

OUR READERS WRITE:

DEFIES AUTHORITIES

(Following is the text of the report Joe Ross submitted to The Free Press recently in which he made known his intention to reopen his Rosslake Resort. It is situated three miles south-west of Georgetown on Lot 17.)

Dear Sir:

Before submitting this report to those who listened to my voice, I should like to describe the Rosslake project briefly.

The complex which bears my name commenced development in 1964 and was completed in 1965. The most important feature of the project, is the swim area, which was developed from a ravine of highlike proportions, wasteland sudden with scrub trees, as well as larger trees, which were used later as timber. Most of the lakeland was shaped by bulldozers. As this project progressed, we found it to our advantage to create an island in this ravine, thus saving some wonderfully developed old willow trees, and we decided to surround these trees with an artificially built-up island, so to speak.

This island when completed, had the proportions of about 185 feet long by roughly 60 feet wide; and now after two years' time, the grass has been established, the trees are still living - the experiment has been successful in relation to the survival of trees under these conditions. Now surrounding the island is a depth of about six feet of water, and from the mainland reaches a footbridge approximately 75 feet long of sturdy construction, and was built high enough to allow a pleasure craft that later built and operate around the lake.

All of this development was artificially constructed and took months to complete. I might say the various depths of water range from the beach level sloping down to depths of over 15 feet in the main swim area. The approximate size of this area is in the neighborhood of from five to six acres of irregular shoreline, and is a colorful development. It has the background of a large and beautiful bush, which presents a strikingly picturesque view in the Autumn.

The beach on the Rosslake swim area is roughly about 200 feet long, and is completely sand. As mentioned before, it was constructed and designed to conform with safety ideals as an objective.

The beach line has a gentle slope from zero to swimming depths. A cordon of buoys marking the four foot depth is anchored along the entire swim area.

The Red Cross Safety Water Services assisted in designing the beach. The important features of this area include spring fed water source with added source of lakeland springs rising from the bottom. There are no currents, and no sudden drop-offs or rocky crevices.

So much for the description of Rosslake swim area as developed in 1965. In 1966 further improvements were made on the beach area, more sloping and grading was completed, more sanding done. Special attention is being paid to a children's play yard with sand and slides, etc. This yard will have a safety fence erected this year, and we believe will be an added safety feature.

Rosslake Resort was opened in July 1965 - many surprises followed which were not contemplated. In revealing these surprises, I should like to be explicit, and honest. The surprises I mention come in the form of a closure. The closure was approved by the Halton Health Unit, being signed by Asst. Med. Officer of Health, Dr. Stuart in absence of Dr. Ball.

In the report submitted by Inspector Sullivan, dealing with conditions that were found on this swim area at this time, and as reported by Mr. Sullivan influenced in part the closing order. What this report contained has never been divulged. I have repeatedly tried unsuccessfully to discover what was the content of that report.

It was later pointed out to me that I had not complied with certain standards contained in the book of rules and regulations. It seems that because this area was artificially developed, it must fall into the category of a small swim pool of the indoor type, and must comply with rules stipulated in the booklet as follows:

1. There must be lifeguard supervision at all times.
Now it is practically impossible or impractical for a swim area, such as Rosslake to comply with these regulations - which apparently formed the basis of the closure.

Now the question arises - Where do we go from here? As a result of this closure, this swim area part of the Rosslake complex has remained closed for two years - two seasons. It is for this reason that I have undertaken this project, an investigation into the justification of the closure.

So far in the investigation it has proved interesting but frustrating. The usual bureaucratic back-passing has been encountered. Thus no one seems responsible, no one remembers, no one wants to associate themselves with the context.

Dr. Stuart, the official who signed the closure expressed his sympathy in connection with the problem, was not in favor of the rules and regulations that are in the booklet.

Constantly I am being asked, "Why is this fine swim area closed?"

In view of these circumstances Dr. Stuart promised a revision, a further inspection to be conducted by an assistant from the Red Cross Water Safety of Toronto. I subsequently received a copy of this. The report was lengthy and describes in detail the area. In assessing this report, I note there was no mention of hazards that might exist, which would jeopardize the swimmer. His comment regarding the beach conditions, first aid post, safety ropes and life rings, etc. were in order.

