



Neil McMillan

Africa is destination of cultural exchange

A 21-year-old Acton area man is leaving for a three-month stay in Africa this week.

Neil McMillan, an Acton High School graduate, is travelling to Cameroon, a country he says, the size of the Yukon, located beside Nigeria.

It has a population of six million. Its capital, Yaounde has 150,000 people but McMillan says he is arriving in the large port Doula.

It's all part of cross cultural project called Canadian Crossroads International, a federal program that sends 100 volunteers to 25 developing countries and brings about 50 to Canada for a four to six month stay.

Volunteers work at teaching, health care or other areas of their expertise. There is no salary, but room, board and air fares are paid for.

McMillan belongs to the Guelph committee of the Canadian Crossroads. He says there are 75 local committees across the country, but Guelph is one of the largest this year.

Local committees are responsible for raising funds for the project and tending volunteers. McMillan said his funds came from selling care packages to university students in residence, as well as a contribution from the Acton Lions Club. Funds also come from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), a federal foreign aid

program, fund raising drives, private donations and bingo games.

McMillan had to raise another \$300 on his own, through his work as a carpenter.

He took a year off from his university studies to apply for the project. He said he became interested in Canadian Crossroads after applying for Canada World Youth project. He was too old for that however and they directed him towards Crossroads.

McMillan said he's not sure what his job will be when he reaches Cameroon, but he has spent the last five months preparing for the trip.

His application was accepted in January and since then he has been getting shots for hepatitis, yellow fever, typhoid, polio boosters and tetanus. The series of typhoid shots he added, was the most painful.

McMillan said he has also been reading up on Cameroon. He found it's mainly an agricultural country producing cocoa, cotton, coffee and some oil.

It's not an industrialized country he said, but Yaounde does have a Hilton hotel. It was divided as early as two decades ago as colonies of both Britain and France. Consequently said McMillan, they speak both French and English, as well as five African languages, and suffer from similar language problems as Canada, except in reverse. In Cameroon, the majority are French.

McMillan attended an orientation program sponsored by Crossroads in January. There they discussed third world issues and tried to prepare for the cultural shock with some games.

For instance, says McMillan, they played role games where one person would portray a village chief while another tried to explain, through an interpreter, his job.

McMillan also spoke with a former Crossroader who taught English in Cameroon, in order to learn what to expect.

And what does he expect? "A whole different lifestyle," he says after much thought.

"A different climate (near the equator) and a standard lifestyle, although it shouldn't be like that in the cities."

McMillan will be working in a village, again he's not sure where, and although there will be two other Crossroaders in Cameroon, he will be isolated.

He left Acton Sunday for a two-day briefing in Bolton with other Crossroaders departing in May, the program's executive and incoming volunteers from the third world.

Last night (Tuesday) he took off from Toronto International Airport headed for Brussels in Belgium, via Montreal. After a day's stay there, he will continue on to Doula.

McMillan said when he arrives, a native of Cameroon working with Crossroads, will meet him at the airport and help him on his way to whatever village McMillan is headed to.

McMillan said he hoped to be working either in journalism which he studied at Carleton University in Ottawa or agriculture.

He is scheduled to return in August, but says he is thinking of travelling through Europe before coming back to Acton.

Once back McMillan says he will work for Crossroads. The major activity for Crossroaders here is developmental education—teaching third world issues and producing a national magazine called Crossworld.

"The whole idea of the program," said McMillan is "to increase public awareness of third world issues. Issues don't abound in Cameroon, admits McMillan, but the third world has always interested him.

"I'm looking forward to it," he said. "It should be nice and warm there."

McMillan will keep readers of the Acton Free Press posted on his adventures in Africa with occasional reports mailed from Cameroon, via France. "Hopefully," he says and adds, "the mail system even less efficient than in Canada."

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Restoration committee will tell town

Repair town hall exterior need study of structure

The exterior of the Acton town hall should be repaired and the building saved for its historical significance the restoration committee concluded Thursday.

The restoration committee decided the exterior should be fixed-up with the interior restored over a period of years at a meeting with town staff at Trinity United Church.

The committee also decided a structural engineering study is needed to determine how much restoration of the exterior will cost.

They'll go to council next month with the money the committee and Actario has raised, hopefully \$40,000—they're about \$5,000 short of that mark now, and urge the building be saved.

There are numerous questions surrounding the town hall restoration project because of problems with provincial grants and escalated costs.

Committee members Dr. George Elliott, Alice Doby, Doug Fread, Louis Charlebois and Bert Davidson reviewed the town hall issue with Halton Hills councillor Terry Grubbe and recreation department officials Tom Shepard and Joy Gwilliam.

A restoration study carried out in 1977 was updated in 1979 and pegged costs at \$298,500.

Fread, who is a local contractor, has estimated restoration would now cost \$375,000.

Fread said the committee should go after restoring the exterior of the building and show the community something is being done. Then the interior could be restored in future years and fund raising continue.

