

Tragedy in Rhodesia felt keenly in Rockwood



CHRIS SINCLAIR

By Lorraine Root
What was to the outside world an international incident was to residents of Rockwood a personal tragedy when, last Wednesday, word was received that two of the village's finest young girls had been slain at Victoria Falls in Rhodesia leaving behind them memories of school time participations and friendships which are being relived by endless numbers of village people this past week.

Marjan Iduna Drijber 20, born and raised in the Rockwood Village was a quietly outgoing girl who made deep friendships both with her peer schooling friends and residents in the neighborhood who looked forward to casual visits and talking with her. An outstanding student throughout her academic career she attended public school in Rockwood, took grade 9 at John F. Ross Collegiate in Guelph, was moved to Guelph Centennial C.V.I. and finally completed her grade 13 at John F. Ross Collegiate as an Ontario Scholar.

She had spent last summer working on the SWEEP program

prior to her trip overseas and, during that time, had made many friendships with the Grand River Authority Park staff as well as with park visitors.

An avid swimmer and outdoor girl she had also worked at the Guelph General Hospital as a candy stripper.

Minister's daughter
Christine Louise Sinclair of Guelph was an equally convivial girl who had moved with her family to the Rockwood village in 1966 when her father Rev. Donald Sinclair took over the Presbyterian Church responsibilities from Rev. Joseph Taylor. Christine, the third youngest member of a community-minded family was a doer who involved herself in Christian Young Peoples' work, had followed up through the Brownie and Girl Guides Organizations, was an avid camper who had attended Ontario Leadership Training Camp at Bark Lake and had spent two summers as a leader at the Presbyterian Church Camps of Iona and Glen Mhor.

She attended her final public

school year in Rockwood Centennial until her family's move to Guelph two years ago required a change to GCVI where she completed her grade 13 and entered spring semester at Guelph University.

Carefree, friendly, and enjoying people, the two girls struck up a friendship in public school which developed in their latter post high school graduation months with their interest in travelling and seeing more of the world.

Together they had visited London, Holland, Germany, France, Spain, and the Canary Islands stopping off at the places of interest and visiting where they could with relatives and friends.

Left in October
They left Canada last October and, all during their adventures have had the eyes of their community friends upon them. In Holland they visited Marjan's grandmother on her father's side and in Germany they stayed with friends. Back to France and down to Spain they left for the Canary

Islands where, via boat, they wended their way to Africa.

They visited cousins in Durban, South Africa during which time they worked, one in a book store and the other in a boutique shop. After a short stay they moved on to Lyttelton to visit Marjan's father's sister.

Letters home were effervescent with the joys of living; the two girls were having the fun of a lifetime and latest word was that they were enjoying a safari sponsored by a travel agency in Cape Town and they would be going north through Africa and up through Europe to London.

And then it was Wednesday, May 16. Radio reports were saying that two Canadian girls had been killed and what was a marvellous adventure for two well motivated local girls had turned into tragedy. While the incident has gained worldwide publicity as an International event, it is to the friends and associates of two wonderful families, one of their community's deepest tragedies.

Friday last Marjan's parents,

Oscar and Sitske Drijber left for Britain and from there flew to Victoria Falls arriving Sunday. A telegram home related that they had been treated like royalty by the Rhodesian government. They have gone to South Africa to reaffirm reports that maybe their daughter is still alive.

Confused accounts indicate that their findings at their destination could be one of several.

The homes of both families have been influxed with friends and visitors with flowers, cards, and many, many favours only partly displaying the tremendous attitudes of caring and sympathy extended to them both. When the Drijbers left Rockwood they shared the trusting conviction that maybe their only daughter is still alive, with them they carried the prayers and love of the Rockwood community.

What they have learned has not been clearly indicated but what Rockwood has learned is that once again passing in a small community is not just a blow to the immediate family but almost as great a one to the families of the community involved.



MARJAN DRIJBER

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REV. BETTY GRIFFITHS of Halifax, Nova Scotia, greets a young friend at special services at Ebenezer United Church, Nassagaweya township, Sunday evening, marking the 150th anniversary of the congregation. Mrs. Griffiths' husband was pastor of the Ebenezer charge from 1956 to 1961 when he

transferred to Lowville and from there to the Maritimes. When her husband died, Mrs. Griffiths decided to become a minister. Sunday she told the overflow congregation some of the reasons for her decision. A reception followed in the church basement.

(H. Coles Photo)

Babysitter attacked — seek suspect

A composite drawing of a suspect wanted in connection with an attempted robbery and strangulation of a 17-year-old Nassagaweya girl has been circulated to police departments across the province by Milton, O.P.P.

