

Winter's debut is hard, slow driving Monday

Old man winter blew into southern Ontario Monday and dumped several inches of snow in its path. An estimated eight to ten inches fell on Acton before it was all over.

Driving conditions played havoc for those having to drive any distance in the season's first major snow storm. Reports of area people say it took anywhere from 15 minutes to almost three hours longer to get home to their destinations.

Tuesday afternoon one man ended up driving for two and a half hours to get from Cooksville to Acton, a trip that usually takes him 40 minutes. He explained the stalled cars along the route held up most of the traffic.

The same man, and another driving home to Erin said the north-south roads were alright, with just blowing snow, but the east west roads were snow packed and dangerous. "It was like driving into a curtain." The drive to Erin took 35 minutes, and normally takes 15 to 20.

A Kingham Rd. man took only 15 to 20 minutes longer to get home from Bramalea, but his shift is over at 3:30, before the traffic gets heavy. Another Acton person, working in Rexdale, took three hours to get home, more than two hours longer than most days. Still another man reported it was the worst driving he had ever encountered.

Halton Hills works crews were out clearing the roads for more than 24 hours, according to works superintendent Frank Morette. The trucks were called out to Acton and Georgetown around three p.m. nearing the end of their work day. By 11 p.m., all the roads in Acton had been cleared, and the trucks headed down to Georgetown to join the others. By 3 a.m., says Mr. Morette, the urban areas were done and the army headed towards the township and rural roads. By morning,

the roads were cleared. By then, workers had to start another day at work, and hope no more snow fell.

Mr. Morette said the plowing was helped quite a bit this year by motorist cooperation. He explained that there were no cars in the ditches for the trucks to have to take time to help pull out, and only a few vehicles had been abandoned. These, however, had been pulled to the side of the road so the plows could go around them.

In other storms, he said, the cars are left in the middle of the road, making it impossible to get around them.

He said he really appreciated the public's cooperation and hopes it lasts for the rest of the winter. Because of this help, he said, the main arteries could be kept open which was his department's main concern.

Mr. Morette said the storm did not take his men by surprise, as the superin-

tendent gets weather information from the Ministry of Transportation and Communication in Malton, and also listens to the weather reports on the radio. The plows were ready to go. He is grateful the town missed the predicted freezing rain.

The cost of keeping the roads open is not known at this time, Mr. Morette said. Overtime, gas costs, etc., have to be calculated.

Another good thing about the motorists, Mr. Morette said, is that there were very few people out driving at midnight, and none out at 3 a.m. He praised the motorists for staying put once they got home or to other shelter.

Mr. Morette did not think of Monday's snowfall as being a particularly bad storm. Because it was one of the first snow falls, and occurred so early in the day when most people found themselves at work, the circumstances were bad. He estimated

between eight and ten inches of snow fell.

Les' B.P. towing service reports 25 calls during the storm, and Tuesday morning. Twelve of these were from people who were stuck in the snow, and 13 from people with car trouble. The majority of stopped cars' trouble resulted from wet engines.

Dinnertime GO trains were late at Georgetown. One train had to push another train into the Georgetown station during the worst of the storm. The train due at 8:30 p.m. arrived about five minutes to 8 p.m. The trains were packed with people who had left their cars behind in the snow.

Reporters struggling through the snow to attend Halton Hills council at the municipal buildings on the Seventh Line Monday evening eventually got there, only to have to turn around and go home. There were not

enough councillors on hand to make up a quorum. Council was re-scheduled for Tuesday.

Hamilton was the worst hit area, with the city being totally cut off. One Hamilton man who works in Acton didn't even bother leaving Acton when his midnight shift was over after listening to the snow reports.

After last year's powerful blizzards, the Ministry of Transportation and Communication advised motorists to have their car equipped with special provisions in the event it is stopped up in the snow and the motorist is stranded. These provisions include: a blanket; a shovel; extra pair of pants and socks, an extra sweater; candy of some kind, i.e. chocolate bars; a first aid kit; a can or jar; and matches.

Some people died in Ontario and New York State roads last winter after being stranded in their cars and freezing to death.

The Boy Scout motto sums everything up in these conditions, "Be Prepared".



