

# And still their yards keep slipping away

Backyards, for which Metcalfe Court homeowners paid a \$1,000 premium for, have not stopped sinking since the first house went on the street near the ravine at the eastern edge of Georgetown.

In 1968 Ken Hutchinson moved his family to 19 Metcalfe Court. At the time his backyard fell put in by the developer, he said in an interview last Saturday.

When they had bought the land they were under the impression that their home was to be on a piece of solid land next door Mr. Hutchinson said. Upon discovering that their home was not where it had been indicated it would be, they put it down to an overzealous salesman who was unsure of exactly where the homes were to be.

Two years later the first crack in the backyard appeared.

Two more years and five more backyards sinking brought out a headline in a July 13, 1972 issue of the Herald, saying: "Metcalfe Homeowners Say Stuck With Useless Backyards".

The story reported that six residents had banded together to hire a lawyer "to get action", from the parties concerned. Mr. Hutchinson said last Saturday afternoon the lawyer hired got no action.

Since 1974 four more feet of land have disappeared, Mr. Hutchinson said. He pointed down to the bottom of the ravine which acts as an open storm sewer fed by a culvert under the bridge at the intersection of Delrex Blvd. and Metcalfe Court.

"It's gone down there," he said. "The tree's gone out, everything going out, it makes you sick."

Mr. Hutchinson, and his neighbour B. Sievking, are the worst afflicted of the five homeowners losing their backyards. He pointed to the other side of the ravine which was part of the backyards of homes fronting on Delrex Blvd. There was an approximate 30 degree slope down to the bottom.

On the Metcalfe Court side of the ravine the slope was more like 45 degrees, he said, and not enough to support approximately 100

tons of earth used as fill, on his backyard.

Along with other affected homeowners, Mr. Hutchinson feels the homes—about his own he has no complaint—would have been better designed with a walk out basement to take advantage of the incline.

What's needed to stop the problem is a retaining wall, Mr. Hutchinson said. Trees and bushes are useless to plant to stop erosion because they don't last long before they end up at the bottom of the ravine.

One tree which was about 100 years old had to be cut down because erosion had caused it to lean in the direction of the house, Mr. Hutchinson said.

When the problem of sinking backyards first occurred the homeowners brought it to the attention of the builders, Skopit Associates. After two years of dealing with the developers, the homeowners took their case in 1972 to the town council which was advised by the town solicitor that it was a matter between the builders and homeowners and the town ought not to be involved.

Mr. Hutchinson said that to the best of his knowledge a representative of the developer had never come to inspect the problem.

He said that a letter describing the situation was to be sent to town council Monday night.

If the erosion continues the steps Mr. Hutchinson had from the backdoor to the backyard will be useless. Already the land beneath one of the boards supporting the steps has sunken away, leaving a space between it and the bottom.

When the matter was discussed at town council Monday night Councillor Harry Levy called the situation "atrocious" in calling for a "long, hard look at what has taken place."

He recalled that the matter had been before council previously and yet the matter continued to worsen.

Councillor Dick Howitt who inspected the site Monday morning reported that one woman's retaining wall had fallen over.

Councillors have asked that the matter be turned over to the works committee where it will be further discussed.



Ken Hutchinson stands in his backyard today.

As it was in 1968

First crack appeared in 1970

# the HERALD

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## Ashgrove sludge site a 'filthy operation'

A sludge disposal site near Ashgrove which has made residents inspecting the area physically ill merely by walking by it will be the focus of town, regional and provincial investigations.

The site is located on part of Lot 2, Concession 4, west of Ashgrove. Although it has been in operation as a provincially approved sludge disposal site for well over one year it has only been this past spring that the stench and health hazards from the operations have created concern among area residents.

Use of the area was limited for the past

year, according to nearby residents, until this spring.

Now up to 12 large converted gasoline tankers per day travel the 10 Sideroad to get to the site where the sludge from septic tanks from homes in the Georgetown, Milton and Acton areas is pumped into an abandoned sand pit.

The residents claim that up to 100,000 gallons of untreated waste are pumped into the pit each day by Blue Spruce Ltd., the operators of the sludge disposal site. Part of that waste is from Maple Lodge Farms.

Although the ministry of the environment

has given residents assurances that there is no health hazard, Ashgrove citizens remain unconvinced.

