

Boy, was it cold!

Town divers take a mid-winter swim

You don't have to be nuts to go swimming in Acton's Fairy Lake in the middle of January, you just have to be prepared. You don't have to be nuts to go swimming in Acton's Fairy Lake in the middle of January, you just have to be prepared. Three members of the Halton Hills Scuba Trek capably proved that Sunday afternoon when they braved

the elements both above and below the surface, to take a 30-minute plunge in the cold, cold water (surface temperature was a brisk 33 degrees) of Fairy Lake. The outing was the first "under ice" dive the trek had held since the group organized itself early last fall, but they don't expect it's going to be the last one.

Preparations for the dive were extensive. Besides carefully preparing their many pieces of equipment the three hearty divers—Dave Francis of Georgetown, Jim Powell of Milton and Jim Mulholland of Acton—and their dive master, J.D. Hewitt of Georgetown, spent a large part of Sunday morning just preparing the ice around the

dive site. Following very specific safety rules two holes were cut at the centre of a star-shaped pattern cleared in the snow. (The pattern helps the divers find the opening once they're under the ice surface.) With the ice on the lake almost one foot thick, the cutting took a good part of the

morning. Once the opening was completed the divers then doffed their snowmobile suits and donned their complete one-piece wet suits. Those suits have about half-an-inch of insulation and cover almost the entire body. Only the face is left with a mask that too is almost totally covered. The areas of the face that were not covered were coated with grease for protection against the bitterly cold water which could have proved fatal if the divers had not been ready to deal with it.

The record low temperatures of Sunday presented some unique problems for the divers, all of whom are qualified divers, making their first under ice dive. Water would freeze almost immediately on masks left in the open. A regulator on one diver's air tank froze open before he could get it operating properly but, thanks to a replacement, he managed to get in 20 minutes of diving. The others spent close to a full half-hour swimming in a 20-foot radius of the opening. The cold did seep through the wet suits but Powell noted that it wasn't any worse than a summer dive into the depths of Tobermory.

Besides just the challenge of taking their first under ice dive the three men were also getting in some practice should an emergency ever occur requiring immediate help from experienced divers.

The Halton Hills Scuba Trek is a young organization of approximately seven qualified divers from throughout the town. The aim of the group is to organize activities for experienced divers in the area. The range of activities will vary from actual dives to seminars and training sessions. Membership in the group is open to any qualified divers in the area.



THE THREE DIVERS who dared to take a dip in Fairy Lake on Sunday morning wasted no time in donning their

well-insulated wet suits.



PLENTY OF HELPING HANDS led by dive master, J.D. Hewitt, were offered when the divers had to get into the water of Fairy Lake.

GVAS responds to record number of calls

The Georgetown Volunteer Ambulance Service responded to the highest number of calls per month in the 19-year history of the service in December.

The volunteer crews responded to a total of 94 calls, transporting patients a total of 1,200 patient miles. A number of those miles involved transporting the patient from point of pick-up to destination.

Both ambulances were out simultaneously on nine occasions during the month.

With December's record, 1975's total number of calls reached 738, an increase of 111 calls over 1974's 627. Total patient miles travelled amounted to 7,332 for the year.

Officials of the GVAS expect that if the present growth rate continues the Georgetown Volunteer Ambulance Service will respond to well over 800 calls during the next 12 months.

Arson suspected in church fire

Arson is suspected in a fire which totally destroyed the Hornby Presbyterian Church during the late hours of last Wednesday night. The 100-year-old building was completely gutted as a result of the blaze which

firefighters from Esqueping and Georgetown battled for well over three hours.

The church, located at the corner of the Eighth Line and Steeles Avenue, had not been used for church services for a number of years.

The Clarkson Musical Society was the last group, according to Fire Chief Ken Buikema, to use the building. The group staged a musical presentation there last November. The props from that presentation, including

some musical equipment, still being stored in the building, were totally lost and, according to Chief Buikema, the cost to replace them may amount to \$15,000.

Investigators were hindered in their efforts to control the blaze by a lack of a close water supply. Water had to be pumped from a nearby stream.

Investigators from the Ontario Fire Marshall's office and Halton Region Police are continuing their investigations

into the fire. There was no furnace operating in the building at the time of the fire and the power had been shut off.

Damage estimates place the loss at between \$25,000 and \$50,000.



The gutted Hornby Presbyterian Church



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Social planning council lacks funds

Lack of financial support has forced cancellation of plans for a North Halton social planning council.

Area representatives of the Halton Region Human Services Council, which would have sponsored the local body, have decided that their concept of a localized unit to coordinate volunteer services may be more difficult to realize than anticipated.

Funding for the North Halton Council has been virtually eliminated by cutbacks in spending at the regional level.

The second meeting to discuss the feasibility of such a council had been scheduled for Jan. 21.

At a gathering in Hornby on Dec. 4, representatives of the legal profession, police, educators and social workers had pledged their support of the project.

A social planning council has operated in Peel Region, in various forms, for the past 11 years.

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