

Bustling 81 year old Ballinafad man enjoys life to hilt

by Ann Redfern
Life after 80 is a special gift to those who enjoy it to the full. Touching 81, Norman Elson shares his gift with his friends, hundreds of them, down the street and around the world.

When Elson isn't at the library, hosting a weekly gathering of coffee, books and conversation which welcomes anyone who cares to drop in, he's helping his friends, from 10 months old to 100 years, or writing letters, weekly or monthly correspondences to friends in several different countries.

"Getting old doesn't mean finding something to do, it means finding the time to do it all," Elson says with a laugh. There are times, he admits, when his country property, with its parched grass (whose lawn isn't?) and large garden could stand a bit more attention, but he has other things to do. . . things like showing his visiting niece and nephew around the good picknicking spots, giving a hand at Pioneer Days, or helping Lynn Bernard, owner of Penniesworth, in the store. Or reading a story to a four-year-old neighbor while his mother runs an errand. Sometimes, he sits and relaxes, and reads book after book, correspondence, magazines, anything which looks interesting.

Those relaxing moments aren't too frequent, though. Come late summer, Elson starts his preserves. . . hundreds of jars of marmalade, conserve, jam, jelly and pickles.

Last year, he made 11 varieties of marmalade, thoroughly enjoying trying several different recipes and thoroughly enjoyed sharing it with his friends and neighbors.

For Elson, it's just another hobby, another skill to explore.

"I'm fortunate that I have so many good friends and good neighbors here," Elson said with a smile as he lounged in his back yard and sipped coffee. "There's never a dull moment."

Perhaps it's Elson himself, rather than life, which is never dull.

He first came to Canada, sent by the British firm for which he worked several years, to open up a Canadian branch in 1948. He spent 20 years living in the Montreal and Toronto areas before returning to Britain in 1968. When he returned in 1973 to retire, he and his wife settled in Ballinafad. "We had been assured that it would take a long time for all our furniture to get here from Great Britain, so we took a driving tour of Wales before flying across to Toronto," Elson recalls. No sooner had they arrived at their son's house in Thornhill, when a message came from the shipping office to say his furniture had arrived.

"Needless to say, our move to this area was more a matter of finding a house fast to fit the furniture we had than anything else," he recalled.

The Elsons settled in Ballinafad and quickly made friends with the neighbors.

To Martha Lewis, who lives next door, he was a godsend. "He has so many interests. . . the theatre, literature, travel, children, culture in general. He tries everything. He's not bad at baseball, but he can't throw a frisbee too well," she added with a grin toward her neighbor.

Elson became a surrogate grandfather to the children in the neighborhood, sending

them postcards when he travelled. "I think children need to be exposed to older people," he asserted. "Especially if they don't have grandparents who live nearby, people should be able to mingle and get along with friends of all ages, not just stick to one age group."

Since Elson became a widower, his activities in the community have increased. A few years ago, when Georgetown Library was temporarily moved to Guelphview Square, Elson was asked to run a library drop-in on Main Street once a week. "I have no idea why they asked me, but apparently they were getting complaints from residents of the old part of town that the library was too far away."

Elson went to the Guelph St. location Thursdays, chose books from the library stocks and set them up in a room at the back of Penniesworth. On Friday morning, people would drop in, browse through the books and chat over coffee.

Not wanting to spoil the goodwill established by the Friday morning library group, the library decided to continue the program after the new library was opened on Church St. They called it Coffee, Books and Conversation, and a few regulars drop in every Friday between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. to say hello. "It isn't quite as successful now as it was before," Elson commented.

It was through the library program that he met Bob Barber, an expert on lilies. "He gave me some sample bulbs to begin with, and I started growing lilies," Elson explained. Barber showed him how to cross-pollinate to mix various colors and develop hybrid strains. Elson's latest hobby began



Norman Elson in the garden of his Ballinafad home.

sprouting all over his back yard in white, yellow and orange. Since then, his lilies have won prizes at Hamilton Flower Show.

Norman's greatest gift, however lies in making friends.

"Letters are very important to me," he claimed. "Sometimes they're the only link I have with people I've known for years." His correspondents describe everyday occurrences, the books they've read, the plays

they've seen, and the places they've been to.

Like everything else, he can't keep a good thing to himself. "His correspondents are interesting individuals," Mrs. Lewis describes. "He receives lots of letters from people all over Canada, the U.S. and Europe, and he shares them with us. It seems that we know these people just as well as Norman does himself."

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Georgetown/Acton, Wednesday, August 3, 1983

A. E. LEPAGE

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Dramatic Arts participants from Georgetown took advantage of the television studios at Halton Cable Systems Limited in Acton last week to film their own TV show. Children taking part were Leanne Henselwood, Dave and Holly Verhaegen, Tara Hamilton, Susan Thibodeau, and Bethan Evans. They were under the supervision of Cable's John Ollivier.

