

Fierce wind, snow bring area to standstill Thursday

One of the most intense storms in a century drove furious winds and snow through the district Thursday. Accidents were common; many people were stranded. Schools and stores and businesses closed early. By Thursday evening, nothing stirred in town or district. The roads were still clogged with abandoned cars, checked out by police and snowmobilers for stranded motorists.

Word of the multi-car pile-up that left Frank Toth seriously injured spread through town as friends anxiously asked each other for word of his condition. He lost his left leg as a result of the storm. He was out with his tow truck, removing a police

cruiser from the ditch when the accident occurred. The storm circled a hub of low pressure that set a record for all the years that records have been kept. The barometric reading reached 27.98 inches. Winds reached up to 113 kilometers an hour. Until midnight last Thursday the Acton precinct of the Halton Regional Police answered 23 calls for here and the Georgetown-Milton district.

The 23 were just the accidents police managed to reach. Police were aware of many more. Banks closed up and sent their staffs home early. Some stores also closed up when there were no customers out. Some events for Thursday night were cancelled. Schools closed up early Thursday. They were planning to be closed Friday anyway. For the public school students, Friday was to have been Professional Development Day. Although the children stayed home as expected, the PD day was cancelled. At the High School, Friday was to be a day off for the end of the semester.

There were many acts of helpfulness. Friendly welcomes greeted people who stayed overnight, unable to face the treacherous driving. Some people took in strangers. For most it was friends. Stella Brunelle, receptionist at the Glenlea Medical Clinic, took three people

stranded by accidents to her own home for the night. The three men were from Hamilton, Burlington and Milton. The man from Milton had a friend in town who picked him up there while the other two spent the night at Mrs. Brunelle's. One Acton home was offered to the police to take in people stranded by the storm. The Aitken home on Tidey Ave. was not used although police knew it was available if needed.

The Community Services Centre also had homes lined up, for people involved in accidents, which were not needed. The taxi started out for Milton on Thursday Morning, but returned to town and

safety before long. As a result, there were no Meals on Wheels on either Thursday or Friday. All the recipients were contacted by phone. Daily newspapers from Toronto arrived, but not from Guelph on Thursday. An Acton couple returning home from Toronto got all the way to No. 25 highway when they encountered accidents on the road. They turned around and with no motels or gas stations open, they went all the way back to the city and spent the night in a hotel there.

One student had frost-bitten hands after his car was involved in an accident. Go Transit buses west of Brampton were pulled off the road at noon, according to Go Spokesman Tom Henry. By supper time, the entire Go bus network was closed except for a route to Pickering and one to Newmarket. By early evening, only one route was open. Grey Coach lines also pulled their buses off the roads by early afternoon. Their entire system was closed, Mr. Henry said. Drivers were put up in the Holiday Inn, Toronto for the night, and were able to start the routes early Friday morning to get systems back to normal. An empty Go bus, heading home to Milton, had to be pulled out of a ditch near Derry Road and the Brampton-Halton Hills townline, the spokesman also said.

