

103-year-old home given new interior



A BEAUTIFUL DOOR enhances one of Acton's earliest residences and Cornelis Snoek is pleased when visitors push open the door to enjoy hospitality of their Main St. N. home.



RELAXING IS EASY in the Cornelis Snoek home on Main St. N. He reads a book while sitting near the large glass window-door which opens out to a stone patio and garden.

Imagination and energy have been pooled together to preserve one of Acton's oldest homes so that, in its present state, it should be able to stand long enough to at least double its vintage 103 years.

Fifty-five Main St. N. is the address of the house now owned by Cornelis and Maika Snoek which has served families in Acton dating back to the mid 1800's when population was less than a few hundred people. Early accounts of Acton history shows the lot on which the house is built was sold in 1857 by Rufus and Maria Adams to Malcolm Kennedy for the sum of 12 pounds, 10 shillings. It is believed they were the original builders of the Main St. residence.

In 1904 the house was sold for \$800 by Thomas Kennedy, Elizabeth Craine, Catharine Smythe and Ella May Prentice to Bridget O'Brien. There has been a history of large families in the wonderful old rubble stone home. According to Mrs. George Fryer, previous owner of the house, eight children comprised the O'Brien family and they were well accommodated in the eight-roomed dwelling.

Converted to house more than one family, the rugged home has withstood many minor changes. Additions have been added and subtracted but outside appearance of the house has remained much the same.

Living in

From owner to owner, the old building has had its ups and downs with everything from speculation to purchase by people who simply felt the old residence was worthy of ownership.

When the George Fryers took over the building in 1952, they took with them two children Jeff and Shirley. They ripped out two rooms, added two bathrooms, one upstairs, one down, and proceeded to divide the house into two separate units, an upper and lower apartment. For 22 years Mr. and Mrs. Fryer lived at their Main St. address. Last year, after her husband's death, Mrs. Fryer sold her home and moved into her present Church St. apartment.

Purchase of the house by new owners, the Cornelis Snoeks, was in February, '73. It was just one more step in the story of initiative and courage of the Dutch-Canadian immigrants who, with two small children, arrived in Canada 17 years ago with nothing more than \$104 in their wallet and the clothes they wore on their backs.

Mr. Snoek tells an amazing tale of arriving in Acton via train at 2 o'clock in the morning, "tired like a dog after 24 hours travelling." Leaving Holland he and his family had flown to Montreal, then four hours later took another on to Acton. They then called a taxi and gave the driver an R.R. 2, Acton address.

On arrival in Canada, the couple could not speak one word of English. Their only contact was Mrs. Snoek's aunt, Mrs. Marled DeVries, whose address had been sent to them written as R.R. 2, Acton, which turned out to be a farm at Ospringe. Worn and tired from travelling, the couple can still remember their relief when the driver finally got instructions on how to find their relative's address.

From there for Cornelis it was working on a farm. In Holland he had been employed in the business of leather goods manufacturing of harnesses and luggage, etc. But there was nothing for the leather craftsman's specialized interest around Acton, and for some time he worked as a hand on turnip, mixed and tobacco farms, "anything to make enough money to keep going," he said. As his language difficulty lessened Mr. Snoek tells of working with Ontario Steel in Milton for three years, then to Micro, Ajax, and finally American Motors where he was utility man in the car-seat department.

They soon came to Acton and went into partnership on a BP gas station and car wash. A snack bar was incorporated into the business with the ambitious Mrs. Snoek managing the shop. The family then moved from 52 Victoria Ave. residence to a house located near the car wash.

As business progressed the industrious couple bought out a partner and Mr. Snoek left his job with American Motors to concern himself only with his Acton business. From there it's been a story of progress with the couple seeing need of a second laundromat in town and installing one when the plaza was built south of the corner of Main and Mill St.

Due to health problems, the car-wash and snack bar became too much for proprietress, Mrs. Snoek, and the decision was made to lease the business and purchase a house nearer the laundromat on Main St. And so it was they found the home they'd always wanted. The Fryer home was up for sale and, with its ideal location,

the Snoeks purchased the property as two more owners in the long line of former residents.

Secret of the couple's success has, as they say, been working together. "We've worked together all our married life and it is really no secret but a fact," they say happily. From steam to steam the Snoeks applied their philosophy to their Main St. N. home. They have literally gutted the inside of the house to replace it with another one inside, utilizing the marvellous 24-inch thick rubble-stone walls. The house has changed from a no-bathroom house to one with a four foot "bug-by-hand" crawl space. The floors are now more solid and the area beneath the first floor lends itself to easier facility repairing. What was eight rooms before is now seven plus a furnace room with a large downstairs modern kitchen-dining room done in early Canadiana and a large living room which extends the length of the house. The front staircase has been replaced by one at the back which leads to four bedrooms and bathroom on the second floor.

