

# Rockwood Firefighters fight flames with know-how



Using three hoses at maximum pressure, Rockwood Volunteer Firefighters water the schoolyard grass during one of their Monday night practices.

by Jennifer Barr

Rockwood Volunteer Firefighters don't have much time to play cards. This 27 man force works an average of 300 hours a year fighting fires, saving souls and practicing, always practicing.

Every second Monday night the firefighters answer a short toot on the alarm and gather for two to three hours of concentrated, hard work. A combination training and review period, fire practice keeps the men sweating.

In one recent practice 20 firemen had an air pack race, a village hookup, a rural hookup complete with portotank, donut unrolling, cardiac resuscitation and discussion thereof.

No, donut unrolling is not breaktime. That's the term used for rapid unfurling of a hose.

The Rockwood force has been an officially recognized organization for 34 years. Before that residents formed their own firefighting brigade. Herb Saunders, the firefighter with the longest term, has been putting on his helmet for 35 years.

Present firechief Carl Meadows has been with the force for 26 years—11 of them as chief. Assisting Carl is Tom Rockola as deputy chief and captains

Bill Wingate, Rick Lewis and Wayne Duby.

Newest member is Paul Gault, rookie of a few weeks who joined the force one week after moving to the village. He'll receive his training on the job, being taught lifesaving and resuscitation techniques one-on-one.

For the first six months Paul will follow and learn before he's permitted to enter a house on a fire call. Butch Given has recently passed the six month mark and was one of the fastest participants in the airmask race (firemen assemble and get into all equipment necessary for survival where oxygen is diminished.)

"The six month fellas are right up there with the older fellas" commented one fireman while another chuckled "we let the rookies go bombing into the fire—we're older and wiser."

The village hookup involved a mad dash round the block (in a firetruck) to hook up hoses to a hydrant in front of the firehall. Teams of four were timed to see how fast they could blast leaves off the trees with several tons of water. The exercise was performed with such speed and finesse this reporter almost



Firefighter Gary Lautens fills the portotank with a thousand gallons of water for a rural hookup.

(Continued on Page 7)

# The Acton Free Press



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## September start IGA plaza

Construction of the new IGA plaza on the Dominion Hotel site is expected to start this September, three months after original plans called for ground breaking.

Doug Fread of Acton explained he and his partner Roman Kassian, a Toronto architect, have brought in a third partner, Green County Investments, and

they will have some input into the configuration of the plaza. He said it would appear any changes which will be made to plans will be minor in nature.

Also Landawn Shopping Centre's objection to the IGA has been formally dropped and the OMB has approved the rezoning of the property.

Fread had hoped to get started on construction in

June but the delay caused by Landawn's objection and bringing in a new partner means it won't start until fall.

Also site plan approval is still needed from Halton Hills.

The plaza will contain about six retail stores as well as a 15,000 square foot IGA supermarket.



Wayne and Mildred Kelley were honored last month in Gravenhurst for his 30 years service as a volunteer firefighter, most of that time in Acton. Photo by RON TURENNE

## Honor ex-Acton firefighter

by Wilma Blokhus

Former Acton Firefighter and resident Wayne Kelley was honored last month with the presentation of the Ontario Fire Services Long Service Medal.

The presentation was made at a ceremony in Gravenhurst by John R. Bateman, fire marshal of Ontario.

His wife Mildred shared in the award when she received a brooch with a trillium motif.

The award recognizes his entire 30 years of service as a volunteer firefighter.

Kelley is a life member of both the Acton Firefighters Association and the Fireman's Association of Ontario. In 1977, the entire Acton Fire

Department was recognized as the town's citizens of the year. Last year, the department presented Kelley with a silver cup, recognizing his 25 years of service in Acton. He has also received a certificate honoring his services from Halton Hills.

"I have always been interested in the fire department," he recalled. "I worked in fire prevention until a regular fire prevention officer was appointed."

Kelley retired as a volunteer from the Acton Fire Department in November, 1980, after 30 years of service. His volunteering began in Drayton, Ont., in 1945, where he served for three years, before moving to Acton.

## Still aiming St. Joseph's open spring

Halton Separate School Board is still aiming for a fall start on construction of the new St. Joseph's School and a possible spring opening according to Trustee Irene McCauley.

She reported in an interview this week that the ministry of education has approved preliminary sketches or schematic drawings for the new school to be built on Mill St. West not far from the Legion.

These sketches are back in the hands of architect Michael Torsney of Hamilton and he is preparing the final drawings.

The final drawings must still be approved by both Halton Hills and the ministry of education, a process which should be completed in another three or four weeks and then the project will be put out to tender.

McCauley noted that last week Torsney, board superintendent of plan John Brett and Group Eight Engineering's Bill Carr met with Halton Hills staff to make sure everything planned meets with municipal approval.

