

# New Rockwood park superintendent says works there is "the greatest"

By Lorraine Root

The Rockwood Grand Valley Conservation Park has got to be the greatest jigger's paradise in all of Ontario. Up, down, over, and around, the paved roadway takes you on a tour through one of the most spacious, superbly kept, well organized, and rustic beautiful parks in the district.

I trundled my trusty little bicycle over there the other day to chat with the new superintendent, Jim Muir, who recently moved up here from Fergus, and is now living in the house which formerly belonged to the Dave Nelson family on George Street.

Jim, is an enthusiastic and ambitious young man who literally breathes conservation. I first had reason to make his acquaintance when I was visiting the park myself on the occasion of a tremendously large picnic crowd which turned out to be a group of 400 members of the Christian Reform Church from Brampton who were celebrating their annual outing. Impressed at the size of the crowd and at their well controlled behaviour for such a large group who had their own "make set-up" for the occasion, I saw this well groomed and uniformed, authoritative looking chap with the Conservation insignia of identification on his shirt sleeve, mingling with the crowd and pleasantly being congenial and helpful to all the picnickers—rather like a gracious host at a garden party. As I had never noticed this particular touch in the park before I couldn't help but think that it did lend a very good impression—rather as if he would not interfere with the activities, but if there is anything you need to serve you sort of thing. I've always felt that it's the little things that spread goodwill and pleasure and create a real incentive to come back again.

I talked to Jim about this and asked him all sorts of pertinent questions about why he had become interested in conservation work. We had quite a chat really, if you could call it that, sitting beside an important cog of a wheel which is continually turning around to organize, answer questions, direct assistants, and make suggestions—all this with the sound of lawn mowers buzzing with activity and the scraping of shovels against pavement as a new water line down to one of the picnic areas necessitates the digging up of the roadway to lay the pipe. Such a busy man, but all in good spirits he still managed to tell me a little about himself.

Only 23 years of age, married and with two young boys of his own, aged two and three, Jim Muir hailed originally from Haliburton but moved with his family to a farm just outside of Fergus when he was four. With his family eventually moving right into the town of Fergus proper, he was educated at the public and high schools there.

I asked Jim if his early life in the north country could, perhaps, have instilled in him his love for the outdoors. "No, not really," he grinned. "I was too young to remember that but, after I left High School, I knew I could never work inside because I loved the life on the farm and I would really like to have one of my own. But you know what it is now—days, farms to buy and operate are a very costly proposition, so, rather than work indoors in a factory or the like, I felt that, as outside jobs are limited, "I would try Conservation work."

His first job was at Belwood where he worked for five years, originally as assistant operator of Shand Dam. Jim gave me a little bit of fill-in about his job which

I thought was both interesting and informative enough to pass along. It seems that the Grand River Conservation Commission and the Grand Valley Conservation Authority were, up until two years ago, two completely separate organizations not even closely affiliated. The Grand River Conservation Commission had the ownership of all Grand River Dams including the Shand Dam, the Conestoga Dam near Drayton, and the Luther Marsh Dam near Grand Valley at Orangeville, the Grand Valley Conservation Authority however, owned and operated all the Park areas affiliated with the Grand River.

The Provincial Government, realizing that to contribute grants, etc. to these two bodies was rather futile, and forced an amalgamation of the two groups, with the top men from both parties, being put in charge of key positions of operation and direction. Other Conservation parks throughout the Province are not under the same jurisdiction but are affiliated, in as much as Conservation Schools send their men out to the various areas but all are operated separately.

When Jim was first given the opportunity as the superintendent of the Rockwood Park staff he was rather dubious as to just how he felt about leaving Fergus. "I had been brought up there," said Jim, "and felt as if it was part of me and I just loved the work."

But the transition has been great. For the first few weeks he didn't really know if he'd make it as everything was so much larger and, naturally, rather strange. "Now, I just think it's the greatest," he said with absolute self-assuredness. "There is no doubt in my mind that this is one of the best parks anywhere. What pleases me is that I never get complaints about the poor facilities, or something that isn't right and so on the way they do at other parks, and the local people themselves are just wonderful to me."

"I am very proud of this Park now."

And it shows. Everyone is working with enthusiasm; no one is slacking off after the boss leaves; industry beats; it presents a beehive of activity.

With Harry Collins as his Assistant and Paul Waddell as another full time employee, his summer staff has grown to include five extra ground and gate assistants with four life guard and swimming instructors, comprised of one or two high school lads, but with the government pressures on "hiring University students" the majority of extra hands, are from Toronto, Guelph and other local Universities. A congenial, industrious, and well-run Park committee which presents a good impression of a place to picnic at.

I threw more questions at the young Superintendent and he patiently tried to answer them all. "The hot-hole area on the other side of the River which provides many curious visitors with a great deal of pleasure hasn't been touched on as yet as we have not been given the "go ahead" on it, said Jim. "Right now we are busy keeping things

in order, looking after the three camp grounds two for families and the other for groups; we will be adding more trees and establishing new trails."

Jim figures he puts in at least 55 hours a week, "just being there when I'm needed," he grinned. "The park usually starts getting busy during the summer around the beach area about ten o'clock it's really jammed. After dinner at night, I like to stay around as the park shuts down at sunset but sometimes it gets extended until ten o'clock at night." "To keep my eye on things generally," said the conscientious Park man.

A keen "car bug" Jim Muir has been interested in dissecting, rebuilding, rejuvenating, and adjusting, anything that has four wheels and a motor, ever since he was fifteen. Two years ago he built a '31 Ford Hot Rod Coupe which started from only the shell and was comprised of all different makes without any two original parts from any one car. "Right now," said the versatile outdoor automobile design mechanic, I'm in the process of building up a '34 Ford which, right now is all in pieces." Apparently Jim bought the machine which had been broken down by its owner to make adjustments on it but, as time ran out the project was never completed with the result that the dissected, ancient car sat for eight years in a questionable condition until it found Jim Muir and the old model contraption hopes to live again to once more decorate the highways of the local Rockwood area.

