

Hargraves homeless — fire guts house



It is believed the fire which gutted the home of George and Marie Hargrave, Wallace St. started in the vicinity of a wood burning fireplace, according to fire chief Bill Cunningham.

Flames could be seen for several blocks late Sunday evening as fire ravaged the home of George and Marie Hargrave on Wallace St.

Halton Hills fire chief Bill Cunningham estimated damage between \$60-65,000 following the blaze which started in "the vicinity of a wood burning stove," about 11 p.m. and spread quickly throughout the house.

Cunningham said Mr. and Mrs. Hargrave, both ambulance attendants for the St. John Ambulance, were in the living room when the smoke detector went off near the rear of the home. When they went to investigate they saw smoke pouring out of the recreation room. The fire chief noted they immediately left the house, went to a neighbor's home and telephoned the fire department.

Within one minute of the report, Cunningham told the Free Press, the house was engulfed in flames, indicating how quickly the flames spread. Firefighters living in the vicinity saw flames pouring out of the back of

the house as they rushed to the hall.

The chief explained the fire went up the wall of the rec. room, which extends the entire length of the house, across the ceiling and into the roof. From there it went to the main house and into the eaves. Firefighters were forced to vent the roof to allow the gases and heat to escape.

The rec. room was completely destroyed, Cunningham said, and there is extensive heat and smoke damage to the rest of the building. All their possessions were ruined, he said.

"Mother Nature was not with us," Cunningham pointed out. He explained the sub-zero temperatures froze the water from the hoses as soon as it hit anything. The firefighters were also affected by the cold, although it did not hinder their operations at all.

The cold, plus the fact the fire was in the roof and walls made it one of the more difficult blazes in a while, he said. Firefighters were at the scene for over three hours.



The recreation room of George and Marie Hargrave was gutted and extensive damage resulted to the rest of the house Sunday evening when fire engulfed the home.

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School tax up average of \$40

Halton Hills taxpayers can expect to pay an average of \$40 more a year for education taxes alone if there are no drastic changes in Halton Board of Education's proposed budget before it is approved March 29.

This is an increase of about 8.5 per cent over last year, leaving residents with an average bill of \$540 a year. Added on to this is the regional and municipal levies.

After five weeks of examining the budget, finance committee chairman Bill Priestner recommended that trustees approve an operating budget of \$147,516,716 for 1984, which includes elementary, secondary and trainable mentally handicapped.

Teachers' salaries make up the greatest share of the budget at 77.92 per cent of the overall picture, or \$114,948,848. Priestner pointed out to trustees Thursday evening 10 years ago 71 per cent of the budget was spent on salaries, which indicates they are spending money in the classroom, where it should be.

At the secondary level, teachers' salaries

make up 78.34 per cent of the \$72,540,572 budget, or \$56,825,826. Elementary teachers salaries are costing \$57,354,001, or 77.58 per cent of a \$73,927,872 budget.

Plant operations took the next biggest chunk out of the board's budget at \$13,670,525, or 9.27 of the total budget. Pupil transportation takes up 2.84 per cent, or \$4,184,053 of the total budget.

Trustee Anne Fairfield wondered what the cost of educating one pupil works out to. Priestner answered that at the elementary level, Halton is \$2,784, while in Hamilton it is \$3,254, Windsor, \$3,514, Ottawa \$4,062, and Toronto \$3,938. It costs \$3,742 per secondary student in Halton, \$4,136 in Hamilton, \$4,668 in Toronto, and \$5,345 in Ottawa.

Priestner pointed-out-costs per elementary student is going up 8.1 per cent and 7 per cent for secondary.

He reminded trustees provincial grants are being increased by less than one per cent and "the taxpayer is being made the scapegoat".

At present

12.3% tax hike for town only

Taxpayers in Halton Hills may be facing a 12.3 per cent tax hike for Town purposes alone. Both Halton Board of Education and Halton Region tax increases will be added when their budgets are set.

With more paring yet to be done, Councillor Ross Knechtel, finance chairman, said \$744,073 has been cut since the start of budget sessions, but was not too hopeful much more could be pared from the "bare bones" budget.

He emphasized assessment has risen only 1.2 per cent, while the provincial unconditional grants have risen the minimum 2.5 per cent, in contrast with increasing costs and approximately 5 per cent inflation.

Compounding the financial situation is the surplus of \$100,000 carried over from 1983. This is the smallest surplus accumulated for several years.

"We're at the point of deciding what services we can give and what we can't give,"

commented Knechtel. He complimented the staff on their long hours of work in preparing a budget explaining they don't simply add five per cent to the previous budget but start from scratch.

Councillor Harry Levy pointed out the loss of non-tax revenue probably accounted for 7.5 per cent of the projected 12.3 per cent increase. He predicted sometime in the future council would have to consider debenturing on cutting the level of service, since costs rise from year to year.

Mayor Russ Miller suggested the town tax would go up 20 per cent if council did everything they would like to do. "Keeping taxes down over the years finally catches up with you," he added.