Both Go and Grey Coach resumed normal service Friday morning. The entire east end of Acton was without hydro for 40 minutes during the storm. The powerful winds blew down the primary lead from a transformer on Queen St. All of Glenlea subdivision, Queen St., Arthur, Peel, and Mill East, and surrounding area were without power while Acton Hydro workers repaired the wire. Phone calls encountered delays, but the lines held. More than 35 smashed or abandoned cars were towed to Les' B.P. The Ontario Provincial Police had asked owner Les Pelletis to retrieve any abandoned cars along Highway 25 North, as they were obstructing traffic. His two tow trucks handled 42 cars before the night was through, many for cars in the ditch. One man counted 200 abandoned cars on Highway 7 between Georgetown and Toronto. Others reported counting hundreds of other cars on any road they travelled on. Many motorists were stranded in a small restaurant on Highway 10 and Derry Road. Brampton City buses were pulled off routes to travel up and down Highway 10 in search of stranded motorists. They were then taken to emergency sites set up in nearby arenas and in Shoppers World, Brampton, where it is reported there were thousands of cars. At these places they were given food and lodging until the storm blew over. Highway 401 and other major roads leading from Toronto were described as parking lots with abandoned cars literally bumper to bumper. Toronto itself was a mess. Huge office buildings had to be evacuated due to high winds, and windows were broken. Glass falling to the ground injured passerbys and ropes had to be strung from pole to pole so pedestrians could hold on to them to keep walking in a couple of places. Hundreds of people had broken bones in the city. Twenty-foot waves coming from Lake Ontario flooded Lakeshore Blvd. and other roads along the lakefront, forcing them to be closed. The ice created a skating rink. Many Acton residents took several hours longer than usual to get home from work. Some did not make it and had to stay with friends or strangers somewhere along the route. Other commuters didn't even attempt to come home. All have their own stories to tell.

12 hour battle to get home

It took a Rockwood area man 12 hours to get home from work Thursday, and the last few miles were via snowmobile. Bob Johns works for GO Transit near Dufferin and Highway 401, in Toronto. As the hurricane force winds got worse as the day went along, he decided to leave the office early and head home. That was at 1:30 p.m. At 4:10, Mr. Johns had made it as far as Steeles Avenue and Winston Churchill Blvd., (Brampton-Halton Hills townline). Here he was stopped for three hours at a small restaurant along with about 250 other stranded motorists. Around 7 p.m., a police officer came in and said the road was open so once again, Mr. Johns headed out. However, his driving was short-lived as he only got as far as Derry Road, and traffic was stopped up again. On one

side of the road, a grader had gone into the ditch. Across the road, an empty GO transit bus, the driver on his way home to Milton, was also in the ditch. Motorists had to wait until these vehicles were pulled out before they could proceed. Mr. Johns continued slowly and was on the Guelph Line, about five miles from home, when a snowmobile driver flagged him down. The man told him a truck was jackknifed across the road ahead, and it would be impossible for him to go any further. The snowmobile driver was a snow plow operator, on his way to work. With this new barricade between home and himself, Mr. Johns eventually found a farm house where he was taken in. Several hours later, another snowmobile operator came by and offered him a ride home. He walked in the door at 12:30 a.m.

The Acton Free Press

One Hundred and Third Year.—No. 31. ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1978. Twenty-Four Pages.—Fifteen Cents.



ACTON RESIDENTS HAD to fight their way through snow and wind Thursday when the storm struck. Shops all along Mill and Main streets closed early because of the afternoon snow.

Hotels full business good

Local hotels and motels did a booming business in the storm. Eli Kekic, owner of the Station Hotel, said all available rooms were booked. Some people, he explained, lived in Erin, others north of Highway 24, and one man from 25 Sideroad who did not even try to make it home from his Acton job. Bartenderess Charmaine Overland of the Dominion Hotel reports the same with their eight available rooms filled. People heading for Guelph, Georgetown, and other directions called the driving quits in Acton. Both hotels report the overnighters stopped in about 3 p.m. In spite of the storm, business was good in both hotel bars. Mr. Kekic said the band could not make it from

Hamilton, but the customers did not seem to mind. One employee of the Dominion was snowbound at the end of the evening as he couldn't get home to Norval. Cedar Springs Motel, between Acton and Georgetown on Highway 7, was booked up by early afternoon, according to owner Mrs. Max Bogovic. People from as far away as Barrie took a room, and in no time, their 11 units were taken. One man from Germany, touring the area by car, was also stranded here. Area teenagers experienced car trouble only a few miles from home, and wanted to book a room. However, by this time, says Mr. Bogovic, all the rooms were taken, so her husband drove them to their homes.

