

# Plea for preservation of village

By Lorraine Root

"Rockwood does not at present realize or grasp the idea of its possibilities, and may be compared to that unhappy Irish gentleman who is said to have turned his back upon himself. If a learned savant came, or a troop

of artists from "foreign lands and climes remote" they would see with joy and surprise sights and scenes which many of the inhabitants of Rockwood see not at all, or regard with indifference." Such were the words printed in an article written by Mary Leslie



LOU HILTS now owns the property adjacent to the ball park which once housed the local chicken coops but, since their removal by a Toronto purchaser sat for some time idle until Lou's purchase a few months ago. He feels that the land should be incorporated into the present park but if the township and village fathers can't see the merit in keeping them, is anxious to start building houses as soon as the weather clears. —Photo by Lorraine

in a 1909 copy of the Home Journal, Canada's leading magazine. It was a special plea by the then, well known writer, to preserve Rockwood's great beauty as a natural Paradise.

Sixty four years ago, and Miss Leslie was referring to speculators in both United States and Canada but particularly ones who, at that time were moving in on the village of Rockwood and "with great energy turning the rocks, pot-holes and caves into lime."

"It seems inevitable, said the writer, 'and it requires no conjure to predict that all of the glories of Rockwood, within this speculators grasp will speedily disappear under the ruthless hand of the money-maker; that the most unique and distinguished little town in the Dominion for natural charm will soon become as uninteresting and commonplace as its neighbors.'

**Special note**  
In her article Mary Leslie gives special note to one area of Rockwood familiar to many of its present residents, the Rockwood ball park, which, at one time was called Exhibition Park where the local Agricultural Society held fairs.

She said "I know many parks both in the States and in Canada which could bear no comparison with Rockwood for natural attractions. There are magnificent views from the Exhibition Grounds (the present Rockwood Ball park) and, in the summer, the place is replete of sweet white clover."

The writer refers to Rockwood as "The town beautiful"; as an unknown nook to the outer world and continues "with very little capital and taste to direct, what a nest of loveliness it might become; what a rest and refreshment to the weary; what an attraction for the true artist; what an object lesson to its neighbors; what a "joy forever" to future generations and place of quiet pilgrimage for lovers of nature yet unborn!"

Mary Leslie was a romanticist who had the vision to recognize both the beauty of the Rockwood village and the necessity of its preservation. She was aware of its possible exploitations and was making a plea to Canadians to "look well to the natural advantages God has bestowed upon their towns and conserve instead of destroying them."

Sixty-four years later and once again Rockwood is being beset by speculators and money grabbers. This is a time when residents should be on guard to make certain that Mary Leslie's 64 year old prediction "All the glories of

and refreshments topping off the exciting evening.

Watch out folks. It'll be a blitz for the Eramosa ball players who will be knocking at your door to sell tickets to support their favourite organization. Imagine one \$5. ticket could net you \$1,500. with a ticket for \$100. drawn on the last Sunday of every month beginning in April and 5 draws of \$200. on the final night. Come on, buy a ticket and put the kids into new uniforms this year and remember every ticket purchased is put back into the pot and you could be a winner every month.

Dig deep again folks it's that time when we remember the handicapped. The C.N.I.B. canvassers will be out in force this week with Helen Hills, Rita Pinder, Donna Greenis, Betty Lou Nightingale, and Leslie Ferguson, carrying receipt books for your donations. Irma Hospes is this year's organizer and the group hopes to see collections go over the top. Proceeds are for local assistance and let's everyone get behind the canvassers proving the adage "Charity begins at home".

The experience of being right in a crater, viewing fabulous mountains and finding the people fantastic were only some of the marvellous experiences of Miss Gladys Hanna and Mrs. Edna Hosking on their two week visit to Hawaii. Arriving home last Sunday night the two ladies are feeling great and healthy although not completely slept out after their 11-hour flying time. They were on four different islands, stayed in sumptuous hotels, saw acquaintances from Guelph and found the outer islands absolutely tremendous. Welcome home ladies, glad to have you back in the community, and your friends are happy and only wish that they too had been there.

