

Weather forecaster uses nature signs for results

Environment Canada, move over. Wilmer Fryer has a better track record at predicting the weather.

The 68-year-old Meadvale Rd. resident has been telling folks whether to put away those winter boots, or keep the snow shovel handy for about 50 years, and he proudly admits, he's pretty accurate.

Wilmer uses signs of nature to help him with his predictions—the cattle, birds, squirrels. They've all helped him over the years.

But his main source of knowledge, he reveals comes from "when the sun crosses the line." This happens three times a year, December, March and June, the first day of winter, spring and summer.

If the weather is cold on December 21, the next three months will be cold, Wilmer says. He knows because he's always right.

Last December 21 was a very bad day weather-wise, and it was a cold, snowy winter. March 20 there was a cold east wind, indicating a cool spring. So far, it has been a cool spring. Whatever the weather is June 21, one can bet the rest of the summer will be the same. Wilmer points out last June 21 the day was very hot. Last summer was one of the hottest on record.

Wilmer insists this is an accurate method

of forecasting. He's rarely been wrong in the past 50 years.

Of course, as with all good weathermen, Wilmer doesn't depend on one source only.

His family used to have a butternut tree and would gather the nuts from it. However, there were some winters when the nuts would be all gone by the time they got there, the squirrels having gathered them, settling in for a long cold winter. Wilmer notes two winters ago there were hardly any nuts taken from the trees, and it turned out there was very little snow that year.

Day to day predictions are also made by Wilmer, and he used this knowledge to his advantage when farming at RR 4 Acton. By walking the fields, he could see the cattle gathering together and know that within a day or two there would be a storm—either rain or snow, depending on the season. The same held true with the birds. If they were flocking together, he knew a storm would be coming.

Circles, or a halo around the sun usually means a storm within three or four days.

Even the positioning of a new moon can tell its stories, Wilmer says. If the moon is further south, it generally means warmer weather that month. If farther north, one can expect colder weather.

Wilmer says the new moon this past March was the farthest north he has ever seen it, and March was an extremely cold month with lots of snow.

Some of Wilmer's other methods come from poems handed down over the years: "When the wind is in the south it blows the bait into the fish's mouth."

"When the wind is in the north the skilful fisher goes not forth."

"When the wind is in the east, neither fit for man nor beast."

"When the wind is in the west, then it is at its very best."

Wilmer contends Northern Lights is a change in weather, and thunder in March is a fruitful year. If there's thunder in February, lock your grain in your granary, and cattle with a heavy coat of hair in the fall indicate a cold winter is on the way.

Snowbirds flying around is a sign of snow, and sundogs around the sun is a sign of a storm, he says. A dog eating grass is a sign of an approaching storm and if you hear the tree toads it is a sign of rain.

One of the most familiar of Wilmer's methods of forecasting the weather is "rainbow in the morning is the sailors' warning. Rainbow at night is the sailors' delight."

By using these signs, Wilmer would know when to do certain chores around the farm where he lived for 60 years. If a storm was brewing, he'd get all his work done as quickly as possible rather than spreading it out over a couple of days. If there had been a dry spell, but he could tell rain was on the way, he would wait until after the rain to cut the hay.

Wilmer lived in the farmhouse near Speyside on Highway 25 now owned by the Carachis.

Wilmer admits it was much easier to predict the weather for the farm because of the animals being nearby, but he's still pretty accurate even though living in town.

Unlike many people, he cannot forecast the weather by the aches and pains in his joints. He says a trip to the chiropractor every two months is probably affecting that particular type of predicting.

Wilmer doesn't regard his talents as a hobby. It is just every day life to him. He doesn't record his predictions, saying he would probably forget where he put the paper they were written on. He relies on his memory, and while he may forget simpler things, he never forgets what the weather is going to be like.



Wilmer Fryer has been forecasting the weather for 50 years. He's revealed some of his methods in an article.

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One Hundred and Ninth Year — Issue 41

ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18, 1984

44 Pages — Thirty Cents

Groundhog blamed for grass fire

A groundhog is being blamed for one of the recent grass fires around town.

Firefighters were told that the owner of the property where this one fire occurred put burning paper down a groundhog hole to get rid of the groundhog.

Unfortunately, the animal had other ideas. The groundhog kicked the paper back out of the hole and that started the grass on fire.