The exterior of the building could be restored for about one-quarter of the money, he estimated total restoration will cost \$375,000. The exterior could be repaired, except for the tower, and further deterioration prevented for a reasonable amount of money. "If we get something going then I think people will start going full tilt (on fund raising)." Fread suggested a lot could be done on the exterior for just the money which has been raised by Actario and the restoration committee and the municipality's \$40,000, without any grants. Shepard felt some grant money will still be forthcoming, just not as much as originally expected and certainly not enough to cover escalated cost for complete restoration.

Fread said he doesn't think the structural engineering study will cost much and Shepard will contact some firms for the committee to get quotes. Shepard observed grants applications when sub-

mitted a year ago set restoration costs at \$301,000, including equipping the building and leaving some room for inflation.

He said the committee needed to establish why it wants the building saved, to give Acton a community centre or as an historical building.

The exterior of the building could be restored and the town could attach an easement preventing changes to the outside of the town hall and then sell it if the committee only wanted it saved. Shepard explained this is being done with the Milton town hall, which has received hefty provincial heritage grant funds.

Several committee members noted the town hall can be functional as well as an historical building. Mrs. Rosenquist observed Acton needs more of a community centre than just a building which is a rink with a room added on and Charlebois said the town hall can be a "focus" for the community.

The 1977 study suggested the building could be used for a senior citizens' drop-in, Chamber of Commerce office and rooms for other service groups

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inside

An official opening of the Elizabeth Dr. senior citizens' apartments is planned for next month. Turn to page 3.

A Day Care Centre will open in Acton August 1. Details on page 2.

The region might supply Halton Hills with mosquito spray. See page 5.



Very carefully, Acton High School student Paul Moore learns the ropes and steps of rock climbing at Rattlesnake Point. He and other members of Dr. Paul Tamblin's immersion course are preparing for a two-week voyageur trip that will take them into northern Ontario in June. The students, under supervision, made their way up the 75-foot high cliff and later made a descent. Photo by ERIC ELSTONE

Actario hosts public meeting

Actario organizers will host a meeting at McKenzie-Smith Middle School next Tuesday night to seek public input on how the draw should operate in its second year.

Earlier this month the Actario committee decided to keep the draw going for a second year. The bulk of proceeds from next year's lottery will still go toward restoration of the Acton town hall.

Ted Tyler said the May 28 meeting, beginning at 7:30 p.m., will deal with "how the draw will continue." Among the topics of discussion will be rule changes for the lottery, prizes and prizes, how revenues will be divided up, local organizations selling tickets commission, when the next series of tickets will go on sale and when the first draw will be held.

Representatives of all service clubs and local organizations, ticket holders and the general public are invited to attend the meeting.

Over 600 tickets, out of 1,000, were purchased for this first year of draws and Actario has turned a profit of \$27,000. There are weekly draws for \$350, monthly trip draws and weekly draws for merchant bonus prizes which can only be won by those who attend the draw. The current year's lottery ends with the start of September. Tickets cost \$100 for the year.

Major Beardmore study of chemical waste runoff

Beardmore will undertake a major study for the balance of this year to determine the environmental impact of chemical waste disposal runoffs both on the firm's land and off the site.

The tannery agreed to carry out the study following a recent meeting with Ontario Ministry of Environment officials.

Beardmore was one of 11 industrial waste disposal sites identified as having chemical waste runoff problems by a consultant for the ministry who studied 52 potential problem sites last October. The local firm was named as one of the problem sites in February.

A meeting between Beardmore and ministry officials was held on May 11, ministry spokesman Darryle Hogg said in an interview this week.

He said Beardmore has decided to go ahead with the province's recommendation of a study to identify if there are problems in the ground water and Black Creek surface water near their disposal site. The study will "assess the impact" of the movement of runoff, determine where the runoff is getting into the environment, gauge how much runoff is going into surface and ground water and examine surface water chemistry.

Hogg said the firm expects to have study results by the end of the year and meetings between Beardmore and ministry officials will continue. What action will be taken will be determined after the study results have been reviewed. The study will "determine environmental impact" of the runoff.

The consultant's report was only a preliminary study, it only established which sites were "potential concerns." This in-depth study will determine the "magnitude of the problem."

Ministry officials have repeatedly emphasized there is no health hazard posed by the runoff. Right from the start Beardmore and its parent

company, Canada Packers, pledged complete co-operation with the ministry and through a series of meetings that has been the case.

Already the firm has taken steps, without knowing the magnitude of the problem, to start remedying runoffs.

In March Beardmore started on site ground water and surface stream monitoring and undertook a water conservation program. By reducing the amount of water used in the industrial processes Beardmore hopes to reduce waste water volumes. In addition the firm is instituting plant changes to minimize chloride levels.



Acton Firefighters hose down a smokey garage fire on Mill St. W. last week. See story and photo on Page B8.



The Ontario Agricultural Museum opened for the season recently. Here our guide Celeste Brush walks for a ride in the three seat democrat parked in front of the Lucas homestead. Located next to Kelso the Agricultural Museum features 23 buildings and 20,000 artifacts. Photo courtesy The Milton Champion