BRUNO THE BEAR was not too smart but he was smart enough to know it was Kristin Herner's third birthday, and he gave her a special hello. Bruno was part of the Hansel and Gretel puppet show put on Saturday at the library by

the Pepi Puppet Theatre. The play was presented to a packed house in the library, where the kids received it enthusiastically. Holding Kristin up is her dad Brian Herner.

Pump house

Kingham residents prefer store on lot

A meeting called to discuss the future of the Main S. pumphouse ranged over many subjects Wednesday night at the Robert Little school.

Well attended by town staff, the meeting was short on interested residents, however. Just five attended from the Kingham area, along with other nearby residents and some from other parts of town. Also included in the attendance of about 20 were councillor Peter Marks, recreation director Glenn Gray, assistant planner Brian Kropf, arena manager Harold Townsley, recreation co-ordinator Anne Pickering, pool supervisor Liz Binsfeld, Georgetown recreation director Karen King and Debbie Taylor of the Children's Aid Society.

One suggested use for the pump house was as a day care centre, but this proposal didn't

last long on the floor. Miss Pickering said in fact the building was too small. Only 15 children would be allowed in that space since there is only one toilet. Two supervisors would be required. The space would allow about 20 children, if another toilet were installed.

Since there is no kitchen, the children could only be accommodated half days.

Everyone present agreed on the need for a day care centre in Acton and chairman Peter Marks declared "we can make it happen."

He suggested interested people call and leave their names at the Community Services centre. He said he understood there were over 50 names on a waiting list for the hoped-for centre in the Pentecostal church. This plan fell through.

Debbie Taylor of the Children's Aid Society said her work proves a need to her. Mr. Marks said the Community Services Centre has had calls and Anne Pickering said the regional day care people think Acton needs a centre too.

Mr. Marks said a day care centre can support itself. In Georgetown, the cost is \$8.75 a day including lunch. He thought rented accommodation downtown would be best, say in a church basement.

The Georgetown Centre is not filled, and there was a brief mention of bussing children there.

Lorraine Barton of Honey Pot Nursery school said they have had difficulty getting qualified people and in fact the business is for sale. There are over 50 enrolled with a waiting list. The program is half days, with no lunch, so it is less suited for working mothers than day care. She hopes Honey Pot Nursery will be sold to a qualified person who will own as well as run it.

With 40 or 50 names, we could go to the regional day care, Mr. Marks said. All other towns in Halton have it. The region will not invest in a building he said.

Mr. Marks said if no good suggestions were accepted the pump house and site could be sold on the open market, at an estimated worth of between \$40,000 and \$50,000. Council would like to use a portion of that income to develop the parkland in Kingham, he said. The park area is low lying and swampy.

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ACTON, ONTARIO,

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1977.

One Hundred and Third Year.—No. 23.

Forty Pages.—Fifteen Cents.

Eventual benefit from leather restrictions

The federal government last week imposed worldwide quotas on imported footwear, but Beardmore president Peter Dunham feels the decision took too long. "It's a step in the right direction," he says, "but the cutting season is almost past." He thinks there will be few immediate effects this season.

Fred Dawkins of Frank Heller and Co. also agrees the improvement in business won't be felt in Acton for a while yet.

Legislation is designed to protect the domestic shoe industry from further deterioration as a result of the growing number of footwear imports.

The quotas will apply mostly to leather footwear. Donald MacLeod, chairman of the Shoe Manufacturers Association of Canada, says legislation should go a long way to preserving close to 20,000 jobs in the footwear, tanning and shoe industries in Canada.

But the delayed timing con-

cerned Mr. Dunham. "All the manufacturers have had troubles, some of them arranging layoffs for two weeks at a time," he said. At Beardmore's there has been a reduction in the work force. The chrome division has been working four days a week.

He said the company has noticed a modest increase in orders in the past two weeks, but not enough to indicate the season has been saved by the new legislation.

In fact, at the recent Shoe Manufacturers conference in Montreal, plans were being made to march on Ottawa to demonstrate the plight of the industry. However representatives were assured the legislation would be forthcoming soon.

Mr. Dunham says he and Beardmore's would have been more optimistic if the decision had been made in September when expected.

The two and half month delay is "crucial." There is a natural lapse of time between

making of shoe samples, the taking of orders and then the production and re-order of shoes, for instance. Beardmore's must wait for retail reaction to feel an improvement in business. "The season is shot," he explained.