Upstairs dormer windows have been clarified and are deeper than before to incorporate the distance from the new walls to the outer window edges. Downstairs, a window facing the garden has been converted into a sliding glass door-window which opens to a patio outside.

What the Snoeks have done is rebuild as opposed to restore. They have taken advantage of the solidity of the past and converted it into a home of the present which will last for many years into the future. It's not a new idea in what can be done with old houses but it's one which the present owners are enjoying immensely. Part of the old has been adapted with the new, with modern heating units providing adequate warmth along with other up-to-date facilities.

The project which began last Feb. 18 is almost completed. Daily the Snoeks are able to walk to their laundromat and check on its running order. In between-times, they enjoy the luxury of semi-retirement in their lovely new home which, they say, "We hope will be our final one."



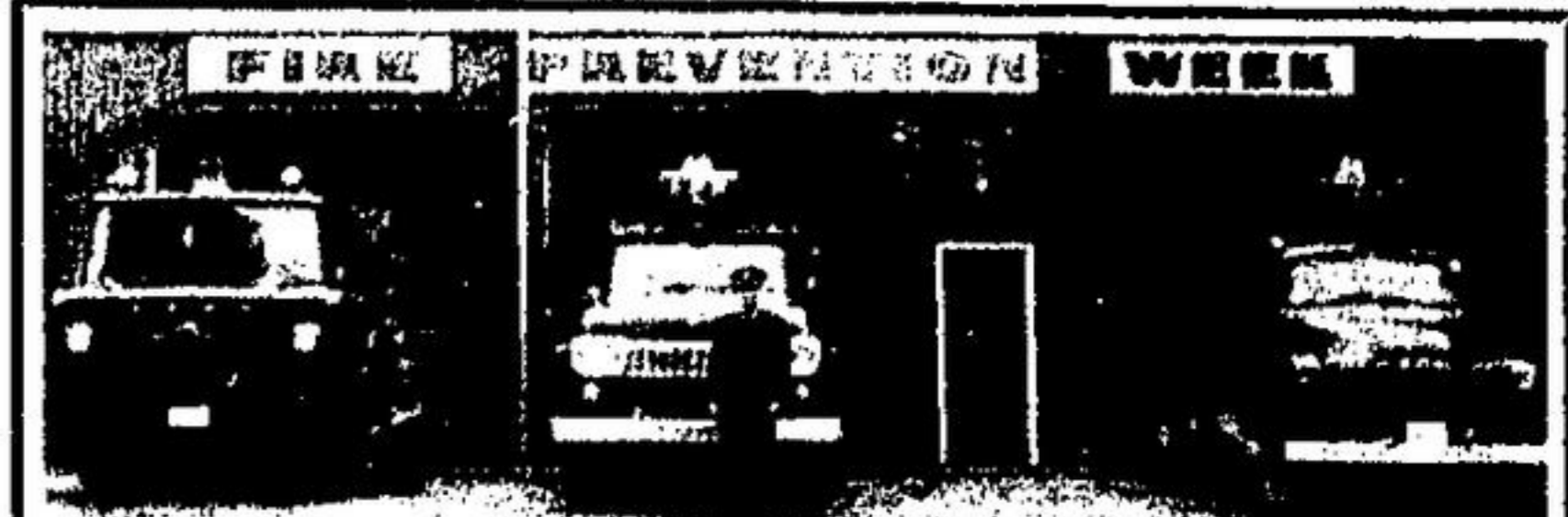
MAAIKE SNOEK enjoys working in her Colonial-type kitchen which her husband designed. The kitchen-dining room adapts itself well to the general decor of the home.

Sank vots for reunion

Calling all 9th Canadian Mounted Militia veterans and their wives or their widows, to the 50th annual banquet (probably the last one), 12 noon, Saturday, Oct. 26, Sheraton Hotel, King Edward Hotel, Toronto!

For further information please call or write to Tom Bradley, Box 52, Milton, Ontario L1B 4B6, or Joe Cowley, 508 Dundas St. West, Toronto, phone 416-533-6416, on or before October 18.

The publicity secretary, Mrs. J. J. Glynan of Larchmont, is very anxious that as many veterans as possible learn of this 50th reunion, as numbers grow lower.



October 7th to 12th is FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

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Acton Fire Department
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12th
9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.

- ★ For Free Routine Fire Prevention Inspection Contact Fire Chief Mick Holmes at 877-5185, Ext. 53 or at Home 853-0636.
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Halton Hills Fire Dept.

(AREA 1)

Drag strip may close

Councillor Roy Booth told Halton Hills committee of the whole council there is nothing the town can do right now about noise at the drag strip unless they violate the by-law.