Fire chief Bill Cunningham said the fire department isn't saying where or when this fire took place to prevent further embarrassment for the property owner.

Truck stolen by escapee?

A truck stolen in Eden Mills and recovered later in Toronto is being held by police since it may be a piece of a bigger case.

Guelph OPP report Harold Tomlinson, Main St. Eden Mills, let police know his pickup truck had been stolen at 11 a.m. Saturday.

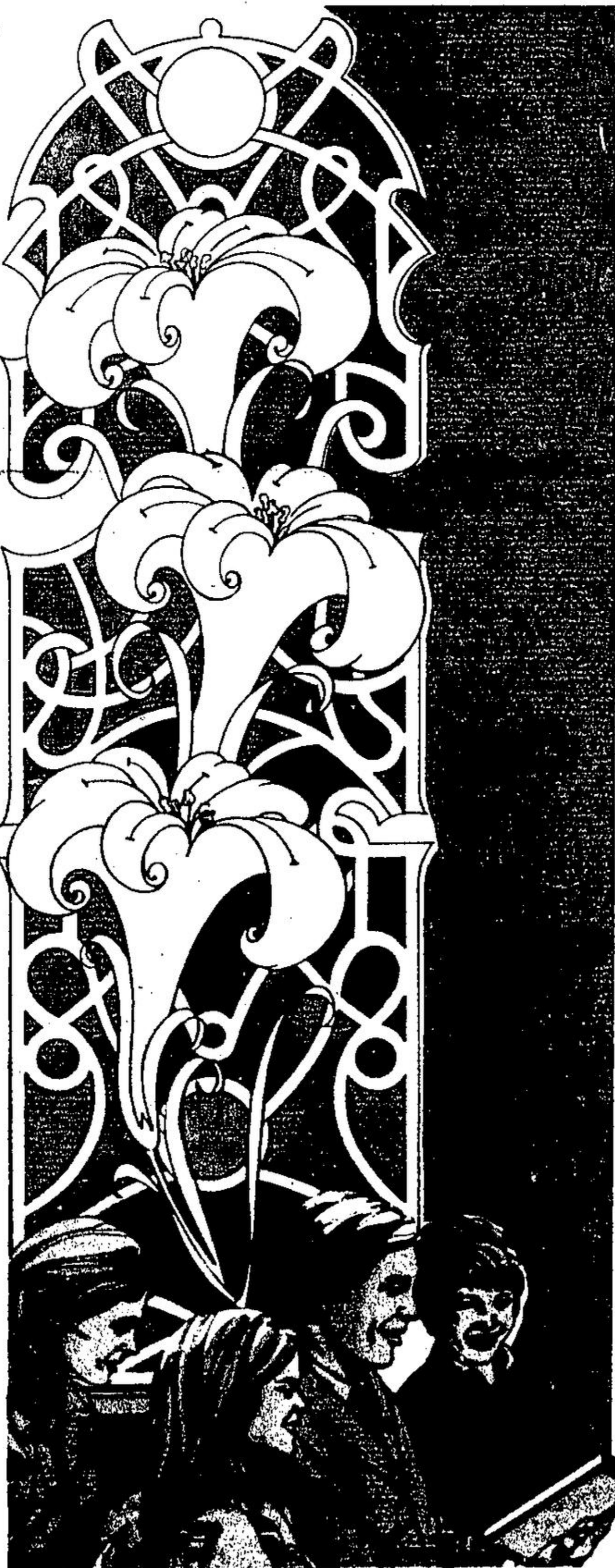
A little over an hour later, at 12:09 p.m., Metropolitan Toronto Police recovered the truck.

Guelph OPP say it is believed the truck was stolen by one of five late week escapees from Guelph Correctional Centre.

This inmate left the truck in Toronto, police believe, and then stole another vehicle and headed east.

What makes this case more significant is that this escapee was later killed by police in the Napanee area.

Of the other four escapees, two were apprehended Sunday in the Warton area, Guelph OPP say, while two were still at large Monday morning.



Search for more Acton water Test drilling soon along 32 Sideroad

by Paul Dorsey

Landowners northeast of Acton are being asked to allow test drilling on their properties as Halton region moves to bolster the community's water supply.

Regional council is today (Wednesday) expected to appoint the engineering firm of Anderson Associates Ltd. to design a second pumping station for the Fourth Line, subject to viable wells being situated there.

