

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Growing Pains

A discussion at a recent council meeting, spearheaded by the town's reeve, concerned whether bigger is necessarily better.

Reeve Morrow expressed the idea that, perhaps, council should be spending more time dealing with the town as it is, improving facilities for those who live here now, rather than planning ahead for a bigger and bigger community, with the mounting problems of civic services which this entails.

His train of thought has come about by designation of Georgetown in a Toronto-centred region plan as a "slow growth" area.

In a discussion, it was pointed out that, should Georgetown wish to remain a smaller community, this could not be possible unless such planning included the neighbouring area of Esquesing Township, which surrounds the town.

It would seem to us, that should the reeve's idea find favour, there would only be one way to achieve it. Slow growth or not, no government can impose lasting regulations which will force farmers to keep their land as a farm when it is worth many times more for residential or industrial development.

The government must, by necessity, be willing to have us pay for green belts, by acquiring the land at its market value, in the same manner in which conservation areas are purchased.

The reeve's idea has much merit, and deserves consideration of council and residents. Large communities have their place in the scheme of things, and so do small ones. As one councillor suggested, perhaps the starting place would be a referendum to find out what present residents think about it.

Spreading Christmas Cheer

Quietly and efficiently, a group of Georgetown men and women have been doing their bit at the holiday season to assure that no town family will be without a Christmas dinner and other amenities which go with a happy time.

The Georgetown Christmas Welfare committee came into being some years ago, when local service clubs found they were duplicating efforts, in some cases, and missing some who could use a helping hand. A fortunate choice to head up the committee was Mr. Walter Gray, at that time a member of town council. Ever since,

Mr. Gray has spearheaded the yearly chore, which has increased in work, as the town increases in population.

He has had valuable support from some industries and some private citizens, in donations to add to the happiness of Christmas for families who otherwise might have a bleak time.

This year, anticipating a larger list of recipients, the committee has issued a general appeal for donations, either cash or goods suitable for gifts. Anyone who wishes, may contact Mr. Gray, who can assure you that your donation will be well used.

Old Age Gone

Changing times are no more evident than in the postal service.

The old adage "The mail must go through" seems to be gone.

For instance, during the Christmas weekend, the federal service has announced a complete shutdown from Friday night, December 24 to Thursday night, December 28.

No one will deny that a postal employee is entitled to the same consideration as other industries, and it is not uncommon today for individual businesses to plan holiday close-downs. But not many shut up completely the way the post office has decided.

Would it not be possible, when such

an important public service as the post office is concerned, to stagger holidays and maintain some sort of service, particularly on the Tuesday, which is a normal business day for others?

We are perhaps somewhat selfish in our attitude, being in a business which depends heavily on the morning mail. But we are not alone, and there will be general dissatisfaction with an Ottawa ruling which affects most of the Canadian public.

Another year, we hope a more satisfactory arrangement will be made to accommodate those who count on the mail to keep their business operating smoothly.

Busiest Fire Committee Has Low Pay Rate

Esquering councillors will likely receive \$25 for each fire area committee meeting they attend in future, as a result of a discussion at Monday night's regular meeting.

Up until now councillors serving on the Georgetown fire area committee have received a flat rate of \$50 per year and those serving on the Acton fire area committee \$30 per year. Milton fire area committee members have been paid \$25 per meeting.

RIDICULOUS
Councillors agreed it is ridiculous to have members of the Georgetown committee receiving only \$50 yearly, even though they might attend more meetings than Milton committee members.

"It does seem unfair," Deputy Reeve Russell Miller commented. "Georgetown has the biggest area and the most equipment to look after."

TOUGHEST
Councillor Dick Howitt, a member of the Milton fire area committee, concurred.

"I go to four or six meetings a year, none of which is probably as difficult as Georgetown, for \$25," he said. "The Georgetown committee is usually the busiest, and the toughest. A flat rate of \$50 is ridiculous."

Turkey in the Straw Used to be Their Tune, But



WITH CHRISTMAS APPROACHING IT'S BYE BYE BIRDIE!