Drug stores shut doors early

Both drug stores closed early Thursday, after notifying the doctors they were doing so. The pharmacists were aware that doctors have sufficient drugs on hand for emergencies. However, at least one resident went anxiously from one store to the other with a

prescription Thursday afternoon, finding them both closed. He had been getting the prescription for a neighbor, who subsequently phoned back to the family doctor. "Everything worked out all right," said the helpful but frustrated friend. He did think one of the stores might have stayed open.

"We hated to do it," was the word from Glenlea drug mart. "But it was too dangerous." Their doors kept blowing open in the fierce wind, and the power was off for an hour. They closed about 4 p.m. They informed the staff at the medical clinic upstairs they were leaving.

A clerk recalled that pharmacist Garry Barton has often come to the store in the middle of the night for an emergency. Pharmacist Sandy Dewsbury of Acton Pharmacy at Mill and Main also said she informed the doctors the staff was leaving early. They left about 4:45, she said. Normally the stores are open till 9 p.m. on a Thursday. Ms. Dewsbury said there were no customers at all. She faced a drive of several miles and then a 500-foot driveway in the Eden Mills area. Her children didn't get home from their baby sitter's. Another staff member had an accident on the way home. Ms. Dewsbury started digging her car out at 7:30 a.m. Friday to get in to town to open up the pharmacy. Doctors can always be reached through their answering service. While some doctors live in town, all the pharmacists live in the country.

McGrath joins new board

Robert Farrell of Milton, Peter McCarthy of Georgetown and Mrs. H. McGrath of Acton have all been named to the Board of Governors for the first Separate High School in Halton. Members were appointed to the board by His Excellency Bishop Paul F. Reding. The school is located in Burlington. Other members of the board include Chairman Rev. B. J. Ryan, Vice-Chairman Dr. R. J. Taylor, D. G. Mackan of Burlington, M. Boyle, L. J. Moore, and Mrs. B. Brown of Oakville and Rev. J. F. Duffy of Waterdown. Director of Education for the Halton Roman Catholic Separate School Board and T. P. Brady, Business Administrator of the Halton Roman Catholic Separate School Board are ex-officio members of the board, and serve in an advisory capacity.



THERE'S SNOW FORT LIKE our fort, think Ginette and Michelle Daissie, and their dog Joe. The Caissies' parents painted the fort with eyes and a mouth to make it the most human fort in town.

Honor for Dr. Oakes

At the annual convention of the Ontario Veterinary Association held last week in Toronto, Dr. Frank Oakes was honored by being awarded a Life Membership Certificate in the Association. To qualify as a Life Member, a veterinarian must have been a member of the

association for a minimum of 35 years, must have reached the age of 65 years and must have a record of ethical professional conduct throughout his years of practice. Dr. Oakes is presently Acton's Citizen of the Year.

Bid to reduce council size fails

Oakville Councillor Carl Eriksen failed to get support from Halton Region's Administration Committee in his effort to reduce the number of councillors from 24 to 14, reduce the number of committees from four to two and to place an immediate freeze on all staff positions. Eriksen told the committee that a smaller council makes better decisions and can provide better government. "One factor in the inefficiency of council is the size of it." Milton Councillor Jim Watson said he'd support a reduc-

tion in councillors, but only if each community had three representatives each. That would mean no reduction for Milton but a reduction of two for Halton Hills and substantial reductions for Oakville and Burlington, which have seven and nine respectively. His amendment was discarded as being frivolous and the main motion was defeated as well. While many councillors agreed the council could function better with fewer councillors, they couldn't support Eriksen's motion.

Burlington Councillor Walter Mulkeiwich said the cut proposed by Eriksen would mean a Burlington councillor would represent 26,200 people instead of 13,100. Burlington Mayor Mary Munro suggested Mulkeiwich's claim that 26,200 was too many people was "garbage". Eriksen argued that the future role of the council and the region would be a reduced one and one of a different nature. He said committees would make better use of staff. While there was some sup-

port for reducing the region's role to one of housekeeping, councillors on that committee wouldn't support Eriksen's way of going about it. The committee tabled Eriksen's motion to freeze staff positions until a staff report is filed on the matter. Chief Administrative Officer Ernie Reid said controls advocated by Eriksen in reference to hiring unnecessary bodies were already in place. "We don't hire anybody if we can transfer someone from another department to fill the void."

