

# COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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## Start cutting

In a recently released report mapping out budget directions proposed for 1993, Halton regional financial officials say it will cost taxpayers an additional 4.8 per cent to carry on business as usual next year. If that's the case, we don't think Halton need bother conducting business as usual.

Regional officials, in a report to be discussed tomorrow (Thursday) staked out two scenarios for the consideration of councillors. One involves the aforementioned 4.8 per cent increase, and at the other end of the spectrum is a paltry 1.5 per cent tax hike, seen as equal to current inflation. Hitting the 1.5 per cent target would involve cutbacks in regional spending.

One reason inflation is running at an almost negligible 1.5 per cent is that everyone else is adjusting spending to create that rate. We believe Halton could do that too.

Regional officials say they are proud of their fiscal responsibility, and in many areas this is probably justifiable, but paring the increase from 4.8 per cent to 1.5 per cent would involve trimming roughly \$2 million from Halton's bottom line, and that is not outside the realm of possibility.

These are extraordinary times in many quarters, calling for extraordinary measures. Already, regional government has been shielded to a certain extent from hardship. While virtually all private firms have laid people off, Halton has not taken that step.

And elected officials on Halton council, with a few notable exceptions, are still content to spend taxpayers' funds attending conventions and seminars.

We grant that Halton has pressures that differ from those of private corporations. Halton bears the costs of the current wave of social hardship, through such programs as welfare. Those costs cannot be controlled by regional government. The demand for services in there has increased.

But we don't doubt there is fat in the regional operation. There is in virtually every firm, private or public. That must be confronted. If it means layoffs to get to a 1.5 per cent tax increase, Halton must face that prospect. Elected officials must face it. Most of them are always trumpeting financial responsibility.

Programs that genuinely serve Halton's needy should not be sacrificed. But everything else must be considered, including the sobering prospect of laying off government workers.

## Aim for respect

There's a lot more to policing and the law than the shoot 'em up scenes often portrayed on television and film. The problem is how to educate the public about what happens in the real world.

Halton's Optimist Club members have planted the seed of awareness by sponsoring Canada's first Respect for Law Camp, geared to students entering Grade 8. Various police forces, the coast guard and St. John Ambulance made presentations during the three-day camp at the Milton Optimist Centre.

The 70 youngsters gained a rare insight into the roles of these upholders of the law. They're expected to go back to their friends and families equipped to dispell some myths and promote respect for the system which is meant to protect us.

The Optimists have lived up to their name by investing in youth to create a more law abiding society.

## LOOKING BACK



With a hearty hello from the Milton Steam Era Reunion, these children wave a greeting from inside a tractor wheel during the 1965 version of the annual event. The tractor is the second-largest Rumley ever built and the children in its wheel are (clockwise from centre) Darlene Page, Ricky Norris, Douglas Page, Tommy Norris and Paul Horner. The Steam Era returns to Milton Fair Grounds again this Labour Day weekend.

## PAGES OF THE PAST

### One Year Ago

From the September 4, 1991 issue

Organizers of Las Vegas Night were betting on at least 600 people showing up at Pineland Farm for a big leisure centre fundraiser. The event was to feature games tables, wheels and horse races for the gamblers and two stage shows throughout the evening. The admission price also covered a late night snack and an entry in a draw for a trip for two to Las Vegas. All proceeds from the event were to go to the town's 'A Fitting Beginning' campaign for the new leisure centre.

Despite a drop in attendance the 31st annual Steam-Era was being called "a real good show" by organizers. The economy and very hot weather was being blamed for putting the damper on the event. Homemade scale models of steam engines as well as a machinery toys were big hits throughout the weekend. The official opening ceremonies featured a lengthy parade of full-sized antique machines.

Two Campbellville athletes were named to the Central Ontario Baseball Bantam All-Star Team for 1991. Raymond Dennis and Mike Charron were chosen to play in the Ontario Bantam All-Star Tournament at Clarkson and Oakville. There were 256 players in the COBA rep system who were eligible to be chosen. The system for picking players counted on scouts and umpires to determine the best players with input from coaches.

### 20 Years Ago

From the September 6, 1972 issue

Milton would truly become the "steam capital of Ontario" with the establishment of Ontario's first Agricultural Museum at Kelso. Construction was to begin at the 80-acre site in the fall. The property would

include a large demonstration area in the shape of a football field. It was thought likely that in the future the annual Milton Steam-Era would be moved there rather than at the Milton Fair Grounds. The official announcement was made at the opening of the 1972 Steam-Era.

An estimated 25,000 people visited the 12th annual Steam-Era at the Milton Fair Grounds. Organizers felt the crowd was about equal to that of previous years. However, they felt that local attendance was down and more people were coming from farther away. Twenty-four steam engines, 50 gas tractors and 150 gas engines were on hand in addition to an estimated 200 models both new and old.

Ken Fay of Milton had established himself as an excellent all-round athlete. He had pitched for many all-star minor baseball teams and was well-known as an asset on a hockey team. He had recently proved his worth at golf as well, winning the juvenile championship in Oakville at Glen Abbey golf course. He finished the tournament in a three-way tie and won in a playoff round.

### 50 Years Ago

From the September 3, 1942 issue

The Monster Street Fair to be held on Labour Day promised to be the biggest yet with fun galore for young and old. The night was being organized to help out the local Red Cross.

Residents were being reminded that their exhibits for the Milton Fall Fair should be planned by now. They were also being encouraged to make it a point to enter exhibits in as many classes as possible.

Miss Shirley Elliot was opening a dancing school in town. She would be providing private instruction in ballet, tap and toe dancing.

## PUD

BY STEVE NEASE

