

Students issue Rockwood planning study

II How Rockwood Began

A detailed account of Rockwood's history can be found in "Here and There in Eramosa", but for the purposes of this report, we feel that an overall look is more appropriate.

As late as the 1830's, this area was natural forest. This primitive glory is gone now, but the hills, streams, rock formations and the cedars still make this area potentially the most beautiful natural setting for a village in this part of Ontario.

John Harris was the first settler, followed by Colonel, or "Squire" Strange. He was a surveyor by profession, and it was he who laid out the village plan. He also owned and operated several water-driven mills on the river. The community was then called "Strange's Mills", and this name held until the name was changed to "Brotherstown" due to an influx of Quakers. Then, in 1850, when the railroad came through, the engineer and designer of the railway bridge named the station "Rockwood", after the trees and rock outcroppings in the area.

Until this time, the village core was in the valley because of the mills, and the houses and hotels were up on the table lands, but as the mills closed, forced out of business by mechanical mills closer to the consumer market, the core broke up, most of it moving up the hill around where Root's Hardware is, with the rest of it strung throughout the town.

Like the mill industry, the railroad, quarries and other industries were forced

out of business by technological changes, such as the trucking industry, and large corporations closer to the consumer market. Thus the character of the village has changed from virgin forest, to a self-contained industrial community, to its present state, a rural residential village with some light industry, and stores to serve the community, as well as the surrounding agricultural area.

Still, psychologically, Rockwood is a rural village, not urban. The natural setting is not completely destroyed as yet, and has the potential to be quite readily restored to much of its natural beauty. Thus in its 130 year history, Rockwood has undergone several major changes due to technological development, and yet the village seems to have stayed the same somehow, but losing a bit with each change.

What will the next major change be? With growing populations and the city-centred planning that the province is doing, we feel the village could and should plan the next major change, and be one step ahead of it, instead of one step behind.

III What the Village is Like

Rockwood is a scenic, rural community of over 850 people, situated on both sides of the Eramosa River valley, and from hill-tops to the north and south, few buildings are visible through the many trees. It is a mixed community, yet most residents have a common bond of appreciation for the special qualities that the village has, and they seem to feel very strongly about

protecting and improving their physical environment and their way of life. We share these concerns, and would like to give our impressions of the village, as well as pointing out the characteristics and mechanics of the community.

The village economy is primarily to meet the commercial and service needs of local residents in the village and surrounding agricultural area. Some additional commercial and service facilities are desirable for the village economy and shopping convenience. The people would rather spend their money in Rockwood than in Guelph, if what they needed was available there. Care must be taken to locate these new shops so that they strengthen the existing core, rather than pulling it further apart. Considerations should also be given to compatible building materials. By preventing "sprawling" or "strip" growth, you reinforce the centre core, and strengthen the community.

Most residents work in other centers like Guelph and Acton, while a smaller number are self-employed, or employed in the eight industries of the village.

The lack of services, and the location of the village, being in between large consumer market areas, has kept the amount of industry down. Any substantial increase in the industrial base would greatly alter the character of the village.

The village is serviced by individual wells and septic tanks. Because of underlying bedrock, septic tanks require large lots for building sites, and as a result, there is a lot of open space in the village,

with a lot of room between the houses, and the houses are randomly spaced in most areas, which gives a nice quality of spaciousness, privacy and tranquility. Unfortunately, some percentage of wells have been found to contain contaminants, and this presents a possible health hazard that must be alleviated for the community good. The sewer and water system that has been proposed would solve the health problem, but at the same time would create some serious new problems. Fortunately, there is a zoning plan that is basically sound, and is being strictly adhered to, but the plan could give more considerations to some of the special features and characteristics of Rockwood, as well as do more to identify and solve some of the problems. Based on the zoning plan and existing conditions, a more detailed and sympathetic plan should be prepared to take better advantage of the potential that exists. Then a compatible service system could be laid out that will not require a disproportionate expenditure, will be capable of handling future requirements without costly replacement or additions. A service system is a very effective planning tool — it can limit growth or it can cause growth, and it can determine the direction of growth, and the kind of growth. In this case however, we feel it should be subservient to an ultimate plan, not the ultimate plan subservient to it, which could readily be the case.

Highway No. 7 enters the town from the south, turns sharply west in the centre of the village, and provides easy access west to Guelph, south to Acton and to secondary



roads to Highway 401. It also forms the main street of the village, and for most of the year traffic volumes are satisfactory, but the main street becomes very busy during the summer tourist months.

TYPICAL OF MANY Rockwood homes is this one on Mackenzie Street. The village also has many well kept older homes, some of them well over the century mark. —(Staff Photo)

(Continued Next Week)



THE TROPHY which read "With thanks to our 'Little Big Man' from the Rockwood Girls' Tri-County Softball team, ages 12 - 19 1971" was presented last Saturday night to Al Nichol by team captain Pauline Pinder at the "Alice and Al Nichol Nite" held at the Rockwood Centennial School by their many village and district friends. —(Photo by Lorraine)

Venturer to Japan

The adventure of a lifetime is just around the corner for one Wellington District Venturer.

David Avery of Ferguson left Toronto International Airport Tuesday along with 95 other boys.

Their destination is Tokyo, Japan on July 31. A pre-Jamboree Conference will take place in Vancouver on the grounds of the University of British Columbia July 27 to 30.

