

I spy

Kareh Bongard, an education officer at the Halton Region Museum, admires handmade German swirl marble glass which was imported into Canada from 1890 to 1910. The piece of work is one of many items in a marble display currently exhibited at the Milton museum.

Nurse gets taste of 'total poverty'

By KAREN SMITH

You won't hear Eileen DiNatale complaining much about the cost of living in Canada.

The Milton District Hospital nurse manager has just returned from a Central American country where many people's homes are plastic hovels about the size of a double bed.

As a volunteer with Extended Hands, an organization which builds houses and other facilities in underdeveloped countries, Ms DiNatale, 49, recently travelled to Guatemala to help set up a medical clinic.

Although her 10-day stay meant a concrete floor to sleep on and no running water, she isn't complaining.

"I had an absolutely great experience. I'm really glad I went," she says. "But it was hard work, and we went without a lot of things like electricity, water, and indoor toilets."

The Milton resident estimates she saw about 60 patients during each eight-hour work day. Many were treated for head lice.

"Every mother had about four or five children

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GO train expansion stopped until 1997

By ROB KELLY

The good news is that beefed up GO train service will be coming to Milton in the future. The bad news is that it won't happen until 1997.

The provincial urban-suburban transit firm will implement what it calls all-day rail service over the next five years. That means there will be 54 trains a day instead of the current 19, with trains only 20 minutes apart during peak periods.

The all-day service on the Milton-Mississauga-Toronto line will extend to Erindale in Mississauga by 1995 and to Milton in 1997. Construction on the project, which entails building a third rail-way track in some places, will begin this year.

GO engineers were on hand Monday night to outline the work for Milton town councillors. As is usually the case when GO representatives show up in Milton for one reason or another, they were pressed to provide a commuter train stop in Campbellville.

Mayor Gord Krantz took another run at that idea Monday. It has been something of a sore point with Milton councillors, generally, that people in Campbellville can't board the GO train there despite the fact the trains are stored overnight on sidings just west of Campbellville, at a former train station called Guelph Junction.

"Council has actively pursued a station at Guelph Junction," said Mr. Krantz. "It makes a lot of sense to catch a train there, regardless of

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Slide into nature photography

Amateur photographers will have a chance to learn about skills involved in the art during an upcoming slide-show at Crawford Lake Conservation Area.

Richard Armstrong will share his images of natural beauty found along the Niagara Escarpment. Photographer Robert Stimpson has travelled to some of the most beautiful places in the world and visitors will have the opportunity to "visit" them during his captivating slide presentation.

The show takes place Sunday Jan. 26 from noon to 4 p.m. Crawford Lake is located on Steeles Avenue at Guelph Line, 5 km south of Hwy. 401.



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