Monday night was fun for 35 neighbours and friends of Cathy Osborne who congregated at the home of Millie Smith to fete the future bride with a miscellaneous shower. April 14 is the date when the district's favourite Dairy Princess will become the bride of John Mounstephen of Guelph and Monday's shower was the fourth for the popular girl with goodies

Rockwood within this speculators grasp will speedily disappear to become as uninteresting and commonplace as its neighbors." does not become a reality.

**Decade of loss**

Already within the past 10 years villagers have watched precious landmarks sold, lopped, and removed; valley road, sold to the Grand Valley Conservation Authority and closed off for non-walking villagers driving through in need for quiet relaxation; the beautiful old SS No. 9 stone schoolhouse which stood proudly as an odyssey to past generations of primary school educators; the C.N. station, representative of yet another era of Rockwood history. Gone, gone, and more to go some in the hands of caretakers who can't see the need to conserve and preserve.

In the 1971 Stage One Rockwood Planning Study proposed by three imaginative University of Toronto Landscape Architectural students, Yosef Drenters was asked to make a dedication. As the one man who has shown the greatest insight in the necessity of Rockwood's preservation and demonstrated in his restoration of the Academy, Yosef said: "It is now more than ever before needing the preservation of Rockwood and its surroundings. When one looks at the environment of Eden Mills, Everton, and Rockwood,—unique—such a valley must be preserved in its natural beauty. With Toronto but 55 miles away that great city and its vast populus is going to need our valley and others similar for recreation of their families. We must be host to that city and

others and share what we have. Let us keep the open spaces open for them to come to for many generations and make sure that those who come after us will have the proper veneration for those who know how to preserve this great piece of country for them."

**Vanishing parks**

But one, by one they're disappearing. In jeopardy at this time is one of Rockwood's prettiest sites, the Village ball park, referred to in Mary Leslie's article as Exhibition Park. As it stands there are for sale four lots adjacent to the present park, which once housed chicken coops. Already the park is enclosed on one side by housing and, two years ago, town fathers did, in their wisdom procure the furthest three lots behind the ones for sale with the intent of incorporating them into the present park.

Since that time the chicken coops have been removed and the land broken into lots. Already sold twice, it is ripe for housing but, if preserved and incorporated along with the lots already accrued and incorporated also into the present ball park, it can only add to its aesthetics and value as a natural park. If however, allowed to house even one house, the value of the park and the beauty of its grounds can be forgotten and it will go the way of much of the Village's rustic charm, to become the forgotten entity of a derelict acreage.

At a time approximately six years ago with applied long thinking, the property could have been procured at a cost five times less than its present one. Right now the owner, Lou Hilts requires the sum of \$15,000 for the lots which he can sell for \$20,000. At a December 10th, 72 meeting with the Lions Club, Recreation Committee, Rockwood Trustees, and Township Council, Councillor Bill Adsett proclaimed his interest in preserving the property and was thoroughly backed up by Duncan McPhedran, Deputy-Revee.

Eden Mills trustee, and president of the Eramosa Recreation Committee Rodney Bell strongly vocalized his objections, however to the township procuring the property. Rockwood Village, in its unincorporated state, cannot afford, budgetwise, to buy the land herself. And at a recent township meeting Councillor Betty Lou Clark tabled the motion for its preservation but no other councillor seconded.

Only one council member could see the merit for quick procurement of a property which can never deplete in value but, once it falls under the concrete cellar, can never be restored. Lost, another valuable piece of Rockwood property again because it's caretakers, those who should have the foresight of long range visioning, can't see the importance of its preservation.

All this, at a time when Georgetown, Brampton, Toronto, and Hamilton, are screaming for parklands, places to put one's feet, Rockwood sits with its green, treed and natural lands still intact, but no one is caring.

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WHO CARES? Yosef Drenters cares and, after 12 years of living in the Academy has found where the original library cupboards of the Rockwood Academy belong and after restoring them to completion is installing them in the library. Not only does he see Rockwood as a place with a past but considers it, with its scenic beauty, a place of future recreation. —(Photo by Lorraine)

## Comin's and Goin's

Special mention is about the weekend trip of Stewart Royce presently of St. Joseph's Hospital in Guelph and Miss Florence Till who attended the wedding reception of Mr. Royce's granddaughter, Anne Francis Kirvan, last Saturday. Over 50 guests attended the delightful affair which was celebrating the February 28th nuptials of Anne Francis and Bob McKinlay. The Hamilton trip went off in style for one of Rockwood's dearest residents when his daughter and her husband, Doris and Doug Patterson of London picked him up in their automobile and drove him and Miss Till to Hamilton where they stayed over until Sunday with his daughter Edith and husband Roy Kirvan. Congratulations to the newlyweds but special congratulations to Mr. Royce. Isn't it great to know that he's getting about these days?