FACTS AND FANCIES THAT HAVE GROWN WITH THE FESTIVE TREE

One of the most joyous elements of the Christmas season is the Evergreen tree. Yet it is a fact that they were first brought into homes at a time of fear. And primitive man thought that they harbored beneficent spirits.

In the North, primitive man watched with mounting terror the decline of the life-giving sun. Lengthening winter nights carried the threat of unending cold, darkness and hunger. Frozen fields held no promise of another harvest. Fruit trees stood bare, apparently lifeless, deserted by the spirits.

Alone in the bitter cold and gloom, the evergreens stood as a document of faith in the revival of the sun god and the return of light and life to the frozen world. Living conifers in tubs were brought indoors to prop the householders' courage and to shelter the sylvan spirits. These earliest trees of the winter solstice ritual were not ornamented. They were a testament of life, not mere decoration.

The frivolous elements in the social observance of the Christmas holidays came not from the North but from the Mediterranean countries. In Rome, the celebration of the winter solstice was an imagined return to the simplicity and brotherly goodwill of the Golden Age. During the week of the Saturnalia which began on Dec. 17, all class distinctions and rules of decorum were suspended. No official business was transacted, children were released from school and truces were imposed on battlefields. Houses and public buildings were garlanded with flowers and evergreens. Gifts were exchanged, feasts were rampant and masks and mummery roamed the cobbled streets.



BILL SMILEY

Whoever Heard of Bubble Pipes

Never fails. Had barely written a column extolling the grand, mild weather we'd been having, when the wind came out of the north with a bone in his teeth, and the snow flew, and the car and I both started coughing.

And almost before I'd begun ruing the writing of such a jinx column, my wife yelped something like, "Holy Old Whackers! It's almost Christmas." And sure enough, it almost is.

Christmas, when we were all young, was something. There was looking forward to school holidays, associated with sleighs and toboggans and skating and coming in soaking wet, rosy as a cherub, hungry as a hyena.

There was the anticipation of decorating, hanging stockings, rustling paper, and a vast, magnificent turkey dinner, a once-a-year treat.

Christmas shopping was no problem. Nobody had any money. Of course, the agonizing decisions were there, even then.

For adults: should it be something practical — a new sweater or long underwear; or should it be something magic and enchanting — a game or a book? No question of both.

For kids, with maybe 85 hard-earned pennies to spend, there was no problem. A bubble-pipe for your brother (10c and supply his own soap); a colouring book for your sister (15c and find her own crayons); a beautiful cup and saucer for your mother at 35c; and a purple and yellow tie for your dad, at 25c. If the family were bigger, you cut your cloth.

And you did all your shopping on the day before Christmas. There was never a frantic thought that the stores might be sold out of bubble-pipes or long underwear.

Then there was the symbolic significance, though we didn't even know the meaning of either word then. There was the church concert, usually held in the Sunday school hall. There were games and carols and choirs.

There were the telegrams from Santa Claus, read aloud periodically, and with mounting excitement, to say that he was getting closer and closer, from the North Pole, though Dunder had come up lame. Then the entry of himself, the wild clamour, and the dispensing of those string bags with candy and an apple in each.

And the Christmas pageant in the church, the nativity scene, invariably broken up by a tiny angel piping, "Hi Mommy. Looks like I'm an angel," while Mommy blushed deeply between embarrassment and pride.

I still look forward to Christmas, but there's a difference. It's about the difference with which a prisoner would look forward to (a) getting out of jail, or (b) going to the electric chair.

Nowadays we anticipate Christmas, all right. But what we look forward to is a hectic, expensive scramble, with precious little of the mystery and delight remaining.

The Christmas turkey is now just a dirty bird that has to be stuffed and then suffed into us, and then cleared up after. A turkey today is not a gruesome, fascinating thing hanging head down in the woodshed, by its claw-like feet. It's just something you buy and stick in the freezer, anytime during the year, in case you have unexpected weekend guests.

Shopping has changed immeasurably. The panic button is pushed about the end of October and we are warned, shouted at, and scoured by the various media until we have a tremendous guilt feeling if we're not Christmas shopping by mid-November.