They point to the fact that the sludge is being poured on sand, which, although it has a filtering effect, will eventually reach a saturation point at which time they fear the sludge will run off into a nearby stream.

The smell is another concern of citizens. Dave Secord who rents a home several hundred yards away from the site recalled that last summer, even though use of the property was limited, westerly winds often brought a sickening smell.

Another complaint that the residents have voiced is the "filthy operations" at the sludge disposal site. They noted that all sludge was supposed to be pumped into a lagoon but a tour of the site by not only residents but some town councillors have shown that sludge is being dumped elsewhere.

The tanker trucks are also "spewing their material on municipal roads", the residents claim. Because the site is not fenced off adequately the site has been termed a potential danger for children.

Spokesman, Bill Manderson met with town council Monday night to review the Ashgrove residents' concerns and he drew support not only from a large delegation present from that area but also from two councillors, Ric Morrow and Dick Howitt.

Both councillors, following a tour of the site earlier that day were upset with the operation of the site. "No words can describe what I saw there," commented Councillor Morrow.

Acting on the citizens' requests town council has asked the ministry of the environment to investigate the operations in

order to find out what assurances the operators can provide that sludge being dumped there will, eventually, be pumped out.

That was one of the points guaranteed by Blue Spruce when it received permission from the region to set up the site.

Halton Regional Police will be asked to enforce the weight limits on the municipal road, which is a class "B" road.

The town's solicitor is also investigating whether or not the operation is permitted under Esqueping Township's Official Plan.

## Questions still nag victim's father

"It's what we sort of expected," said Glen McTavish by the coroner's jury into the death of Eric James Couture.

Mr. McTavish's 18-year-old son, Wayne, was one of seven occupants in the John McHugh vehicle which was struck by a vehicle driven by Couture March 6 on Hwy. 25 south of Acton. All seven youths died instantly.

The coroner's jury recommended that the Halton Regional Police establish a high speed pursuit policy, convey the policy to all officers, provide a more senior officer than a constable in the radio dispatch room and look

around for a more sophisticated communications system.

The three-man, two-woman jury also called for legislation prohibiting the leaving of keys in unattended cars.

Const. Tom Roduck, driver of the police car chasing Eric Couture, was formally commended by the jury.

"We're pleased," said Mr. McTavish who was represented at the inquest by Georgetown lawyer Walter Sopinka.

John McHugh, whose 17-year-old son was at the wheel of the car Couture smashed into, could not make a comment on the jury's recommendations immediately following the

close of the inquest. But later in an interview in his home he said:

"We agree with practically everything they had to say. I think it (the jury's recommendations) is good."

"Constable Roduck did his duty to the best of his ability," Mr. McHugh said, "and I congratulated him."

Nevertheless, "I was just disturbed about the discrepancies of some of the statements," Mr. McHugh said. "Const. Roduck testified twice at the inquest, causing considerable consternation to Inspector Craig (of the traffic investigation division of the O.P.P.) and to the Solicitor General."

### Complete report on page 2.

John MacBeth, the Solicitor-General had said publically outside the legislature following the accident that there had been no high speed chase according to a report prepared for him by the Ontario Provincial Police.

The actual point of discrepancy troubling him, Mr. McHugh said, was that on March 7 Const. Roduck gave a statement to Inspector Craig saying the roof lights were activated at 12 Sideroad. Then some two days later, said Mr. McHugh, Const. Roduck gave another statement saying the roof lights were activated at Kingham Road while travelling at 55 miles per hour.

"It leaves me with a question mark in my mind," Mr. McHugh said. "But I'm not all that uptight about it."

Mr. McHugh said he felt the jury could have gone more into the subject matter of chases although "I don't think there's any way to stop high speed chases."

"If he (an offender) wants to speed away," Mr. McHugh said, "he can do so."

But since three or four days after his son died in the accident, Mr. McHugh said he has been wondering how to stop chases and how cars can be designed to make leaving the keys in them even more difficult than it is now.

Mr. McHugh said that some of the ideas which came to him included a yet to be invented device which the police would activate

in their cruiser to knock a distributor of a fleeing car out of operation.

"It would certainly stop any high speed chases from happening," Mr. McHugh said. "Surely in this technological age, some means could be designed."

As for keys in the ignition, Mr. McHugh felt the automobile manufacturers "should produce cars in which the door locks if you leave the keys in."