Dramatic Arts program on Halton Cable

by Susan McGowan
Dramatic Arts Supervisor

Looking into a TV camera is a regular special event for participants in the Recreation Department's Dramatic Arts program.

Every Thursday, the group gets together with John Ollivier, Halton Cable Programming Director, for a workshop in television. Everyone learns a bit about how to work a camera and how a TV show is taped but the most fun is seeing the final product!

Tune in to Cable 4 on Wednesday, August 3 at 6:10 p.m. to see this week's "Wild Wild West" show! For information about how to register, call 877-5185 extension 63.

NDP says Must keep NEC

The provincial NDP wants to pressure the ruling Tory government to debate the future of the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) and its Plan and the Hearing Officers' report on the floor of the Legislature.

Two NDP critics visited the Standard Aggregates' Speyside site Thursday morning and talked about the issue with Councilor Pam Sheldon and Speyside Ratepayers' official Jim Kenzie.

"The recent recommendation in the Hearing Officers' report on the Niagara Escarpment Plan that the lands on this site (Standard Industries in Speyside) be changed from Escarpment Natural to Escarpment Rural makes a mockery of the protective goals established in the Niagara Escarpment Planning Development Act," Mel Swart, MPP Welland-Thorold, and Brian Charlton, MPP Hamilton-Mountain, said in prepared press releases.

The two NDP critics, who Sheldon noted approached the Speyside Ratepayers about getting involved in the fight, applauded NEC for "standing firm and refusing to agree with the hearing officers."

"We urge the Ontario government and particularly Norman Sterling, Secretary for Resources Development, to back the NEC and reject the proposed redesignation. This sensitive area must be protected from the devastation which would inevitably result from aggregate extraction on these lands.

"Surely alternative sources of supply, if needed, can be found in less sensitive areas.

"Simply stated, the need for additional reserves for one particular company (Standard Industries) is not sufficient enough a benefit to justify the negative environmental effects that come with aggregate extraction."

Standing looking at a large marsh off St. Helena's Rd. on Standard property, Swart noted the hearings are over and the report has been tabled so now the government must make up its mind whether to follow the NEC's views or the hearing officers'.

"It's the moment of truth on if the Escarpment is going to be preserved. Now is the time to bring all the pressure we can bear on the government."

He explained Sterling must make a public statement on areas of the hearing officers' report which he disagrees with. Sterling doesn't have to comment to the people on the aspects he supports. Citizens will be able to comment on Sterling's negative findings, in writing, up to 21 days after he makes his important statement. Also, Swart said, Sterling's decisions will likely be final since the cabinet doesn't even have to report to the Legislature despite the "tremendous" importance of what Sterling and the cabinet will be determining.

The NDP is demanding no decision be made on the hearing officers' report and NEC Plan until the new Legislature session in October. They also want either time set aside in the Legislature to debate the issue or else an emergency debate.

The new NEC Plan covers just 37 per cent

of the land originally to be protected by the NEC, Swart said, adding the hearing officers' recommendations to exclude certain areas from future protection cuts the area down to 32 per cent. They are deeply concerned about the hearing officers' report calling for enlargement of permitted uses on the Escarpment, especially in environmentally sensitive areas like Speyside, Niagara and Beaver Valley.

Also the hearing officers' suggestion that the NEC be disbanded means there will be no "watchdog" over municipalities. "If this happens there will be nothing more than a facade at protecting the Escarpment."

Lands may be protected from development or aggregate in plans and legislation even, but without an agency policing the situation rules are soon forgotten, he warned. "We have good reason to distrust preservation policies in any plan unless there is a policing body."

Charlton complained that at the end of the 10 year Niagara Escarpment preservation "process" it is now a "closed door process."

The NDP also feels that the development permit process hasn't been protecting the Escarpment since 90 per cent of all applications, big and small, are approved. Even when the NEC has fought major developments, Queen's Park has "intervened and played politics."

If it's the government's plan to "break Escarpment preservation" it will, it has the power, Swart observed. "But, we want to make them do it out in the open if that's what they want to do. If they want to do that then it must be done with full public input."

Charlton said the NDP wants a process for dealing with this issue which "maximizes public input and minimizes political wheeling and dealing."

"The Speyside area is one of the most environmentally sensitive," Swart observed, and if efforts aren't successful in saving Speyside, the Beaver Valley and Niagara "now, then in the long run we won't be able to save any of the Escarpment."

He said the NDP caucus is unanimous, but the Liberals are split. Some Grits though, like Halton-Burlington's Julian Reed, are expected to back the NDP in their fight.

