



ROGER AND JACQUELINE PRIMEAU

LES FRANCAIS

**The first teacher
at new French school**

Editor's Note: This is the second in a series of articles The Herald has prepared outlining the background history of the formation of a French-Canadian Association in Georgetown, its institutions and the individuals who have helped form it.

These week comments are presented from Roger and Jacqueline Primeau, a couple with a long association with the French-Canadian association and involved in the formation of a French language school in 1960. Both have been awarded the Merit Franco-Ontario for their efforts.

By GEORGE EVASHUK
Herald staff writer

"We opened Sept. 26th, 1960, with 33 students," Jacqueline Primeau, first teacher of the French section of Holy Cross School, Georgetown, told The Herald in a recent interview.

"I was parachuted into the classroom. Not more than five could speak French."

"Everyone thought it was a hopeless case to have French classes in Georgetown but by Easter, they were speaking French on the streets."

By the end of the first year, there were 39 students in Grades 1 to five. When Jacqueline left in 1967 to open another French school—she's now opening her fourth—there were 179 students in Kindergarten to Grade 8. But that first year was a difficult one, "a period of transition," she said.

"Those 33 were pulled out of English classes," she said. "Imagine Grade 3, 4 or five students taken out of their classes in English. We had to start at the beginning."

For the first three or four weeks the class was in the Holy Cross foyer until "a very comfortable, well heated and lighted portable arrived," she said. Textbooks written in French didn't arrive however, until January, 1961.

"It was a matter of adapting to sometimes a difficult situation," she said, but the children shared recess with the others in the English section, she took her break in the staff and a good human relationship developed between Tom Fitzsimmons (then principal of Holy Cross School) and myself.

Students at the school were immersed in French except, of course, for English study, which began in Grade 3, and mathematics and science, which by 1969 was also taught in French. She said the French part of the school was at par with any French school and the English at par with any English school.

"We gave them their own verbal language and culture," Jacqueline said. After Grade 8 when the students had to enter the English stream at Holy Cross or at Georgetown and district high school, they had only to take Grade 9 and 10 exams in French language but did not have to study it like their Anglophone classmates.

"It was good in their early years to speak French and that group seemed to appreciate

A major hurdle the school had to overcome was getting the students to the school. "The whole credit goes to Miss (Theresa) St. Jean," Jacqueline said. "She organized transportation for the school, almost a fleet before a bus was purchased."

In 1967, the year Jacqueline left the school to open another one, it became Ecole Sacre Coeur and a five-room addition was built at the rear of Holy Cross school. Its current enrollment is 113 pupils and there are five teachers and a principal, Paulette Norman.

The enrollment has been stable at 115 to 120 for the past five years, Mde. Norman told The Herald in an interview, and no large growth is anticipated.

To be admitted to the school, a child needs a French background which means one or both parents must be Francophone. A few of the students are from Anglophone families but they must go through an admissions committee, she said, and entry is not recommended past Grade 2.

Many parents now realize the benefit of their children speaking two languages and the school gets many inquiries from Anglophone parents, Mde. Norman said. "They realize that once their children finish (French) school they won't be backward because they are taking the same material."

Ecole Sacre Coeur begins English conversation at Grade 2, introduces phonics and reading at Grade 3 and by the end of Grade 8 the pupils have covered the same material as English schools.

As the school is administered by Halton Roman Catholic separate school board, the students have religious studies from which there is no exemption, she said. "But we don't make them change their religion."

"Besides language and Roman Catholicism, we try to have as many other cultural activities in French," Mde. Norman said. "We teach them French-Canadian customs and traditions. In our electives we teach things of French-Canadian origin."

"We are trying to stimulate their pride in their culture and language, try to make them aware they are lucky to speak both languages," she said. "We don't downplay one for the other. We encourage French and don't discourage listening to English for in an area like Georgetown, it is an English atmosphere."

Mde. Norman has been principal at Ecole Sacre Coeur for two years. She started her teaching career in Sudbury and taught at French schools in Mississauga and Toronto before becoming principal here.

The French Association of Georgetown was started in 1959 "by Miss (Theresa) St. Jean and Ed Hayes who both canvassed door to door," Roger Primeau, president for 13 years, told The Herald in a recent interview.

"There were 20 families at most at the beginning," he

said. "For the first seven or eight years it grew rapidly and has kept on thriving." After a stable period ending about two years ago, the association is growing some more, he said. Now there are about 150 families with approximately 500 persons.

The objectives of the association are education, cultural and social in that order, Roger said. After the school got underway, the association formed a French parish at Iglesia Sacre Coeur on Guelph Street in Georgetown in June, 1966. A few years later a community hall was built behind the church.

When the association first formed, there was only one other formal organization of Francophones in the area, at Hamilton, Roger said. Later, other associations throughout Halton formed. Social activities such as corn roasts, sleigh rides, campfires and picnics brought the members together in the early years, he said.

And when the association was about two years old it made contact with Federation of Club Social based mainly in south-central Ontario but affiliated with other French associations across the province, he added.

