



There was an estimated \$50,000 damage in this spectacular barn fire at the R.R. 1 Rockwood property of Alex Morrison last Wednesday night at about 8:30 p.m. The farm is just north-west of Ospringe. Hillsburgh, Erin and Rockwood fire departments responded to the blaze and Guelph OPP said the damage estimate

was made up of the loss of the barn, loss of farm machinery and loss of 150 to 200 pigs. There were no injuries in the fire. It is believed to have started by spontaneous combustion.

Photo by DAN MCGILLOWAY

## So far, so good

# No Acton water shortage as yet

Despite five weeks of predominately dry weather, the region's water department is delighted to report there's still no hint of water rationing in Acton on the horizon yet. In fact, the threat of rationing looks to be a long way off even if this extremely hot and dry weather persists.

For the second year in a row the region's works department warned Actonians early in the spring an extremely hot and dry summer could produce some rationing because Acton doesn't have quite enough water capacity, equipment could break down leaving a shortfall, and water supply must be held in reserve for any big fires.

Don Morrier, manager of plant operations for Halton, said Tuesday "we seem to be in pretty good shape."

He noted a couple of weeks ago, despite the dry weather there was ample water to fight the Thomas' Video blaze. In fact, fighting the fire only dropped the reservoir a few inches, Morrier noted.

"I don't know if they're rationing water themselves up there," Morrier said of the pleasantly surprising situation in Acton.

He said region staff has noticed that while water consumption is up substantially in recent weeks throughout the region, consumption hasn't been quite as high as staff expected. Consumption is up, but not "alarmingly."

Morrier suggested conservation awareness and the cost of water means people aren't using as much water as experts anticipated throughout the region.

For example, they have noticed people aren't using their lawn sprinklers as much as they have in past dry spells, lawns aren't as green as they might be. Morrier said the constant conservation awareness is causing people not to put as high a priority on having as picture perfect lawn as they might want.

The region's main concern is an equip-

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The

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## Rockwood apartments controversy

# Colored siding war rages on

Rockwood residents were shocked and angry when unexpectedly members of the Eramosa Non-Profit Housing Corporation board and Eramosa Township councillors got up and left a public meeting called to discuss the multi-colored siding and appearance of the new senior citizens' apartment building in the village.

For over an hour members of the housing corporation board had been saying they would hold a meeting to discuss what they had heard from the crowd of about 60 people Thursday night at the Rockwood town hall. They also seemed to be agreeing with the call for a further public meeting with citizens to report back on what they had decided to do.

All night the audience pressed the board and councillors to back them in raising money or seeking further government funding so the exterior of the building could be made to look more acceptable to the community.

Not content with board chairman Barry Dryden's pledge to hold a board meeting and then report back to citizens, a residents' committee polled members of the board and found little support for taking steps to change the exterior after the building is finished. Completion of the

apartment building is expected by mid-August. Also citizens wanted to know when the board would meet and when another public meeting would be held.

Reeve Murray Cox, who also sits on the housing board, said he wanted residents to wait and see what the building looks like when it is completed before contemplating exterior changes. Another board member, Deputy Reeve Gordon Baldwin, said he liked the look of the building and Dryden suggested he didn't find it that bad, but he was no judge of color and wouldn't notice it if he lived across the road. Betty Marshall, who was visibly exasperated by the evening and was the first to get up and leave, said she wasn't totally in favor of the color scheme and thought changes might be considered after the building is completed.

There is one vacancy on the housing board, and repeatedly citizens were urged to apply to council for the post so someone from Rockwood would have a voice on the board.

Various colors of siding starting going up on the building this spring. Currently there are blue, green, a creamy yellow, beige, brown and a rust red.

Residents kept telling the board members they don't want the project stopped, they favored work halting on the exterior but the interior could be completed and the building occupied. However, they were told unless the outside was completed the architect and contractor wouldn't release the apartment development and occupancy permits couldn't be issued. Citizens agreed there was a need for a senior's apartment building and it was located in a good spot.

A citizens' brief noted the board has been plagued by personnel changes, there are only two original members left. They complained their worries have been met with comments like "you'll get used to it" or "give it a chance."

Secretary-treasurer of the board, Robert King, recalled the board saw five conceptual plans, two were for just two storeys, but had to go for a three storey design after hearing eloquent pleas for an elevator

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Fast and furious motocross action like this attracted a big crowd to Leathertown Motocross Park just west of Acton on Sunday.