With a history of stock car racing in his veins I learned what makes a racing car enthusiastic tick. "I raced stock cars for

three years, but I just don't have time any more. There is simply no other sport that can answer the thrill one gets from car racing."

I asked Jim if he would compare it to a track stars excitement before he participates in a competitive run as he told of that tense, up-tight feeling before a car race. "No," said Jim, "I've done a little tunning myself, but it simply isn't the same thing. Everything is just too much, and then all of a sudden you're away and something happens to every bone in your body. One minute you're all tensed up and then you level out and it's beautiful. It's one man pitting his driving skill against another and it's that skill that makes you the better man." It's having control of something you yourself have created, and having built two hot rod racing cars himself, Jim

Muir should know what he's talking about.

Phones began to ring, trucks were drawing up outside the gate house, attendants were beginning to report in, and one with a word that Jim was needed in one of the park areas immediately! I realized that my interview time was up but it had been a stimulating and curious one. The village of Rockwood was regretful when the past superintendent, Ron Williamson, was promoted and he and his wife Jennifer left for their new home in Galt. He, too, had accomplished great things in the park which actually brought it up to its present day standard, but he had left behind him a beautiful centre, operating efficiently by a well adjusted staff of delightful people with an interesting and versatile Conservation Park Supervisor who cares!

## ROCKWOOD PERSONALS

Great congratulations from the Rockwood Village folk who are very proud of Peter Leslie who recently passed his Grade 10 Music Examinations with honours. He also passed his Grade 4 Toronto Conservatory of Music examinations in History and Harmony, also with honours.

Friends of Richard Wall will be interested to know that he won't be showing up in the area too much this summer as he is in Timmins relieving for the Royal Bank.

Mr. and Mrs. R. Potts from Stoney Creek, recently visited Mrs. H. Winch and her daughter Ruth.

Cathie Ward, Barbara Law and Ronnie McRae, three pupils of Mrs. Ruth Wall's piano class in Rockwood passed their grade one examinations from the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto recently with honours.



ENTHUSIASTIC JIM Muir is the new superintendent at Rockwood Conservation area. "This is one of the best parks anywhere," he says.—(Staff Photo)

## "Largest crowd ever" lawn bowling tourney

The most successful Inter-County Lawn Bowling Tournament ever held on the Rockwood greens took place on Wednesday, June 25, when 60 competitors attended the event from Georgetown, Acton, Guelph and Rockwood, to participate in the Jitney tournament. In this competition, each individual bowler played only for himself instead of playing as a team member, with the prizes going to the individual bowler and, as the players seemed to be in top shape, the laurels were evenly divided.

an outside audience, watching from the sidelines of the fenced in green area in fascinated interest.

"The largest crowd we've ever had," said the president, Dave Gray and everyone really enjoyed themselves." The Rockwood Bowling Association has had a fluctuating membership for some time now and the 16 members is the largest roll we've had here for a number of years. The members responsible for the supreme success of Wednesday's tournament were Robert Drew, and John Buckman and the next Inter-County Tournament will be held in July at Georgetown, followed in August with another in Guelph and then the big Final Do will be a team competition on the Guelph greens in September after which a dinner will conclude the season of lawn bowling.

## Horse sense



by Pretty Fair

Howdy again! Wal, today things just aint workin' out so good. Just heard via tele-ear that that correspondent who usually sends in my column for me is goin' to be away for a few weeks holidayin'. Ga-w-y, ain't it always the way—just when things were goin' real good what with me winnin' my races 'nall an' with so much to tell yew about what's goin' on.

Goah, I dunno if I can make it for a few weeks myself and travel down to Kentucky—always did have a hankerin' to see what a Blue Blood looked like and maybe I'll get to eat some of that Kentucky blue grass they keep tawkin' about. Wal, anyway, if I don't manage to get

anythin' in for a few weeks don't just give up on I'll ole Pretty Fair 'cause unless somethin' drastic happens like me breakin' my writin' leg or bein' hit by a bolt of lightnin' I'll be keepin' in touch somehow.

Hmm, maybe by the time I get back the tennis courts will be ready for playin' on—or the asphalt will be down for roller skatin' outside with piped in music—or the recreation association will have revived the summer playground activities like they're doin' down in Acton, Guelph, Toronto, an' all the lively, think ahead communities.

Have a happy holiday folks, and hope to see ya at the beach! Trooly yers, Pretty Fair.

## First communion

A one week summer school course in religious training held in the Kindergarten room of the old Rockwood Public School culminated in nine Rockwood and Oustic children taking their First Holy Communion given by Father Earl Talbot of Sacred Heart Parish, Guelph, on Sunday, July 6.

Father Talbot gave communion to Gregory Mance, Tommy Mance, Kimmy Kingsbury, Casey Halliburton, Michael Woloshyn, Marylou Kelly, Sandra Kingsbury, Lori Anne Drexler and Diane Castelarlin, of Guelph.

Under the able teaching and direction of Sister Angelica and Sister Benigna, 39 grades one to six children from Rockwood and Oustic attended the teaching sessions.

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If you're now enrolled in a plan from one of the 200 other insurers incorporated, Windsor Medical Services, Associated Medical Services, an insurance company, or other agency, you're also covered until further notice.

If you now have no health insurance, you'll have ample opportunity to enroll before October 1st. You'll be advised of the enrollment period by press, radio and television.

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