

Caught in quake

They felt earth move

A holiday in Acapulco turned out to be more exciting than the Carl Hymers had bargained for. Just two hours after they arrived in Acapulco March 18, a severe earthquake hit the Mexican resort town.

Mr. Hymers is the vice-principal at McKenzie-Smith school in Acton.

Carl and Fran Hymers were in the lobby of their hotel, changing their money into Mexican currency, when they heard a heavy sound like a loud roar. At first Mr. Hymers thought it was a large bus — the hotel was open to the streets and all sound came in.

But in a matter of seconds they began to feel the floor vibrate beneath their feet, see the walls move and hear the sound of mortar falling from the ceiling. The lights went out and guests in the lobby began to scream. Hotel employees attempted to calm people by saying it was only a heavy truck gone off the road.

Meanwhile, Mr. Hymers and his wife hit the floor beside the exchange counter. Chunks of ceiling were falling 10 feet from them. With lights out it was dark and Carl Hymers recalls wondering where it was going to fall next. Although he'd never been in an earthquake before, he was certain by this time that an earthquake was what he was experiencing then. Images from the movie Earthquake flashed through his mind.

It was about 7:15 p.m. Three minutes or so after the lights went out the emergency power took effect and the lights came back on.

It was an experience that's difficult to describe, Mr. Hymers says. It was extremely frightening and, even now, when he talks about it he feels uneasy. One of the eeriest things about the quake was that it struck so suddenly, without any sort of warning.

Reactions of the other guests varied. A teenage girl not far from the Hymers was paralyzed with fear. Some visitors wanted to leave Mexico immediately while others, the Hymers included, decided to stay on for the remainder of their holidays.

Unfortunately for those who chose to leave, planes were grounded at Acapulco airport. A group of school children who wanted out didn't get away until the following Wednesday, Mr. Hymers says.

There were more tremors several days later. One awakened them at night. Other times, they'd be walking down the street when they'd feel the earth ripple under their feet.

According to Mr. Hymers, the quake registered between 6 and 7 on the Richter scale. An earthquake with an eight reading would have broken the earth's crust; a quake giving a sustained reading of six to seven could collapse buildings.

Acapulco sits on a fault running from Guatemala, the site of a devastating quake a few years ago, through Mexico City to California, Mr. Hymers says. Although Acapulco has occasional mild quakes, this was the worst one in 13 years, he was told. The Mexican press reported 25 people were injured and two died as a result.

The hotel in which the Hymers stayed was an older one, 10 stories high. They were allowed to remain in their hotel, but guests in some of the taller hotels were evacuated and kept out for some time.

Despite a feeling of apprehension, the Hymers didn't let the quake spoil their holiday and returned with enviable ease. While their parents were away Charlene and Heather Hymers stayed with their grandparents.



MUTUAL FIRE Aid meeting was held in the new Acton fire hall for the first time last Wednesday. Firefighters were here from Milton, Georgetown, Oakville and Burlington.

Fun, prizes, cash at Rotary Skate-a-thon

Children are out gathering sponsors for the annual Rotary skate-a-thon to be held this Saturday, April 1 at the arena. Children from Limehouse, Ballinacraig, Osprey, Speyside, McKenzie-Smith, M.Z. Bennett, Robert Little and St. Joseph's schools will be competing in the event.

The children are sponsored a certain amount of money per lap up to a maximum of 60 laps. Each school is given an ice time with the students

competing as a school. Half of the money earned by the students goes to their school for field trip expenses and other student activities. The other 50 per cent goes to the Rotary club for financial support on community projects the group organizes and takes part in.

Prizes are also awarded to the students who earn the most money through sponsors. The prize for the highest earner is a portable colour T.V. Second prize is a digital

clock radio; third prize is a cassette tape recorder.

Rotary club members encourage people to sponsor and watch the skate-a-thon from 12:30 until 4 p.m. on Saturday.

Local politicians and celebrity skaters will be on hand for the skate-a-thon. Kevin Parker, nationally known figure skater and a local resident, will be skating. The Rotary club will be providing skaters with a free hot dog and drink.

Long weekend being planned

Back to Acton Days, the local Dominion Day weekend celebrations, are currently being planned.

A committee consisting of Pat and Ed Wood, Alma Swetman, Terry Grubbe and Jake Kuiken met last week to hear suggestions for the weekend. Representatives from the Rotary and Lions clubs, the Brownsies, Theta Phi, and the arts and crafts society also attended.

Suggestions currently being considered are a calthumpian parade, bathtub and canoe races, a street dance, arts and crafts displays, senior citizen pavilion, bingo, athletic events on Mill St. for all ages, a Brownie display, outdoor barbecue, blue grass concert, leather display, pony rides, band concert, flea market etc.

The committee is open to suggestions from everyone. "Join in and do your own thing," encouraged Mrs. Grubbe. "We really need community support, it's a family affair."

It is also hoped community organizations will help sponsor various events rather than leave the entire weekend up to one group.

Mrs. Grubbe stressed that all plans are just in the first stages and nothing has definitely been planned. She pointed out the next meeting will be April 13 to further discuss plans.