It's maple syrup time in North Halton and this newspaper carries an article by Ted Brown about the process by local farmer and producer, Ed Blvd. Mounsborg Wildlife Centre is having demonstrations on maple syrup production on weekends and holidays which will last until April 15. Here, Sandy Root of Rockwood makes maple

sugar candles from syrup. Wagons at the wildlife centre shuttle visitors to the sugar bush where they can see the sap being boiled down and the pancake house is offering pancake and sausage meals.

Photo courtesy The Burlington Post by Ron Kuzyk

Arena is 'satisfactory'

The Acton arena is "sufficiently operated and in satisfactory working order," according to a report from the office of the Ministry of the Attorney General.

Recently, members of the Public Institutions Panel for Halton, representing the Ministry toured the building, and while they found some minor problems, they were, overall, impressed.

The report noted the building serves about 8,000 people and while parking is sometimes inadequate it is generally ample. While the tour was being conducted, by arena manager Harold Townsley a new snack bar, wet bar and skate sharpening facilities were being built.

Inspectors found the building to be well maintained having been recently reroofed and repainted.

"Public washrooms, including showers, had a definite odor and were in poor condition," the report stated. "Women's washrooms were not indicated."

"The first aid room housed a uniform storage area which left a musty odor. The first aid kit was not evident as it is kept locked in the manager's office due to vandalism. Fire alarms were on the "pull" system in the basement because of theft of fire extinguishers but they were available if called upon, locked in the boiler room."

Inside

This week's Thru the Lens focuses on the Y Parent and Tot program. See Page 3.

White socks stigma? Check out On the Leavell on Page 5.

Catherine Gramham's annual St. Patrick's Day contribution can be found on Page 10.

A Rockwood area couple received an OPP Bravery award. Picture is on Page 13.



Acton men help keep barbershop music alive



Don Lindsay and Paul Tamblin, members of the Royal City Ambassadors go over some music to be performed at the upcoming annual show the group puts on.

What do a high school teacher and a grocery store owner have in common? Plenty, if they're both baritones.

Paul Tamblin and Don Lindsay have already established themselves in the Acton music world, and now are making waves with the Royal City Ambassadors, the barbershoppers who made a splash at the first and second annual McKenzie-Smith Tunes and Talent show.

Don, co-owner of AB Foodland joined the Ambassadors two years ago. He had been a member of the Acton Legion Choralists for many years and sang in church choirs.

About 10 years ago Don went to see the Ambassadors perform and never forgot them. He always liked that kind of music, but did not have the motivation to drive back and forth to Guelph. But about two years, Don recalls, he got a call from one of the members who invited him to a guest night. He went, and "has never looked back."

Don's spent every Tuesday night since then at practices, and since he became a member of the Royal Ex-

press Quartet last fall, practise nights are increased.

Paul joined the Ambassadors last Spring after he saw the men at the first Tunes and Talents. Well known in Acton for his work with the Boars Head banquet, church choir and young people events, Paul was readily accepted by the group. He also is part of a quartet, although it is yet unnamed.

Both men are among "God's chosen people" jokes Don. Translated from barbershoppers lingo, this means they are baritones.

Paul explains a baritone is a filling-in of notes, needed to complete the sound. It is the most difficult part to learn. He points out the musical levels are tenor, lead, melody, baritone and bass. Paul can sing from tenor to bass while Don can switch to bass.

Don explains baritones are rare. Of the 70 Ambassadors, only seven are baritones. For this reason, he laughs, his type of singer is snapped up by the others wanting to form quartets. "They're very popular."

The Royal City Ambassadors is the Guelph chapter of the Society for

the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet singing in America. An international organization, headquarters are in Kenosha, Wisconsin, with chapters all over the U.S., Canada, Great Britain and Sweden. There are thousands of members in the hundreds of chapters in these countries. In this area, there are groups in Kitchener, Burlington, Oakville, Mississauga, Barrie, Markham and Scarborough.

Don and Paul's group give about 16 performances a year. Christmas is a very busy time of year for them, but the Spring with their large show and competition also keeps them hopping.

Their annual show is the only time of the year they ask for donations. All monies raised go towards the "Harmony for Speech Fund" which is the same charity for all the barbershoppers nation-wide. This money helps maintain a house near the Toronto General Hospital where families of patients undergoing logopedics treatment can stay.

Their next show is March 30 and 31, when they hope to fill the John

Ross Hall in Guelph both evenings. Quartets from Indiana and Mount Forest will be giving guest performances.

A single song may take going over 1,000 times before it is finally blended right, Don remarks. Some come along faster, but many don't.

Paul reveals barbershopping should not really exist. As a music form it is outdated, but it's a contradiction that it's still going strong. He credits the organization of the international executive for the continuing success.

Practising is not restricted to evenings, the pair admits. Before last year's show, newcomer Paul taped the formal sessions and then replayed it in the car on his way to school, and every other spare moment.

The Ambassadors are always looking for new members Don points out. Those interested do not have to be able to read music, just have a good ear. Minimum age is 18, but there's no limit at the other end.

That's what a high school teacher and a grocery store owner have in common.