There's enough licensed and zoned pits in areas like Halton to supply all needed aggregate, Swart said. Sheldon noted the aggregate industry doesn't create jobs either, there have been lay-offs in the local aggregate industry in recent years. "It's a question of need for aggregate or the needs of just one company," she declared.

Swart warned if the hearing officers' report is accepted, Speyside will be under a long-term threat. Standard, he claimed, would be able to apply to open a quarry on its land in 20 or 25 years and it couldn't be stopped even if circumstances have changed or if more people are living in the Speyside area.

The NDP's plan of action is the only one left open now to the people, Sheldon declared. She said she hopes the Liberals unify on this issue with the NDP, and the government "listens" and allows a Legislature debate on the issue. She added residents have received "good representation" on this issue from Reed.

"This issue goes beyond preservation of the Escarpment, to 'preservation of the democratic process,'" Sheldon declared. Content and aim of the NEC Act wasn't followed by the hearing officers, she said, warning provincial actions could "default the legislation."

"It goes on all the time. All the time regulations are used to rip the guts out of legislation," Chambers said.

Besides urging the NEC be preserved and it be given the power to make sure the new plan is "incorporated" in municipal Official Plans and zoning bylaws, The NDP wants a proposed \$25 million endowment for Escarpment land acquisitions approved, as well protection of the Escarpment for its entire length.

The choice is now clear, they said. "Either the Escarpment is to be protected and preserved for future generations or it is to be squandered by the present one. The choice is now up to cabinet."

Licences add money to Town coffers

It's not only marriages that need a licence, the Town demands licences and the accompanying fees for more than 70 different business-type operations.

To have adult entertainment, more commonly known as strippers, the licence costs \$2,500.

A refreshment vehicle costs \$100 a year and its driver \$10, a newspaper vending box \$2 each, and a cigarette vending machine \$10 each.

An amusement arcade pays \$300 a year, but each pinball or video game costs an additional \$10 each, and every pool, billiard or bagatelle approximately \$12 each.

When a midway comes to Town there's a \$270 licence fee, before they can open up shop, but a circus has to pay \$100 when booking and \$25 a day.

A movie theatre must have a \$50 a year licence, and a driving school a \$50 licence. In addition the driving instructor has a \$10 a year licence, and the vehicle another \$5 licence.

Public halls renting to less than 200 people pay \$25, to between 200 and 600 people \$50 and over that number \$50.

A laundromat needs a \$25 licence, a trailer camp a \$150 licence and a wrecking yard a \$30 licence.

A taxi company must pay a \$500 start-up licence then a \$25 a year one. The Taxi-driver too pays a \$5 fee.

Lodging homes face an \$80 a year licence.

A large number of licences apply to tradesmen such as plumbers, electricians, and building renovators.

Lottery licences, issued in the first six months of this year amounted to \$4,197.

Dogs running loose in the rural area cost the taxpayer \$901 so far this year, in compensation for injuries to livestock or poultry.

The Town of Halton Hills paid \$280 with province making up the remainder.

Joe Snaj lost an 18 pound gander, Walker Wood Farms a 65 pound lamb, Peter Branch four lambs and a breeding ewe, and Chester Early an 80 pound market lamb.

Ivan MacLeod had a two year old quarter horse and a goat injured.

While dog licences have brought in \$28,404, until the end of June.

The total in the Town coffers from licences, until the end of June is \$67,489.

Rec. Dept. plans an Open House

The Recreation and Parks Department is recruiting the support of community organizations who provide recreational opportunities in Halton Hills. In effort to inform the community of these opportunities available, they are planning in conjunction with other service providers, an "Open House" where all recreation related groups may participate. The involvement would include setting up a booth in a local hall, providing information for distribution and a person on hand to answer any inquiries.

This is an excellent opportunity for any group to familiarize the community with your organization and perhaps boost your membership.

All recreational organizations are encouraged to participate. The open house is scheduled for the early part of the new year. A response from a majority of the Halton Hills groups is required to provide this "Open House".

If your group has not yet let the Recreation Department know of your interest in participating please call 877-5185, ext. 62.

Close three rec. programs

The Glen Williams, Hornby and Norval summer activities centres have been closed.

Halton Hills Recreation Department closed the three centres due to lack of interest.

The Limehouse program is still slated to operate, and registration for the weeks beginning August 8 and August 15 is being accepted. Call 877-5185 extension 63 for more information.



Is Councilor Pam Sheldon going to try and get the Town engineer and councillors to go along with posting of this new sign she designed on rural roads? Pam, along with Jim Kenzie, also of the Speyside Ratepayer's group, met with Brian Charlton and Mel Swart, Ontario NDP Legislature critics, Thursday to discuss the aggregate issue, the Niagara Escarpment Commission, the hearing officers' report and the need to pressure Queen's Park.