Easter seals sent to area residents

Rotary club members are hoping for a good response this year to their annual Easter seals campaign. More than 3,000 envelopes of seals were sent out by Rotary members to residents in the Acton and rural area.

The campaign began on March 20, when the seals were sent out and will continue until April 21 with a projected goal of \$2000 being reached this year. Donations for the seals can be sent to the Bank of Nova Scotia. Rotary club past president, Don McDonald, reported the returns are now coming into the bank.

One-half of the money which is collected is sent to the Ontario Society for Crippled Children, while the other half is used for crippled children in the Acton area. A donation to the Crippled Children is tax deductible and receipts will be issued for donations in the excess of five dollars.

Did you realize the Red Cross will train you if you volunteer? The hardest thing to find is people willing to give up some spare time to be a volunteer. If you'll give the time, Red Cross will give you the training.

Hospital expansions \$21 million

Capital expenditures for hospital construction totaling almost \$7 million over the next five years has been recommended by the Regional Community and Social Services Committee.

The figure, which represents only the region's share of the cost, includes the capital forecast for 1979 to 1982 as well as the capital budget for 1978.

The total cost of capital projects approved for hospitals is almost \$21 million, but under the cost sharing formula with the province, the region is responsible for one-third, or \$6,919,763, of the total cost.

Of the regional amount,

\$425,000 is earmarked for Phase I expansion of Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital for 1980, and \$333,333 for expansion of Milton District Hospital in 1982. Remaining monies were budgeted for all three phases of expansion of Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital and for capital projects at Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital in Burlington.

In the 1978 capital budget, \$366,431 in regional monies was allotted for renovation and alterations to the basement level of the Burlington hospital and equipment costs for Phase I expansion already in progress at the Oakville hospital.

The committee met last week.

Vehicle hits

A vehicle left the scene after it struck a parked car on the south side of Mill Street at 1 p.m. Sunday.

Police set the damage to the auto owned by Edward William Allen of 74 Main St. S. at about \$400.

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\$700 from auto crash

Seven hundred dollars in property damage resulted from a two vehicle accident on Main Street North, south of Knox Avenue, about Wednesday supper time. Damage to the auto driven

by Elmer Andrews of 197 Elmore Dr. is about \$500, police say.

Police estimate the damage to the auto driven by Vinko Cavlovic of 162 Tyler Ave. to be \$200.

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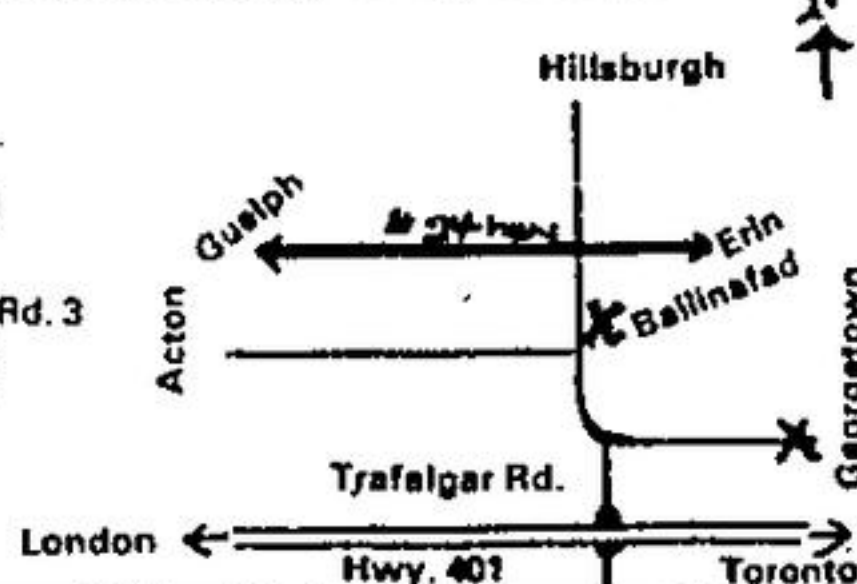
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S.S. teacher pact talks

Talks between Halton Separate School Board and its teachers are expected to struggle along with no threat of a strike, at the moment.

Results of a recent vote by teachers to determine if their negotiators can go to the Education Relations Commission to have an official strike vote are still being kept secret.

The vote results may not remain a mystery much longer, however. Teachers were expected to learn the results Tuesday and an official announcement from mediator Jane Devlin regarding the results could be forthcoming later.

In the meantime both sides supposedly agreed only Miss Devlin, a Toronto lawyer, should be talking to the press.

Tuesday, all she would say was that negotiations in the contract dispute dating back to last spring were adjourned last night (Tuesday night). Winter break has slowed negotiations lately she added.

Chief board negotiator and Halton Hills Trustee Hartley Sherk would not comment on negotiations.

Chief teacher negotiator Bob Boyle broke the news blackout saying talks broke off March 16 when the board refused to negotiate until the teacher vote results are made public.

Miss Devlin said Boyle must have "misunderstood" what went on at the March 16 meeting since talks haven't broken off but have been merely adjourned.

While many issues have been resolved during the over eight months of on again off again negotiations several monetary items haven't been ironed out.

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