The wanted man allegedly broke into a Guelph Line home near 20 Sidersoad last Thursday evening and attacked a girl babysitting some small children. While he was trying to strangle the girl with an electric iron cord, the telephone rang and scared him away, police said.

Police said the attacker may have been a drug addict. He reportedly told the girl he needed money for "a fix". She was looking for some money to give him when he grabbed her and threw her to the floor, then tried to strangle her. Police said her face was burned by the hot iron.

The girl has been identified as Catherine Eleda Ward. She is a student at Acton high school.

To hospital
The man fled by car after the telephone rang. The frightened



Have you seen this man? Milton O.P.P. have circulated this picture to police forces across the province and anyone with information should contact the O.P.P. or any police force. The man, aged 18 to 20 and at least six feet tall, is wanted in connection with an attempted robbery and attack of a 17 year-old Nassagaweya girl on Thursday evening.

teenager summoned help and was taken to Milton hospital for treatment.

With the picture of the suspect, police circulated a description of the wanted man. He is 18 to 20 years of age, six feet to six foot two in height, medium build, with dark brown, mod-styled wavy hair. The girl described him as clean-shaven with badly pock-marked cheeks.

He was wearing blue jeans and a jacket over a dirty T-shirt at the time of the attack. He was also wearing black racing type gloves with no knuckles on the back of the hand.

Noisy muffler
His car is described as a large dark-colored car with square tail lights and a noisy muffler.

Anyone with information on the suspect or the vehicle is asked to contact Milton O.P.P. or the nearest police office.

Meanwhile police suggest homeowners should keep their doors locked and babysitters should be warned to be wary of strangers who appear late at night.



FIVE-YEAR-OLD Jennifer Hines kicks the soccer ball at the goal in Saturday's practice session while the netminder awaits the blow. She's the first gal in minor soccer.

—H. Coles Photo

Jennifer Hines, 5 invades all-male soccer league

Soccer got an unexpected shot in the arm from the "femme lib" movement when five year-old Jennifer Hines appeared to register in the Squirt division of the Acton minor soccer league recently.

Needless to say, the executive did not know quite what to make of it—Jennifer was the first girl who ever appeared to want to play soccer with the boys. They suppressed fears that the all male soccer bastion would never be the same, accepting Jennifer's registration and assigning her a team with which to play.

Saturday morning Jennifer was out scrimmaging with the other players in a practice at the M. Z. Bennett school grounds while her father, Doug Hines, an Acton school teacher, who resides at R.R. 2, Acton, looked on with approval.

"She expressed the wish to play the game, likes to kick the ball around and why shouldn't she be playing the game with the boys?" her father said in effect.

And why shouldn't she?
John Toebes, a member of the minor soccer executive, admitted they had reservations when Jennifer first appeared, wondering whether she wouldn't get hurt when the going gets rough. They suppressed their objections when they found out the parents were encouraging Jennifer to play.

But John wasn't sure just where this would lead. He wonders.

Recently a girl in Ypsilanti, Michigan, was signed to play Little League baseball and the resultant furor became a national issue. The national headquarters of Little League baseball said that if the female centre fielder was not dropped from the roster the team would be suspended until they did.

But the soccer people here run their own show and they are not perturbed.

They just wonder.

The principal thing Saturday

Plans for Principals Recognition Day are reaching their final stages this week. Saturday is the big day, and hundreds of people will be sharing in the unique program.

Many from out-of-town are expected and one of them is Miss M.Z. Bennett, who preceded G. W. McKenzie as principal of the school here. She retired in 1939 and now lives in Parkwood Manor, Waterloo. Miss Bennett will attend the afternoon reception.

Another teacher of nearly 20 years back is Miss Lulu Warner, who sent for tickets. As well as many returning teachers the two new principals will be at the dinner and dance. Gary Dawkins and Hazen Allen.

Former school board members will be here, too.

Weather permitting, the day will start off with a parade, leaving the library area about 1:15. Acton Citizens Band will lead the way, and people may join in all along the route to the high school, River St. to Willow, Bower to Mill, over the tracks to the school. There, picture displays, class lists and photos, refreshments and lots of talk, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. with no charge. Children are particularly welcome here.

About 325 banquet tickets are sold. Tables and chairs will be set up by the caterer in the community centre. Rev. Mike Bennett will be master of ceremonies for speeches and fun presentations.

Many more are expected to come along for the dance which begins at 9. Music's by the

Shaynes. There are plans to have the different graduating years, beginning with 1940, lead off the dancing. Tickets for the dance may be purchased at the door that evening. One of the highlights, according to the decorating committee, will be a fancy gazebo in the centre of the dance floor. This committee has been plotting for weeks.