In addition, Mr. McHugh felt that all private and public vehicle should go no faster than 50 or 60 miles an hour with the exception of certain emergency vehicles.

"And if anyone is caught with the governor tampered with," Mr. McHugh said, "a damn good fine, \$5,000, should be handed down."

### Key to the city

KEY TO THE CITY OF GEORGETOWN. South Carolina is held by Cathie Barton, a first grader at Harrison school here who went south for mid-term break. The mayor Georgetown, S.C. Bill Higgins gave the key to Cathie. If you look at that smile, you'll know why.

## Efco, union renew talks

Labour and management will be sitting down together this week to try and iron out the differences which have kept about 50 workers on a picket line for four weeks outside the Economy Forms Corp. plant in Georgetown.

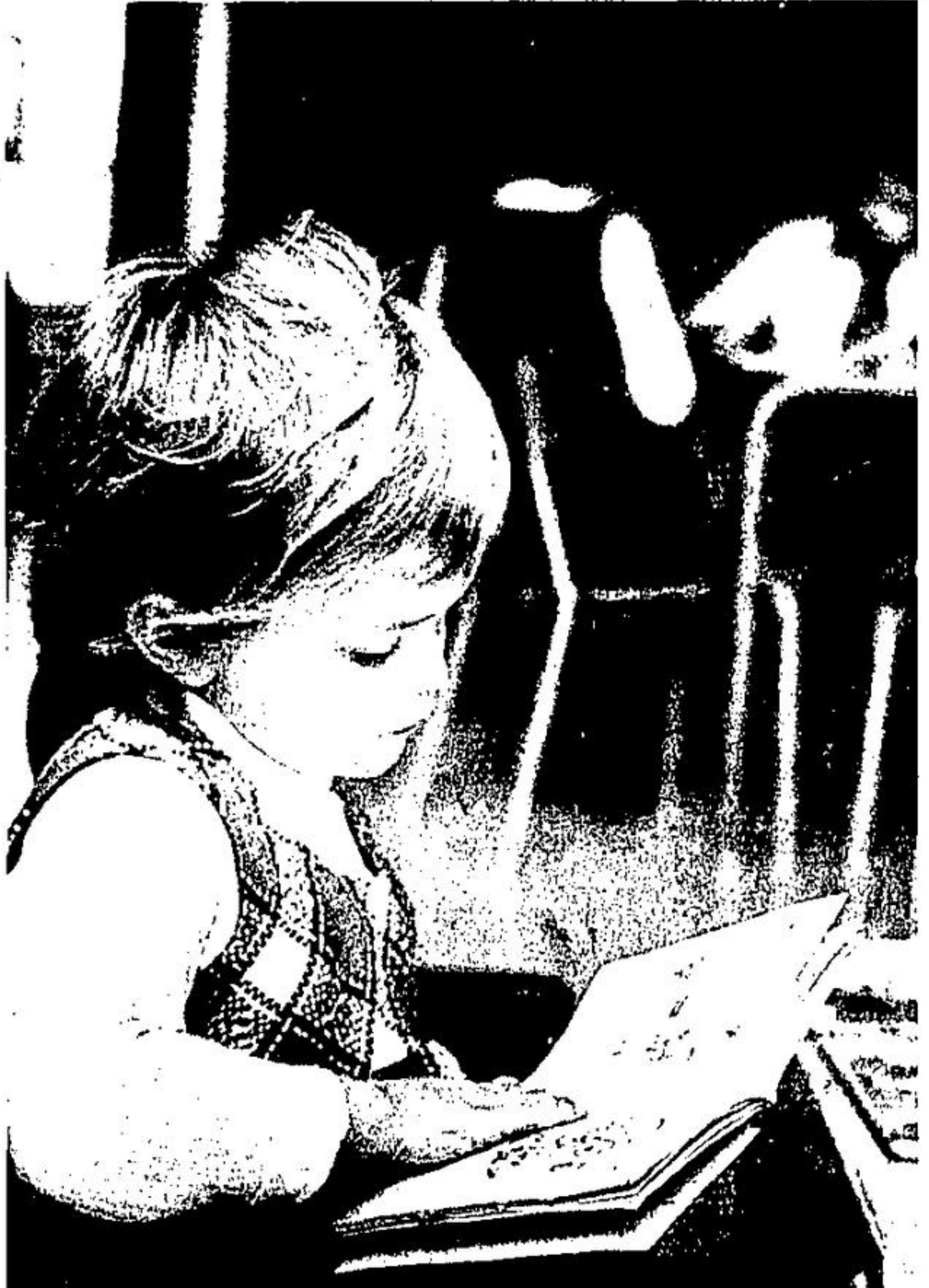
The workers, members of the United Steel Workers of America, Local 7337, went on strike March 12 in an effort to back their demands for a dollar an hour, across the board, increase in the first year of a two-year contract and another dollar in the second as well as some fringe benefits. The present base wage is \$3.55 per hour.