In his report he inserted two improvements I might make relative to signs and safety fence in area of the dam. It was this report submitted to him as being instrumental in prolonging the closure. His comment, "You have not as yet removed the safety hazards existing at your swim area." When questioned, he was unable to describe these hazards. Allow me to degress momentarily.

Pertinent to Mr. Sullivan's report: Two days prior to the closure this gentleman presented me with two carefully documented advertisements, asking if these were mine. I answered yes. He said you must immediately erase your swimming signs, you must stop advertising and from now until Monday your position is embarrassing. You will regard yourself as being liable for any mishap in that water. And the same gentleman, Inspector Sullivan, was equipped to take pictures presumably to support his findings. The lifeguard station was incompetent, and criticized me for accepting gate admission, under these circumstances.

All this seems to reveal that the Halton Health Unit is privileged with dictatorial powers. It would also appear to me that these officials have in a vague way admitted blundering. I regard these gentlemen as being responsible for the two-year

closure of this swim area.

What is the future of privately owned swim enterprises? With the lifeguard problem always facing the operator, not only from a financial standpoint, but from the safety standpoint. It is virtually impossible to regulate your crowds.

It is not possible to supply, according to the ratio of one lifeguard for every 60 swimmers as suggested. Almost impossible to comply with this, both from the standpoint of financial return - by the simple process of mathematics, it would take all of the admission derived to pay for the lifeguard supervision; and also it is not possible to forecast the number of swimmers each afternoon or weekend. It is not possible to forecast the weather.

On cold days few swimmers turn up, whereas on hot days it could become overcrowded. Realizing this, it is extremely difficult to supervise a swim area according to the suggested rules.

Now, all area owners agree that the lifeguarding is important - very important. It is my belief that each operator is aware of this significance, and we are agreed that supervision be maintained and improved. However, it must be paid. The private operator must pay for the lifeguards, from the revenue derived from his establishment.

Now, in the government operated areas, an operating deficit can be overcome by taxation. In other words, a certain rate is established for the admission. This doesn't cover the maintenance cost of swim areas. However, in a government project, the question of these costs is not important, apparently. Deficits are overcome by taxation. Each of us assist in contributing toward their maintenance.

This cannot be applied to privately owned areas such as Rosslake. Thus the problem facing us - What is the future of swim areas to be? It would seem to me that the rules and regulations present an impossible situation.

Are these rules designed to cripple or strangle the type of swim area such as Rosslake? The ones being put on the small, artificial pool, which is easier supervised. Yet with all possible safety methods employed, there is still a risk, and people must be taught to respect a large swim area, and projects larger than the artificial pool will be prohibited to the swim public.

It is my opinion that the majority of swimmers prefer the deep waters of large expanse. The public will seek out those waters even though they lack supervision or responsibility. Any body of water must be respected.

Let us take a closer look at the small swim pool, located on your private property. Is it safe? It has a safety fence. It has a gate. Nonetheless, to me it presents a hazard to children - a death trap. Has this been assessed by safety authorities? Will the erection and development of these private swim pools

be allowed to continue? Where there is water, there is risk. And so the investigation continues.

Let us go back to the rule book. In our democratic society, rules and regulations form a basis for decision. Inspectors, judges, officials have flexibility in interpreting these regulations, and are allowed to take a rational approach in arriving at a decision to be handed down.

It is my opinion that this decision to close Rosslake, without proper warning and co-operation from these officials, depicts a rather callous and sadistic approach to their duties. Therefore, I would ask you: Was this closure justified?

Before concluding my report, let me just add a note of comment. All is not gloom and doom at Rosslake. This whole complex has been a dream come true. Few of us have built castles in Spain without them come tumbling down. For the most part, my castles still remain. As I travel on the journey road of life, part of it is on the stones of adversity, part of the journey is on the sands of victory. Along the way we meet up with challenges, frustrations, and achievements. On this same journey, we are bound to encounter defeat.

Adversity builds character. I hope I have inherited a portion of the courage of my ancestors, who were early settlers on Rosslake farm, who must have endured many hardships along their journey of life, which would make my problems appear infinitesimal.