Fred Dawkins says it'll be at least six months before their company feels the effect of the new legislation. About 40 per cent of their business involves shoe leather and he expects an increase in business eventually.

Imports for next summer are already bought, he noted.

An indirect effect of loss of work in the industry has been a decrease in the amount of split leather being produced in tanneries, which are suffering from the business slowdown. This split leather has been in short supply as a raw material for such companies as Hellers.

Mr. Dawkins also mentions what a "long-drawn out affair" the expected legislation has been.

Reading newspapers and watching television on the decision, Mr. Dawkins says he feels the news media have been very unfair in stressing the reaction of the Canadian Importers Association. He does not agree with their reaction that shoe prices will go up. He feels the shoe manufacturers will see to it that prices do not go up. With more volume of work prices can be kept down. There will also be better use of machinery and skills.

In the new legislation, footwear imports will be restricted to 32.5 million pairs annually for the next three years. This is about one-third reduction from the levels of

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BRIAN RENNICK is the new minister at Evangel Pentecostal church.

Brian Rennick new minister

New minister of Evangel Pentecostal church is Brian Rennick, who has been in town about three weeks now. He has been an assistant at People's church in Hamilton for the past year and a half.

Mr. Rennick and his wife Colleen live in the church parsonage at 64 Acton Blvd.

He is looking forward to the new experience of having his own congregation. He has been getting to know the people and visiting some of the shut-ins.

He comes from Monkton, Ontario and attended school there before going to high school at Mitchell. Then he attended Eastern Pentecostal Bible College, Peterborough, for three years.

From there he went to Hamilton, where he was assistant to the pastor of People's church, and was in charge of youth and music. He taught a teen class in the Sunday School.

He is a pianist, and enjoys singing. He sang in groups and choirs in college. He also enjoys sports.

Town hall historic site

The Acton town hall was officially designated as an historic site Tuesday night by Halton Hills council. They passed the bylaw which states the property should be preserved because of its historic value and significance.

The only person opposed to the bylaw was councillor Roy Booth who said he was going to vote against it, but didn't want to discuss it.

The bylaw is mandatory before the Town Hall project can receive Heritage Foundation grants.

Santa writes to children from the North Pole

In spite of the slowdown in mail service yesterday morning (Tuesday), due to trucks being held up on snow-packed roads, one very special letter did get through. It was placed between the Free Press doors when office staff came to work in the morning.

Dear Children:

In less than three weeks I shall be making my rounds throughout the world delivering presents to all good boys and girls. My workshop is just a flurry of activity with so many orders to fill, and not enough time to get everything done.

However, when I load up my sleigh on December 24, everything will be finished. The elves can breathe a sigh of relief, but only until I return. At that time, I shall have a nap, and soon start producing toys for next year.

Once again this year I cannot promise all the youngsters everything they want. There has been such

a heavy demand for toys like Stretch Armstrong, Mr. Mouth, racing car sets, building blocks, dolls, etc., that not everyone will get exactly what they want. I will try to do my best.

I am glad to see your area finally has enough snow for my sleigh. It was going to be difficult to visit one area with runners on my sleigh, and then take them off and replace them with wheels. The snow makes my job much easier.

I would like to thank all the children who sent me letters. I enjoy reading them after a hard day's work and have recorded all the requests.

So remember, children, you'd better watch out. I have people all over the world keeping an eye on you to make sure you are good.

There are boys and girls all over the world who do not have a chance to celebrate Christmas for various reasons. The children of North America should be

thankful for what they get, but also thankful for what Christmas day means.

So many have let the idea of shopping, parades, gift giving, and even myself get in the way, and shove the true meaning of Christmas back into the cobwebs of their minds. Please remember, children, on Christmas day, that the day is celebrated not just as a time of the year when wishes come true, but when Jesus Christ was born.

December 25 is a joyous day for young and old alike, and far more than the commercial season it has developed into.

I will be attending services in my private chapel here in the North Pole, and hope all of you will be attending your local churches.

Take care, and have a Merry and Joyous Christmas.

Love, Santa.



A confectionery delight

EATING OUT with a difference: Stacy Patenaude is really eating out as she takes a mouthful of snow yesterday. If you're hungry enough, or young enough, you will eat anything, and snow is a time-tested midday snack for many kids.