The high school students have invited all former pupils to their dance Thursday evening, which has been called a Homecoming Dance in honor of the principals. Adults may obtain tickets at the school.

The committee organizing the day is delighted with the response.

A big percentage of the town's population will be involved in the Recognition.

\$400 Bell survey shelved by council

There will not be a Bell survey here to determine Acton wishes until there is more public reaction to the matter.

Area manager Lloyd Denby attended a council committee meeting and explained that Bell would conduct a survey to see whether Acton area residents would be interested in having their rates increased to be able to call Milton or Guelph—or both—at our expense.

Deputy-revee Marks reported Tuesday to council that the committee was not recommending the survey which would cost the town \$400. He said the matter would be reappraised if there is enough public reaction.

The matter first arose when councillor Bill Coats expressed his opinion at a council meeting that with the advent of regional government he felt Acton should be listed in the same telephone directory as Georgetown. His opinion was reported in the Free Press.

Subsequently Mr. Denby and Mr. Travers of Bell Canada attended the administration committee meeting on May 14.

Mr. Denby said then that anyone wishing a Georgetown directory may have one on request. Reeve McKenzie said he thought there should be some type of card in the Acton directory informing the public of this.

According to Bell's latest surveys, Mr. Denby reported, they still feel that the Acton area is more oriented toward Guelph for shopping, medical reasons, etc. If this is the case and Acton is placed in the Georgetown directory, Bell feels there would be more requests for the Guelph directory than there are for the Georgetown directory now.

New costs
Mr. Denby told the committee that present cost for a private line in Acton is \$4.80 per month and if we wanted to call Milton as part of the free calling area this would increase to \$5.40 a month;

calls to Guelph would be \$5.40 a month and calls to both would be \$5.80 a month.

At this week's council meeting councillor Coats, whose complaint had re-opened the whole question, regretted he wasn't a member of the committee that met with Mr. Denby. Why do we have free calling to Georgetown when they claim we're oriented to Guelph? Mr. Coats asked.

Deputy-revee Marks recalled an earlier survey which had rejected a Guelph area.

More planters

Acton Development Commission will be placing additional planters and hanging baskets in town this summer to beautify the appearance of the main streets.

If any citizens have suitable plants they would like to donate, please get in touch with Mrs. Laura Dittich, 253-0805, or Ted Tyler Jr., at 853-1550.

Collision takes life of Neil Gibbons

An accident on 401 Highway in Acton, took the life of lifelong Actonian, Neil William Gibbons 74 Main St. S. Saturday evening as the Gibbons family returned from a visit to Peterborough.

Mr. Gibbons was riding in the rear seat of his son Denis's car when it was hit from behind by another vehicle at about 11 p.m. Denis Gibbons and his mother, Kathleen riding in front, suffered only minor injuries in the crash

which completely demolished their car.

The accident occurred in the middle lane of 401 Highway near the Leslie St. entrance. Parts of the car were found in the nearby collector lane. Denis had to escape the wrecked car from the front window which was broken, as did his mother. They were both treated at North York General hospital for shock and minor injuries, released, and taken to

Mrs. Gibbons' daughter's home in Oakville.

It is believed Mr. Gibbons died instantly from the force of the impact.

Constable Campbell of the Downsview O.P.P. investigated. Neil Gibbons was born in Acton April 30, 1903, was educated in Acton schools and St. Jerome's College, Kitchener. He joined the office staff at Beardmore and then transferred to the plant

where he was foreman of the Welding Department for many years. He retired from the company in 1963.

A well known sports figure in his early years, Neil was a member of the first intermediate hockey team which won an O.H.A. group championship. He pitched baseball and was the star pitcher on the Acton team which won the Halton county junior baseball championship in 1922.

Neil Gibbons was one of the Acton all-time greats named to the Halton County Sports Hall of Fame, an Oakville promotion, in 1968.

He married Kathleen Treanor in Georgetown and the survives him as well as a son, Denis, and daughter Mary Kay (Mrs. Bill Martin) of Oakville. A sister Madeleine and brothers Frank and Thomas, all of Acton, also survive.

The funeral mass was celebrated at St. Joseph's Church on Tuesday morning by Father Michael Bennett of Guelph, a family friend. Father J.J. Gillen gave the homily.

Pallbearers were Peter Marks, Arlie White, Charles Kirkness, Don Lindsay and Hartley Coles, all of Acton, and Gregory Gibbons of Toronto. Interment was in St. Joseph's Cemetery.