\$5,250 3-car mishap

Three north bound cars rearended on the Guelph Line about 500 yards south of the 20th Sideroad during last Thursday's storm. Damage to the car driven by Anthony Vadeika of 150 Elizabeth Dr. comes to \$3,000 according to police. Kenneth Trowbridge of Guelph was slightly injured in the accident. Police estimate damage to his vehicle to be \$2,000. Damage to the station wagon driven by Carol Ann Bahr of R.R. 2, Rockwood is about \$250, police say.

Frank Toth "stable" lost leg in accident

Frank Toth is resting in stable condition in Guelph General Hospital after he lost a leg as a result of a traffic mishap during last Thursday's severe storm. Mr. Toth's left leg was amputated above the knee by doctors. His other leg was also crushed in the accident. According to his son, Raymond Toth, doctors feel it may take years, if ever, before full use of the right leg is restored. Mr. Toth's stay in hospital is expected to be between four and five months. It'll be four months anyway, Raymond Toth said, then there is rehabilitation and the fitting of an artificial limb. Mr. Toth has no other injuries.

About ten cars had rearended or gone off the highway nearby prior to the Toth mishap. A quick radio call by Halton constable John Lyver brought off-duty officer Alex Fishbein and Ken Chappel, of Churchill Road South, to the scene. The two were at the injured man's service station, Toth Motors on Guelph Street West, when the emergency call came over a monitor. They used Chappel's station wagon to get to the scene. Calls also went out for a doctor and for an ambulance to come from Guelph. Dr. Brian Moore from the Acton Medical Group got to the crash scene first. When I got there, we just got him (Toth) into the station wagon. We couldn't let him freeze, and we couldn't wait for the ambulance, he said. Temperatures, including the chill factor, were about -70 degrees Fahrenheit, he said. The ambulance, according to regional police, had difficulty in getting here. So the decision to take Mr. Toth to Guelph in the station wagon was made. Mr. Chappel drove, in bad conditions, through the

blowing snow. Constable Fishbein comforted Mr. Toth, who was conscious. A cruiser, driven by Constable Lyver, drove ahead of the station wagon. The ambulance was passed en route. Guelph city police later picked up the escort duties to the hospital. Raymond Toth said his brother Bob returned home from Victoria, B.C. to help out. An Acton couple recommend a collection, as a gesture of community support and sympathy. Doug and Lyla Lueto have a Letter to the Editor in today's paper suggesting this. They hope banks and hotels will set out boxes so friends and sympathizers may make their feelings known in a tangible way. They started it off with a cheque.

\$800 damage

Halton Regional Police estimate that \$800 in property damage resulted from a two-vehicle collision on Kingham Road Wednesday afternoon. Damage to the car driven by Kuen Ling (Pat) Sit of 104 Kingham Rd. is about \$500, according to police. Damage to the van driven by Garry K. Foster of 54 Rosefield Terrace is put at \$300 by police. The Sit vehicle was east bound on Kingham Road; the Foster van came from the opposite direction.

Chimney fire last week

Acton Volunteer Firefighters were called to an Acton Blvd. home last Wednesday evening to douse a chimney fire. It was the only call of the week.



TOO MANY COOKS did not spoil the broth according to the Legion Ladies' Auxilliary. Bill Taylor, Cal McIntyre, Ivan Kilby, Johnny Krapek and Doug Mason examine what's in the

pot Saturday at the Legion. Men were treating the ladies to dinner in recognition of the job the auxilliary does all year catering. All agreed the meal was excellent.