The agonizing decisions are still there, but most people have some money now, which quadruples the decisions. Every year, at our house, we firmly decide, about Dec. 1st, that there will be no gifts or cards this year. And every year, at the last minute, we plunge into an orgy of both and wind up Christmas Day feeling that we were right in the first place.

Every year, the big problem is What to Buy Grandad. It's not that he is The Man Who Has Everything. The trouble is that he's The Man Who Doesn't Need Anything. He doesn't smoke or drink. His slippers are good as new. And he has at least six shirts in his bottom drawer, not even unwrapped, bought on previous desperate birthdays and Christmases.

The symbolic significance is still there, of course. And the Christmas concerts and pageants. But what's a bag of candy to a kid today? He probably collected eight times that amount on Hallowe'en, and also has an allowance, so that he can buy his own, not that cheap stuff in the Christmas bag.

And the pageants, more's the pity, tend to become second cousins to lashings of liquor, phoney TV Christmas programs, and sheer greed: "I wanna snow-mobile!"

WRONG BROWNIES
North District Georgetown Brownies and 1st Glen Brownies entered the prize winning float in the Santa Claus parade, not 7th Brownies as reported last issue.

THE DISTRICT AT A GLANCE

Honour Dr. Barc McGee

ORANGEVILLE — The Orangeville Rotary Club was host at a special meeting last week to honour one of their members — Dr. Barc McGee. Dr. McGee is retiring after practicing medicine in Orangeville for 32 years. About 300 people attended the evening held in the Orangeville District Secondary School auditorium. Dr. McGee received the Order of Merit from Orangeville mayor Victor Large.

Liquor Lounges in Acton?

ACTON — The voters in this town will decide in December of 1972 if they favour the sale of liquor there in licensed premises. The decision for a liquor vote passed unanimously last week. The two questions on the ballot will be: 1. Are you in favour of liquor under a dining lounge license for consumption with meals on licensed premises? 2. Are you in favour of the sale of liquor under a lounge license for consumption on licensed premises.

Deputy Reeve Defeated

MILTON — When Milton council sits for its first meeting of the new year two new councillors and a new deputy reeve will take seats. Milton voters last week elected Mrs. Marjorie Purvis and Dr. Ivan Hunter as councillors and Bob McCuaig as deputy reeve. McCuaig's election removed Percy Barr from his seat as deputy reeve. Councillors Art Melanson, Gord Kranitz, Colin Smillie and Sid Childs were returned. Defeated councillor was Charles Johnson.

May Share School Facilities

ERIN — Discussions are being held in Erin and Eramosa to determine if community facilities can be incorporated in any of the proposed new school buildings for this part of Wellington County. At Erin, talks have been held regarding joint use of such things as library, swimming pool, and a community school that would involve an after-school program in the gymnasium, art room, shops, etc. School trustees are reportedly "interested."

By-Laws Ban Snowmobiles

OAKVILLE — A bylaw that will ban snowmobiles off Oakville streets this winter received its first reading by town council last week. The bylaw outlines a maximum fine of \$300 for snowmobilers operating their machines inside the limits. Halton county council is also considering regulations that would ban snowmobiles from all county roads.

Plans for Big Plaza

BRAMPTON — A giant commercial project spreading over 22 acres and designed to include a department store, retail store, food store and several small commercial outlets utilizing a total of 233,820 square feet of floor space was unveiled to Brampton council's general committee last Wednesday. The project, to be developed by Sentry Department Stores Ltd., will be located at the southwest corner of Highway 7 and Heart Lake Road, east of Brampton.

Hunt Heirs To \$300,000

GUELPH — Guelph residents with the name Halloran might be in line to inherit \$300,000. That is the amount that is waiting in an unclaimed estate in the U.S. while the search goes on for Halloran heirs. It is related to the family of Patrick Halloran and his wife, nee Mary Casey, who came to Guelph from Ireland in the 1850s. They had a family of six children. It appears the family left Guelph between 1890 and 1900 and may have moved to the United States. Gerald L. Chase of Rice, Wisconsin, is conducting the hunt for the Hallorans.

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