## Motocross track controversy

# Owners say sport great for kids, neighbors petition for Milton action

The businessmen who established a motocross track in North Nassagaweya, just west of Acton, say area residents who are complaining aren't being "fair".

But a spokesman for some neighbors said that while they have concerns about noise, traffic, etc. their main worry is that operation of the track is a possible infraction and Milton council isn't doing much about it.

However, a spokesman for the track operators says neighbors have lost sight of the purpose of the project, providing some constructive activity for a large number of youths and their families. Also, some local youngsters are earning some extra money working at the track at races.

About a dozen residents who live in the area of Mansell Nellis' 300 acre property (the Ponderosa) between the Town Line and Sixth Line of Nassagaweya, attended the July 11 Milton council meeting and presented a petition signed by about 60 homeowners and approximately another 100 trailer home owners in the Acton-Nassagaweya area.

Most of the signatures on the petition were RR 1 Acton residents, with a few from RR2 Rockwood and RR 3 Milton. Also a few citizens from urban Acton, such as residents on Elizabeth Dr., Storey Dr., Cobblehill Rd., Guelph St., Division St., Berry St., and Churchill Rd. North signed the petition. The trailer owners who signed the petition were predominantly from the Metro Toronto area.

Spokesman for the owners of the track, Lorne Doberthien, told council the petition "does not represent the truth of the situation and is not representative of the people in the area."

The petition says the people who signed it feel the track will have a detrimental impact on wildlife, property values, farm animals, the Blue Springs creek, and peace and quiet of the neighbors.

Spokesman for the petitioners, Greg Jones, RR 1 Acton, told Milton council

they are also concerned about fire problems on the wooded property, traffic congestion on the Sixth Line and "noise pollution."

Doberthien told council they reject suggestions that this is the biggest motocross track in North America and that since the property has been closed to use by cars and trucks, there is less pollution, not more. He said they have done "everything possible" to keep noise to a minimum and the track course, covering about five to 10 acres, is in the middle of the huge parcel of land. A large berm was built at the start of the course to deflect noise upwards. Other than for races and practices, only neighboring bikers and people riding horses can go on the land now.

The property is restricted to motocross only, not endura riding which would see people biking all over the land. Motocross involves only about an hour of "hard practice" and races last 10 to 20 minutes.

The Blue Springs Creek isn't near the track. Doberthien said even conservationists and environmentalists agree the track isn't close enough to damage the creek. The only wildlife near the track is a den of foxes, and he said the first race this year didn't bother the animals.

"To our knowledge, property values have not been adversely affected by such a track, especially one you don't see or hear," he charged the instigators of the petition can't hear the track and added traffic isn't a problem because riders arrive and leave at different times. Riders come to the track anytime from two to 20 hours before a race and leave at different times as they lose and are disqualified.

Jones said he had been told by the Milton planning department that a zoning change is necessary to accommodate the motocross track, but Doberthien contended they have two separate legal opinions from different firms saying they do conform to zoning.

Milton has referred the matter to its own legal people as well as a third, outside, legal expert.

"The dispute is over interpretation of old Nassagaweya zoning bylaws and the question if that legislation is in effect in this case or the new Milton Official Plan, which hasn't been given final approval yet. Doberthien notes they are willing to get a zoning amendment.

"We are asking you people (Milton council) to enforce the bylaw," Jones said, adding his group won't hesitate to sue the Town if the municipality fails to enforce the bylaw.

Mayor Gordon Krantz said the case "boils down to interpretation and the courts will ultimately decide that interpretation."

In a later interview Jones explained the big concern is a zoning law is possibly being broken, at least a letter they have from Milton Mayor Gord Krantz says the zoning bylaw is being broken.

This is a bigger problem than just the motocross track too, it's a big problem for everyone in Nassagaweya, Jones observed. "The way the zoning bylaw is written we're under fire now, but where will this kind of thing happen next?"

He explained the zoning allows any open air recreation use, so there doesn't seem to be anything stopping someone from starting a dragstrip or formula one race track in Nassagaweya.

The businessmen who started the motocross club didn't have to seek a zoning change or get any permit to operate, Jones stated. Until last month few neighbors really knew what was being developed, they had thought it was just going to be a small track for local youths.