He said at the Monday night meeting that administration committee had informed Linda Craig, a resident of the area who complained about the noise, that council was aware of the problem but under existing regulations there was nothing they could do about it. The drag strip has not violated the by-law. There is a possibility that a new anti-noise by-law will be enacted sometime in the future.

"Do you mean that the people will have to live with the noise forever?" wondered Councillor Pat McKenzie. Councillor Len Cox told the meeting that might not be the case. "They closed it down prematurely this year and may not even want to operate next year," he said. The owners of the race track would like to build estate homes on the property.

Trees on main roads

For the remainder of this year, trees will only be planted on arterial roads in Halton Hills.

Council will draw up a policy for next year, which may include other roads all over town.

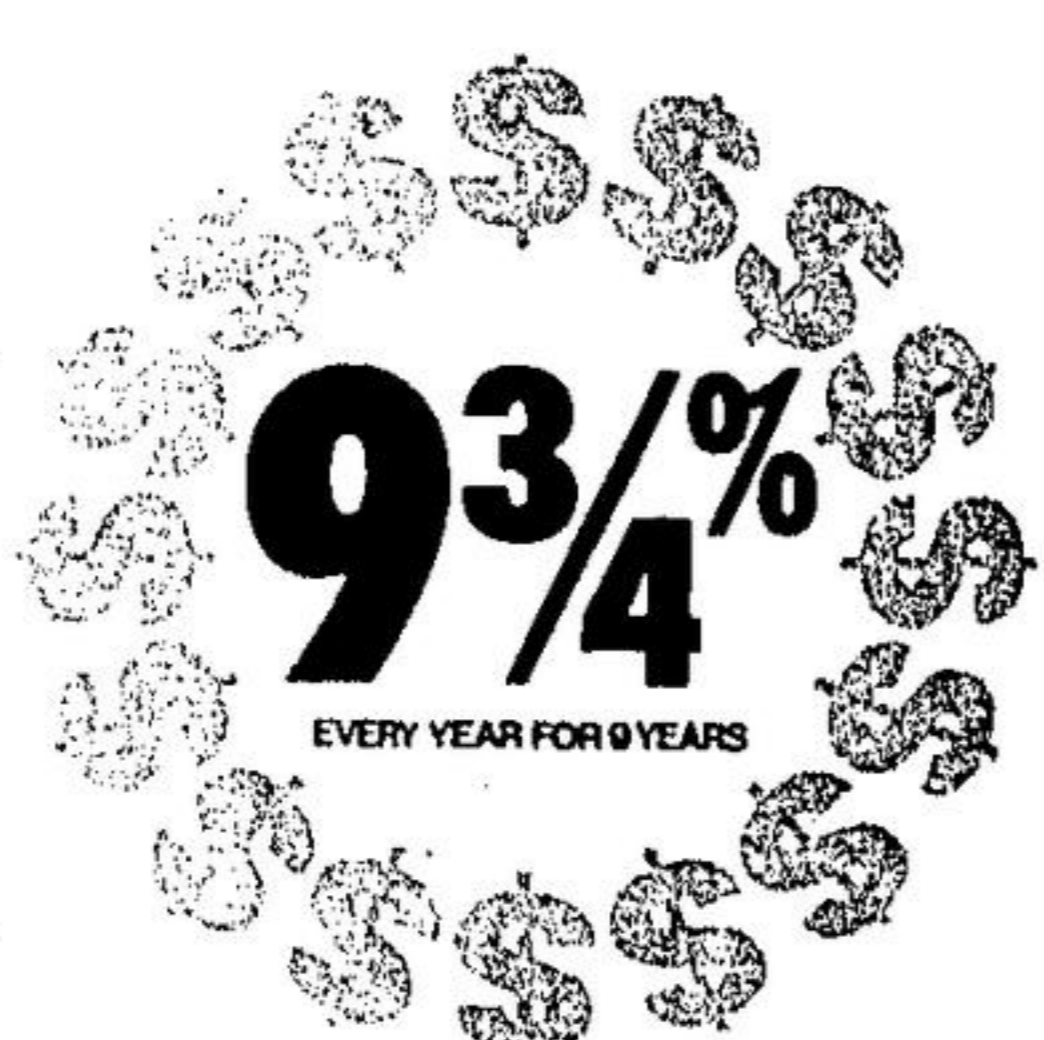
Acting mayor Ern Hyde explained it was too late in the year to do anything but arterial roads this year.

Councillor Pat McKenzie asked if Acton policy where residents shared the cost and planted trees on their own property, would be continued. Hyde said that policy would be included in the study to be done by the engineer.

"Does this mean past policies such as Georgetown had for tree planting on all roads will be wiped out," asked Councillor Ernie Sykes.

Councillor Len Cox said a policy for both Acton and Georgetown would be set.

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