What are my remaining castles? I can share with my guests the saddle horses and ponies - facilities of our riding school. I can relax with the campers, and absorb the tranquility of picnic island. From here I can view the beauties of water and trees.

Who of us would not like to be captain of his own ship, and on his own lake? And so I am grateful as I travel on.

Captain J. Ross.

Dear Mr. Editor:

A few years ago a Community Service Council was formed in Acton to look after the needs of the unfortunate.

In response to an appeal by these ladies, a large supply of infants' clothing, now and used, children and adults' clothing, boots and shoes, and all kinds of furniture was donated by interested people for needy folk.

Unfortunately, the two ladies heading this group, Mrs. D. Engol and Mrs. R. McMurray, removed from town a few months afterwards, and since the Service Council has become inactive, I believe.

The clothing, bedding, etc. are stored in the upstairs of the Town Hall. Most of the articles are in good condition, but require care to keep them free from dust, flies and moths. It is too bad to see these good things deteriorate for want of a little care, when there is so much poverty around. Possibly if not shipped away to where they could be used and appreciated.

Could some individuals or organizations take over the job of looking after these many articles if the former organization is not able to carry on?

One Who Is Interested

O.P.P. report

Quiet week

Our reporting period of July 28 to August 3, 1968, was fairly calm.

Only two occurrences were noted. One involved a disturbance and the other pertained to an insecure business premise.

Traffic patrols of 759 miles, accumulated during 176 hours worked, resulting in seven traffic summonses being issued, 19 warnings given, and one motor vehicle accident being investigated. This accident resulted in

\$300. to the vehicle and \$80. to other property.

This week's court docket accumulated over most of the holiday period, produced 27 convictions with total fines of \$625.

This week, being one of few occurrences, police would like to think bad habits, tempers and the like, are held in check, but due to the amount of people away on holidays it would be hard to assess this situation, said Corporal R. Mason.

Acton ladies' fair board plans events at picnic

Mrs. W. J. McDonald was hostess on the evening of August 1 to the ladies of Acton Fair Board picnic held at Loch Gormac. The weather looked undecided so the cabin was used in case of rain.

Sixteen ladies and one lone gentleman sat down to a delicious picnic supper and wash thoroughly enjoyed by all, along with good humor, good appetites, and an old fashioned coal-oil lamp for light.

A short business session followed supper. Mrs. W. Linham the president, called the meeting to order and Mrs. D. Matthews read the minutes of the last meeting and gave the financial report.

November 12 will be the date for the Hydro Cooking Demonstration, October 22 is the date of the District Annual meeting in

Acton. R. L. Davidson has the baking cases ready, but they will need a coat of shellac and varnish.

There are to be three contests for children this year at the Acton Fair.

1. Cracker eating contest, children 12 years and under.

2. The most freckled face, children 12 years and under.

3. Balloon blowing for children 1 year and under; so children got busy and practice.

The ladies are to have a float this year with Mrs. McL. McCullough, Mrs. W. Linham and Mrs. C. Storey on the committee.

After discussions and suggestions for the float the meeting was moved adjourned. Mrs. W. Linham thanked Mrs. McDonald for making it possible to have the picnic when she is so busy.

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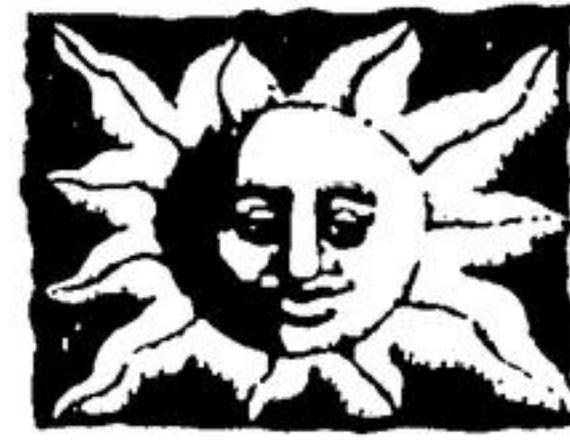
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