The weakness of the zoning and the failure of Milton to act has left residents "angry and scared." Many have made major investments in their property, Jones noted, and he wondered who would buy a house with a "dirt track up the

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### Inside

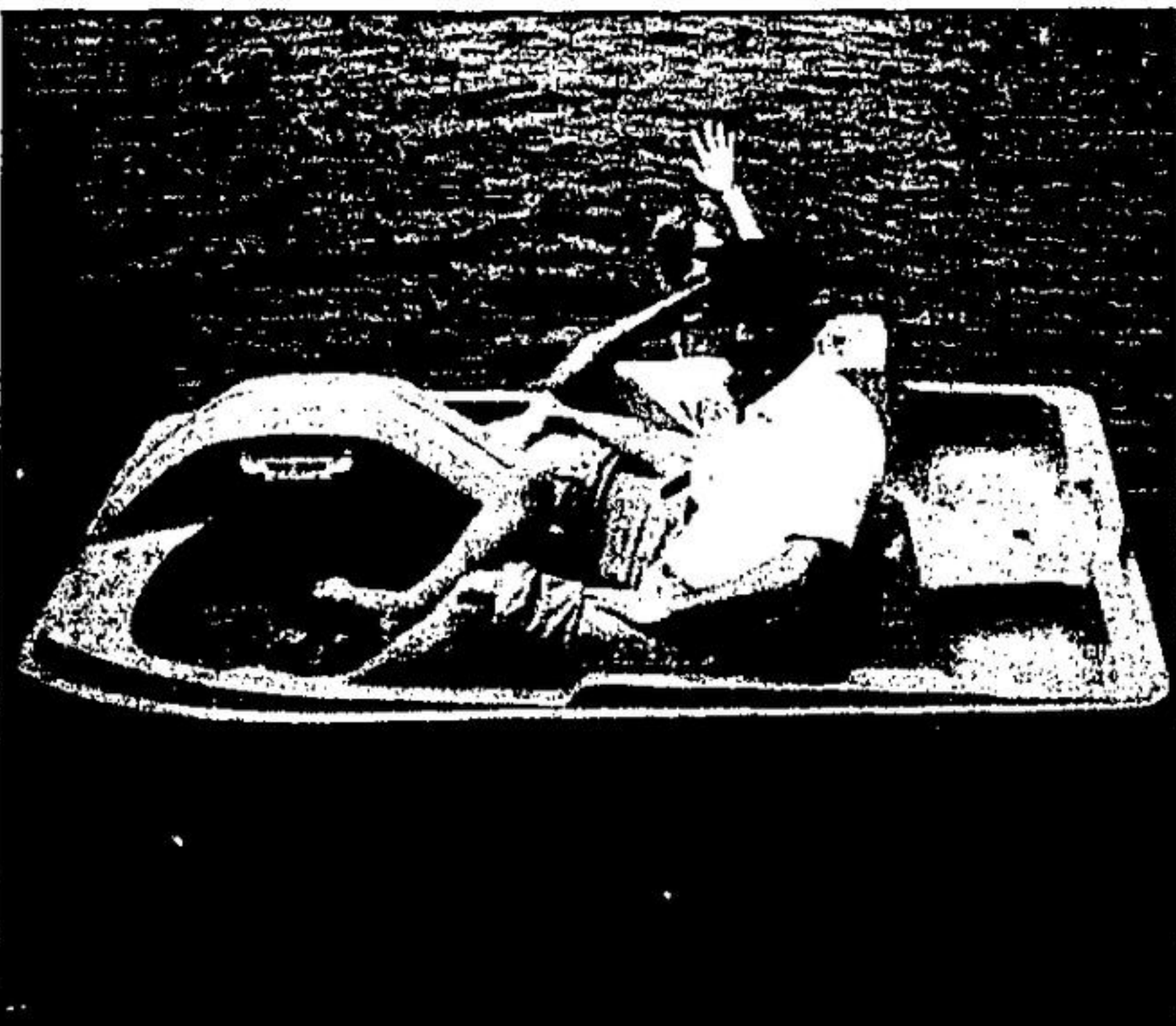
A cyclist was struck down by a hit and run driver last week. See page 5.

We have three letters today on page 15.

There will be a brand new Acton Pharmacy. Turn to page 6.

A boy was attacked in Rockwood by a group of males. See page 6.

Halton Hills has an official organization now dedicated to nuclear disarmament. Photo and story on page 8.



The Commodore gives a jaunty salute to his loyal subjects on shore. For a look at the whole Halton Hills armada see photo and detailed caption on Newsmakers.