Management has offered a 17 and a half percent increase in the basic wage with a cost of living clause and productivity increases in the last two years of a three-year contract as well as some other fringe benefits.

Vandalism amounting to \$1,000 was discovered at the strikebound plant on March 26 when an outside light and interior window were smashed, 80 gallons of oil spilt, the cable of a tow motor cut and some wiring torn out or cut, but police have arrested no one.

The decision to get back to the negotiating table was a "mutual one" said Tom Brotherton, manager of the plant.

Strikers on the picket line said they got about \$45 in strike pay last week, more than they had expected at the time, and were looking forward to about \$50 this week.



STARTING SCHOOL In September will be Kathryn Frazer, 4, shown here reading while in the background her mother, Allee Frazer registers her for kindergarten classes at Holy Cross School. Taking the registration is Gilin Brown.

## Johnson will run again for NDP

"Wicked Willy" is raring to go again. Bill "Wickey Willy" Johnson is the first candidate to throw his hat into the race for the New Democratic Party's nomination for the next provincial election.

Johnson was the NDP banner carrier in last fall's provincial election in which he finished a strong third behind the Liberal's Julian Reed and

the Progressive Conservatives' Gary Dawkins.

The election of the NDP provincial candidate for the Halton-Burlington riding will take place this Saturday, April 10 at 8 p.m. in the UAW hall in Milton.

Thus far, according to Archie Brown, one of the organizers of the nomination meeting, only Johnson has

indicated that he will run.

Brown, himself, stated that he would definitely not be running in the provincial election, whenever it may be, have set his sights, instead, on the next federal campaign.

Johnson, in an interview with the Herald, noted that he had indicated on election night last fall when the returns indicated the swing of the polls

that he would be back "and I'm a man of my word."

Guest speaker for the meeting Saturday will be NDP MPP for Etobicoke, Ed Philip. Mr. Philip is the NDP critic of southern transportation and communication issues. A free lance broadcaster he was a member of the Creativity Canada and the Creative Education Foundation.

## Changes to school year not possible at present

A report by a special committee investigating possible changes to the school year to permit the semester changeover during the Christmas holidays has concluded that such plans are presently unfeasible.

The report by the task force on a modified school year was a direct response to a request by Halton Hills school trustee Ernie Bodnar that the semester turnaround be scheduled with the Christmas break to cut down on the number of wasted days that are presently occurring because of holidays falling on top of examination.

Trustee Bodnar had suggested that extended school days during the first semester (September to January) would provide

enough time for students to earn credits.

The task force however concluded that to do so would require lengthening the instructional period per day to 85-90 minutes. The subsequent effect on the school day would be to increase it one hour and 20 minutes to approximately eight hours per day, including lunch.

Students would therefore have to begin at 8 o'clock in the morning and remain until 4 in the afternoon.

The implications would be six-fold, the task force concluded.

Extra-curricular programs would be seriously affected during the first semester. The second semester would be 20 days

longer (112 days) since, according to provincial regulations, the number of school days must have a minimum total of 185.

Time blocks would have to be adjusted but the total school instructional day, exclusive of lunch, could not go below five hours.

Course and lesson planning would have to be different each semester to fit different time blocks and the different number of teaching days.

The resulting number of days saved in June would be the three-day turnaround late in January.

If semester-end exams were held immediately prior to the Christmas holidays

reports could not be issued until students are into their second semester.

The task force did recommend that the study of re-adjusting the school year be continued. One alternative which they noted was a system being used in Lethbridge, Alberta. That system starts in August and extends to the Christmas vacation period in December. Final examinations for the first term occur prior to the Christmas break.

The second term then extends from early January to the end of May.

The report of the task force will be presented to the Halton Board of Education at its regular meeting this Thursday evening, in Burlington.