In keeping with previous Jamborees, this one will offer the boys many opportunities to learn about another country and its people. In addition of course, they will be meeting and competing with boys from countries all over the world in games of skill, participation and plain fun.

Mr. Carl Meadows returned home last weekend from his two week course in Fire Administration held at the Ontario Fire College in Gravenhurst. The only college of its kind in Canada has students from Bermuda, Halifax, New Zealand, and Australia, and experts feel that all students taking the course offered are receiving invaluable instruction which can be taken back to home bases for application. Carl successfully passed the recent course which is only part one dealing with administration; the entire fire prevention course is a 22 week program.

It's been a real home holiday for Jackie Rowe this summer as her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Dick Goodin and her brother Paul have been visiting from England.

It's over this Sunday when the Howe relatives will be zipping homeward bound and their acquaintances in Rockwood hope they'll have a safe trip home but that they have been happy enough to revisit again soon.

A local people "sit in" revealed that many villagers are dog gone happy these days now that the ole catcher is around. Seems they can put their garbage out the night before the early morning pick up now instead of having to wait five minutes before the Saturday a.m. truck arrives in case the travelling canines decide to breakfast on their debris and spatter it around the neighborhood.

Heather Haworth, the Beach supervisor and swimming instructor of the Rockwood Conservation Park Staff, is

meeting out more invitations for entries to the various swimming classes which will begin on date of August 9 until the 29th. The Pre-beginners class is already filled to capacity, however the 11 o'clock beginners class still has openings. The Junior class is complete but the Intermediates

have room for three more names and the Senior class for ten. If you are interested, leave your name at the main gate of Conservation Park and you too can be in the swim this summer. Get your John Henry down today!

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Comin's and Goin's

Hey now, look who was in the swim and deserves a pat on the back from all his friends. It's Swanston of R.R. 3 Rockwood, who was strongly commended by his leaders at the Glen Mhor Presbyterian Church Camp on Lake Simcoe when he passed his Senior Red Cross swimming instruction course with absolute ease recently and, for a lad of only 12 years, that is quite an accomplishment. His past instructors describe Alan as an eager and avid young athlete who just loves the water and his parents praise his early instruction in the Rockwood Conservation Park's Harris Lake which is held annually under the sponsorship of the Grand Valley Authority. Although Alan is too young to complete any further courses for the next year or two he has passed the first steps towards his Red Cross swimming medals at an early age. Nice going, Alan, we'll see you life-guarding at the local swimming grounds before we know it and your friends are proud of your ability.

Twenty-five neighbors and former neighbors gathered recently to fete Bill and Irene Plummer of R.R. 5-Rockwood, who have given up their farm to move to their new home at 106 Bagot Street in Guelph. A lovely antique style table lamp and an electric kitchen clock were presented to the couple by Mrs. M. Shrive of R.R. 5 Rockwood after Mr. Elwood Tosh had read a short address. Card playing was the evening entertainment and then a delicious lunch was served to the culminate the momentous occasion. The Plummer farm was the homestead to which Irene had gone as a young bride 37 years ago and their leaving the district is a sad event but their many friends wish them well on their new venture.

It's a holiday trip until September, for Lindsay Jones of R.R. Rockwood who left last Sunday via B.O.A.C. on the 7 p.m. flight bound for Shropshire, England where she will visit her

father, Mr. John Jones' family for a few weeks and then on to Derbyshire with Betty's mother Mrs. J. Smith. There'll be trips, holidays at the seaside, and a whole round of visiting for the young Rockwood traveller and her friends at home send the best of luck luck and hopes for a wonderful time.

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Free Press Rockwood

Alice and Al nite attended by 200

The "Alice and Al Nite" held at the local Centennial School gymnasium last Saturday was a highly successful affair for two of the village's favorite people.

Over 200 friends, neighbors, acquaintances, and relatives attended to chat, mingle, and dance at the celebration of the Nichols and their family who have already established themselves as residents of Thornbury, Ontario.

Present trophy Although holidays and weekend trips were expected to cut down the numbers present at the Open House, the pre-planning arrangements of the organizational committee was terrific and everything went according to hoyle with even the members of the Tri County Girls' Softball League which Al Nichol first put on the road, attending to present their "favorite Big Little Man" with a trophy of their appreciation.

A cake, a stereo radio and two albums were all part of the celebration and Alice and Al were delighted when everyone sang "For they are Jolly good fellows". And they are.

Both Alice and Al have been behind organized sports, clubs and scouts, church organizations, home and school endeavours, all all other activities requiring financial assistance for village promotion.

Saturday's turnout was indicative of the goodwill they had established throughout their period in Rockwood and now it is expected that they will turn their energies in the direction of their new residence.

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on the road with such favorable results.

During the evening an unusual trio named the Montgomerys from Eden Mills added gusto to the event with fun music to dance to and special innovations of their own. They played mix-up dances and catered to the tastes of everyone present and, at the completion of the dancing food was served with every guest receiving a piece of the cake which had been decorated with special good luck wishes for the past Rockwood Nichols.

Alice and Al stand together to cut their special "going away" cake at their celebration held last weekend. The couple were feted with an open house and later presented with a stereo radio and two albums from their many Rockwood and area friends. —(Photo by Lorraine)

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