A tune-in on the happenings of the District Lions Club is that their Light Bulb Blitz for March 17-April 17 is on the move with 2 60 Watts and 2 100 watt bulbs being sold for \$1. and the name of the game is community hall, arena, and swimming pool complex. Need a bright light in your life, remember the Lions!

The congregation of St. John's Anglican Church was impressed last Sunday by guest speaker Ben Hannan, executive director of the Guelph Y.M.C.A. when he talked to them of the conflict of being a Christian in today's society. Although the numbers in the church were not great, the sermon reportedly was, and those who attended hope to hear more of a speaker who managed to co-relate today's problems with Christian understanding. "Thanks Mr. Hannan for being on tap" from those who heard you.

Word is that Carl Meadows is still in the hospital in Toronto. His numerous friends send their best wishes for an early return home with his family.

Two nice village ladies were guests of honour at an afternoon tea last Thursday afternoon and won Ivy to prove it. Mrs. Lucy Linford of Harris Street and Mrs. George Thomas of Quarrie Rd. enjoyed fun and visiting with other ladies of St. John's Church at the home of Lorraine Root of Guelph Street.

Lively conversation, hot coffee, and rapport made the ladies decide to do a repeat performance very soon again.

Fun visits over the holidays is when grandnieces stay with grandaunts and little Sharon Nugent is the 13-year-old visitor from Morrisburg staying with Rose Oakes of Guelph Street. Hi Sharon, welcome to our village and come again.

From all their birthday pals it's happy birthday to Kevin and Michael McRae who celebrated their great event with a party last Monday, with seven candles on the cake for Kevin and nine for Michael. Best wishes kids, have a great week and hope you had many returns for the day.

From kindergarten to grade 13 and now many of Rockwood's young grown-ups are to be seen back home for their winter vacations from universities and colleges. Welcome home kids, it's terrific having you around again only it seems like yesterday you were in the old S.S. No. 9 - time flies and everyone's getting

older.

Big tags and all tags for scrawny dogs and brawny dogs and all canine pets come under the licensing by-law says township officials. Deadline date is June but why not get it now and stay out-of-line after all what's springtime without a bright new dog tag. Grrr-r! Down dog, down, see you at the local hydro office.

It's farewell and hope you're happy in your new-homing grounds to Judy Bender and her two small sons. Judy packed up on Saturday and headed towards Kitchener where she'll be with her friends and family. She's also leaving many friends behind who are sorry to see her leave.

Winter holidays are great especially for high school kids and it was Bon Voyage to three district girls last weekend. Marion Guild and Cindy Swanson boarded the bus at Guelph Centennial School on Friday headed for Toronto and a 4:00 p.m. World Airlines flight for Yugoslavia where they will spend approximately nine days touring north to south with 44 fellow students seeing the sites and visiting important places of interest.

On Sunday a delayed 8:30 a.m. flight took Marie Ellen Saunders, along with 22 John F. Ross students to a busy 10 day itinerary in Russia and, supervising the marvellous experience were two teachers and their wives. It will be home again next Saturday for the Yugoslavia visitors and Marie Ellen will pull into Toronto on either Monday or Tuesday. Best of luck and travel fun from Rockwood. Everyone knows they'll have a safe journey home.

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## Calls plug line

A recent three quarter hour hydro cutoff caused temporary confusion with the local hydro office recently when anxious residents began calling the Ontario Hydro office in Guelph, resulting in blocked telephone lines.

An explosion in a transformer on No. 7 Highway had caused the breakdown but Rockwood Hydro manager Len Hockey said today that, if all after hour emergency calls could be made to Rockwood line 4814 it would curtail communication difficulties and the local office would be able to verify the cause and position of the Hydro failure with the Guelph office more expeditiously.

The plea was made after several attempts to contact the Ontario Hydro Office in Guelph. Telephone lines were plugged with call-ins from local customers.

The hydro chief said that hydro problems should be directed to the Rockwood office during regular business hours.

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