She reported the latest cost estimate for the new school is \$1,007,251.

Soil and drainage tests done in the spring at the site turned out well, McCauley said.

## inside

Flames gutted an Elmore Dr. kitchen last night. See page 3.

AHS principal Betty Moore talks about her first year. Turn to page B4.



It's berry-picking time and Ingrid Hawk of Limehouse is ready for the season of strawberry shortcake and homemade jam. There's dozens of great spots to pick-your-own berries in the Acton area.

Photo courtesy The Georgetown Independent

## Family escapes South-east Asia die in Sunday morning car crash

Dreams of a life of freedom and safety died with them Sunday when four members of a Vietnam refugee family were killed on Highway 24 at Stratton's Corners (Bruceville).

Guelph OPP say Bouchanh Onekhamphou, 36, Guelph, was driving northbound on County Rd. 27 the Rockwood Road when he failed to stop for the flashing red light and stop sign. Police say a vehicle driven by Wilson Wong, also of Guelph, broadsided

the Onekhamphou car, killing four people and seriously injuring a fifth.

Dead are Onekhamphou, his wife Sumvang, 24, and two sons, Pong, 6 and Joy, 4. A third son, Lee, 3, is listed in serious condition with head injuries at Kitchener-Waterloo Hospital.

Wong was treated and released at Guelph General Hospital.

Just two years ago the family escaped South-east Asia with their lives in the mass exodus of boat peo-

ple. They settled in Guelph 18 months ago. Bouchanh was a motorcycle mechanic while Sumvang worked in a factory.

A police spokesman noted the family was happy in Canada and travelled extensively around the area.

Relatives in Canada will care for the only remaining member of the family upon his release from hospital police say.

## Businesses affected by power shortage, failure

Acton was operating at about 80 per cent power capacity early last week after lightning struck the main line coming into town early Sunday morning according to Halton Hills Hydro superintendent Hugh Campbell.

After a nearly three hour blackout in the early morning hours, hydro crews switched to an alternative line, which does not have the power capacity of the main line.

Halton Hills Hydro and Ontario Hydro searched the main line for two days looking for the damage, but it was not until Tuesday afternoon that it was finally found. Campbell explained that lightning struck the line between Rockwood and Fergus. Splinters from the hydro pole became lodged against the conductor and pole, cutting the power off. It took another few hours to repair the damage and switch the power back to the regular line.

Campbell noted Ontario Hydro is currently looking into bringing the alternative line up to full voltage and after last week's incident he said Halton Hills Hydro is going to push to have the work sped up.

The shortage posed problems for at least three local industries in town.

Beardmore was forced to send home at least 100 workers Monday afternoon when there was not enough power to turn the machines on. The computer for the spray painting function would not work properly. Employees were back to work Tuesday,

but work was slow until power fully restored. Over-time was necessary to make up the lost production.

Acton Free Press computers were also not receiving enough juice to work properly, and all unnecessary hydro in the building, including some air conditioners were shut off to concentrate the flow of power to the machines. It was slow going on the busiest day of the week, until about seven o'clock at night says composing room foreman Tim Coles.

Presses were only working at about 75 per cent capacity noted assistant production manager John McNabb.

While Building Products was not affected by the power shortage, they were affected until Wednesday due to fluctuations and blackouts during the storm.

Plant Manager Tom Ostrander told the Free Press the lights started flickering around 4 p.m., Saturday causing problems with machinery which needs a steady flow of hydro. By early morning the midnight crew gave up totally trying to keep up with the machines. By 8 a.m. Sunday they were able to continue to work.

Ostrander noted many hours were lost in attempts to get the machines working properly and repair damage done when the machines were off, and then on again quickly.

As for the power shortage, they saw little effect, but Ostrander pointed out they were tied up just trying to get the equipment back to normal.

## Speeder rips up Everton before crashing



This car driven by a Milton resident wound up crashing through a fence on the Sixth Line of Nassagaweya after a wild trip through Everton.

A 19-year-old Milton youth raced through Everton Monday night on a flat tire causing considerable property damage before finally crashing through a fence on the Sixth Line of Nassagaweya just south of Highway 7.

Charges were pending against Douglas Norman Cameron, Guelph OPP Constable Jim Christie said.

The right rear tire on the car blew while the man was driving through Everton at a high rate of speed and careened off a rock tearing up several residents' lawns, hitting trees and nearly striking some children, Christie reported. There were gouge marks in the pavement all the way from the hamlet to where the car finally ended up through a fence.

The officer noted some angry residents gave chase but after receiving the call when he was in Guelph the officer didn't catch up until the car crashed. He reported the driver was going nearly 100 miles an hour.

Acton Firefighters were called out to the scene in case a wash-down was needed.

Police were also investigating residents' reports that there were four or five other people in the car.

(Continued on page 3)