



Photo By Jan Bergstrom

**\$100,000 damage**

At least \$100,000 damage was caused after a fire ravaged a unit at 555 Main St. E. Thursday. The fire, of unknown origin, began at 12:30 p.m. and was extinguished one hour later. The building was rented by Bowlarama and was used to make bowling balls. Neighbouring Discount Mattress suffered \$9,000 in smoke damage and at least five other businesses suffered smoke damage as well.

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Save yourself a "bones" from holiday baking. Wrap small packages of cookies and place in the freezer for unexpected company. It must have a treat drawer.

Every car trunk should have a pair or two of old socks stored away to protect hands when you have to change a tire or brush off the wind shield.

When a pen won't write, drop in hot water for a while. The usually works for ballpoint pens and even "leaks" off fountain pens.

Good hand cleaner, corn meal and clothes detergent powder, makes half-bright hair. Keep it in hand on a sprinker jar.

Save the next greeting card and recycle them by cutting the fronts into regulation size picture postcards. Write address and message on the back.

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**Shift to administration bothers school trustee**

There is a marked shift by trustees from policy-making to involvement in administering educational policy, says Halton board of education chairman Betty Fisher.

Mrs. Fisher said she sees the role of a trustee as essentially to set policy and the educational budget. Although she views the trustee's role for herself as essentially to make policy and let administrators put it into action, some trustees see the role demanding more involvement in administration.

She said the trend toward more participatory democracy, with the trustee acting as the instrument for the public, has grown significantly within the last decade. It is a whole new style of politics, she said, and getting more involved in administrative affairs is the trend, not just with the Halton board. "Participatory democracy is bulging the walls of our institutions."

The community, she said, is expecting more involvement and has higher expectations that its voice will be projected by the trustee.

She said from her point of view as a layman in education, a politician shouldn't get involved in administration. Someone should be put in the job who can administer. If the administrator is inadequate, the board replaces him or her with someone who is.

The effectiveness of a board is measured by how clear and effective its policy is and how well its administration implements the policy.

Essentially, there are two basic philosophies of being a trustee, she said. One is the high involvement with administrative guidelines and the other is policy-oriented.

Trustee Bill Priestner sees policy as the purview of trustees and doesn't like the trend toward involvement in administration. "I am firmly in favor of trustees who get their power to act as part of the board."

"We should not be dictating how many children there should be in a class or how they should be taught. We don't need to have relative input on the age start or how French is to be taught," he said.

The board is deviating, when as amateurs it is telling the professionals (administration) how and what to do in those areas, he said.

A board should be giving direction to the administration through policy, he said, and letting administrators make rules and regulations and interpret the policy. "I don't see trustees operating schools."

Priestner said the board should not be involved in anything in the schools on a day-

today basis. It is not the trustee's job to complain about teachers' behavior.

He said the board in conjunction with administration should set budgeting priorities.

Trustee Noel Cooper also believes that trustees may be getting too involved outside their sphere. "When you are paying top flight administrators top flight dollars, they should be given a free hand to carry out the intent of the board as indicated by the debate."

"Weeding out dirty books at the board table is a farce," he said. It is the role of the administration to get objectionable material off a list of approved books.

As a trustee, Mr. Cooper doesn't invite people to call him on what is wrong with education as a whole. However, he does welcome calls on matters on which the board has a policy such as transportation and busing.

Mr. Cooper sees the board directing the administration on the formulation of a policy and then reviewing and amending the draft when it comes forward. Too many trustees now are wanting to get more involved with the formulation of policies at the grassroots level. The result is that there are three times as many committees as there were 10 years ago, he added.

He disagrees with Mrs. Fisher over public demand for more participation by the trustee in administration. "There is no pressure from people for me to get involved in administration. I am there as a policy-setter."

If there is a competent administration, there should be relatively little work for a trustee to do in a day, he said. If he was to be involved in administration, he would expect to be paid more.

Trustee Cam Jackson shares the view that trustees have been spending more time in administration. He believes that policy may be written in too general terms in some cases. There are too many "warm fuzzy statements" which are unclear.

The trustee, he said, should be able to assure the public that decisions are made with the board's knowledge. He said the administration should consult the board more on substantive issues and on all cost items.

There is a growing concern that there are breakdowns in communication between trustees and administration. This problem, he said, was highlighted by the difficulties over ratification of the secondary school teachers' contract.

**Water, sewer rates jump 6.4 per cent**

Halton residents face a 6.4 per cent increase in their 1985 water and sewer rates. Regional council last Wednesday approved the 1985 rate-supported budget and the 6.4 per cent increase, despite strong objections from Burlington Councillor Joan Little, who believed the increase should be kept to the 5.4 per cent figure outlined in the preliminary budget.

"Most municipalities start off with larger preliminary budgets and pare them down," she told council. "We increase it."

The 6.4 per cent increase, instead of the planned 5.4 per cent, results from additional utility projects added on during budget deliberations in the last few weeks.

Mrs. Little argued that these additions should be limited to \$179,000, which is the amount originally cut from the preliminary budget. This way, the increase remains to what was originally anticipated.

Otherwise, the \$400,000 added to the budget after the cuts amounts to a net increase of \$221,000, she said.

"Either we have a realistic preliminary budget or we don't," she said at that time, adding that essential new or expanded projects should have been part of the base budget rather than in the added-on later.

But Dennis Perlin, regional chief administrative officer, said this was exactly the case. "If anything was absolutely essential, it would have been in the base budget."

But at last Wednesday's council meeting, those who sit on the regional planning and public works committee defended the increase, saying the additional projects are really needed to keep maintenance up.

"One of the pressing issues in this region is the quality of water," said Burlington Councillor Pat McLaughlin. "If we don't do anything to keep up maintenance, well we'll have problems."

In this case, he added, the old adage that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," really holds true.

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