Regional public works director Bob Moore told his committee last week that two of the four landowners involved are ready to cooperate with the region and allow test drilling. The other two, however, want to attach "unacceptable conditions" to any agreement with the region, he said.

All four desired drilling sites are located on the south side of the 32nd Sideroad between the Third and Fourth Lines. The existing pumping station is located on the sideroad's north side near the Fourth Line intersection.

Halton has previously acknowledged that the existing wells supplying Acton are not adequate to maintain the required "firm capacity" for the community's existing population. Firm capacity is defined as the

total flow from the well with the largest pump out of service. Under emergency conditions, a third of the reservoir capacity must be held for firefighting purposes.

The region hopes to provide an adequate supply for Acton's current population by locating and developing a new well near the existing pumping station, but needs still more capacity to service the community's ultimate population of 10,000.

Having set aside \$20,000 for the test drilling program, the region is offering each of the four involved landowners \$250 for the right to conduct tests as well as a purchase option of \$5,000 to \$8,000 for an area 30 metres square.

A Ministry of Environment certificate of approval is needed by June 30 if the construction of a new pumping station is to be exempt from a full environmental assessment. The Anderson firm is prepared to supply a design and other pertinent data by that date.

Regional staff is meanwhile drafting terms of reference for a search for other possible well fields in the Acton area. The viability of servicing Acton through a link-up with the South Peel water distribution system is also being considered.

Want public meeting on aggregate policy

The Halton Escarpment Heritage Association wants a public meeting to tell Milton-Acton residents the effects of changes in sand and gravel policy on their lands.

In a special-delivery letter to Ontario Housing Minister Claude Bennett and Natural Resources Minister Allan Pope, the association states it is "very strongly opposed" to policies being proposed for acceptance by the Ontario Government on the location and ways gravel, sand, and other materials would be extracted from the ground.

The letter has been accompanied by a

petition bearing more than 400 names.

"It is our understanding that the passing of this proposal will result in an unfair and unnecessary encumbrance on the title of every property which will be affected by this shift in land use.

"We, therefore, find it necessary to request that all future proceedings are adjourned until a public meeting in Acton is called. . .

"There are many affected landowners who are unaware of this revised proposed policy.



Rick Henderson, Joe Cyganski and Jim Cooney from Acton entered the Pogy Pig VII in the annual Crazy Boat Race on the Credit River in Glen Williams Saturday afternoon.

Inside

Jim Beaulieu, who once served time for selling drugs, has sold his local business so he can bring the word of God into Ontario prisons. Details on page B1.

Damages are estimated at about \$100,000 in a garage fire in Eramosa Sunday. Photo and story on page 5.

For the second time in a row Halton Hills councillors rejected the idea of trimming four council seats before the next election. Turn to page 2.

You've only a few more days to donate to the Hargrave fund. More on page 2.

Music filled Knox Church Friday. Photo and story on page 2.

Jim Snow says no to more signs on Highway 404 directing drivers to Acton. See page 16.

The region's share of each local tax dollar has increased slightly. Turn to page 11.

Next month is Salvation Army Red Shield month and Mayor Miller has signed the proclamation. See photo page B211.

Outdoors is on page C2.

Sports is on pages C1, C2, C3, and C4.

The Halton Region Councillors are heading up the "Drive to Drive" campaign. See page C4.

RRR

Seek 27th Citizen of Year

Acton Chamber of Commerce is looking for Acton's 27th Citizen of the Year.

A ballot for nominating a person for citizen of the year is published elsewhere in today's paper.

Readers are asked not just to nominate a citizen of the year, but also give some short reasons on the ballot or send along a letter.

Nominations must be signed.

The deadline for nominations for the award is 12 noon, April 30. The nominations will then be turned over to the Chamber's citizen of the year selection committee.

Ballots or letters should be mailed to the Chamber at Post Office Box 415, Acton.

Gas tank falls off car, street blocked for washdown

Mill St. East was blocked off by police late yesterday (Tuesday) afternoon between Willow and John streets while volunteer firefighters performed a vehicle washdown.

As she was driving down the street at about 5:30 p.m., driver Terri Woolner

Ashley, Kingham Rd. heard a loud "clunk". Her gas tank had fallen off. She had borrowed the car from her mother to run an errand.

There was no fire, but firefighters washed down the tank, vehicle and street as a precaution.