That led, of course, to increased contact among the Francophones in the province, especially at bowling tournaments, he said.

The most recent accomplishment of the association was its first winter carnival, Roger said. "We're very happy to see that the carnival was a success," Jacqueline said. "Roger and I came up with the idea to involve Georgetown as a community. Our main purpose was the interaction of the two cultures."

The participation by the Francophones and Anglophones in the carnival was very good, Roger said. He estimates that every French family visited the carnival at Holy Cross School in February at least once and many of the Anglophones for the first time "tasted our culture."

Georgetown once didn't have any facilities for Francophone teenagers in the summer, Jacqueline said. But now there has been three summers of Perspective Juvenesse, a six-week summer program for ages 4 to 14. During the other months, the teenagers have baseball, broomball, hockey, bowling and other activities.

Nor are the adults left out of the community activities Roger pointed out. On the roster of any of the organizations in town, French names are listed. "The point that kept us together," Jacqueline said, "is we were isolated. Our families were not here so we became part of a big family. But just imagine the richness of culture. I've learned a lot, especially from the Acadians—they participated actively in everything."

She plans to write a history of the French community in the area.

Both of them are Ontario born and would not move to Quebec if that province does

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AVERAGE INCREASE FROM \$12 TO \$20
Taxes rise 7.5 per cent

Halton Hills has approved a 10 per cent increase in its 1977 operating budget which will result in tax increases to local residents varying from \$12.49 to \$20.33 on "average" assessed dwellings.

Billed as a relatively "stand pat" budget the increase in expenditure reflects almost a \$200,000 increase in the level of road project spending for this year.

The operating budget level of \$4,976,881 is an increase from the 1976 level of \$4,518,858. Town residents will be responsible for raising \$2,221,965 of the operating budget while the remainder will come from provincial grants, licences and sundry revenues.

The percentage increase of rates in the four taxation areas are: Georgetown and Acton 7.5 per cent or \$12.58 and \$12.49 respectively for average assessed homes; Esquering, 15.9 per cent or \$20.33; Oakville, 13.7 per cent or \$18.64.

Town treasurer Ray King set the average assessment rates as: Georgetown \$5,590; Acton, \$4,460; Esquering, \$4,599; Oakville, \$5,531.

Total tax costs in each of the four areas based on average assessment are: Acton, \$178.57; Georgetown, \$178.60; Esquering, \$148.13 and Oakville \$154.42. Final tax cost will eventually include the still to be confirmed regional budget and the average \$28 increase in education rates.

"The basic objective council tried to establish when they reviewed this last fall was to try to provide the same level of service at a cost not to exceed eight per cent and to stabilize the tax revenue for the future," Mr. King said.

The budget provides for only one additional town staff member, the already approved development control officer. Council earlier had defeated a bid to remove the proposal from the budget. Annual salary is expected to be about \$14,000 per year.

The increase in taxes for Esquering are not caused by increased costs, but rather from the reduced transi-

tional grants relating to this area, plus the fact that Esquering's remaining surplus of \$40,000 was applied against that area's mill rate in 1976," Mr. King explained.

Special charges in urban areas for streetlighting and garbage collection indicate a significant percentage increase but these were offset by a surplus in 1976, he said. Also affecting the increase are higher electrical utility costs in 1977.

Special area charges for Acton and Georgetown will cost \$256,500 while lighting in some areas of Esquering will cost \$5,400.

Coun. Miller said the 1977 budget has been offset by a about a \$400,000 surplus in 1976. This year a budgeted surplus of \$150,000 for contingencies is sought.

He said general government costs have risen only \$36,626 and his finance committee worked recently for more than eight hours trimming \$40,950 from the parks and recreation budget, which he was quick to point out is still higher level than last year, and \$25,000 for renovations to the old Georgetown library which are redundant following recent approval of the Cedarvale site. Works committee did not make any cuts from its budget, he said.

Treasurer Ray King said the increase in roads projects comes from a higher level of ministry of transportation and communications subsidies.

These subsidies which run about 50 per cent of the project costs, are \$710,000 up from \$295,000 last year. Normally, Mr. King said, municipalities budget up to the limit set by the ministry subsidies.

SENIORS CREDIT HAS A CATCH

Council has approved a tax break for senior citizens. But there's a catch.

In order to qualify, a senior citizen must be a resident of Halton Hills, for the past five years, be receiving the old age pension supplement and make application for the \$100 tax credit.

In addition, all taxes in arrears must be paid prior to any approval of an application.

The tax credit applies only to single family dwellings used as a primary residence by seniors and is allowable under the provincial Elderly Resident's Assistance Act, 1973.

Applications must be filled with the town treasurer before Sept. 1 with proof of age and place of birth.

Raiders seek town support

Georgetown Chrysler Raiders faced the stiffest opposition of the past hockey season Monday when management appeared before town council.

Halton Hills council delayed a decision on whether it will provide a \$17,500 guarantee to stage the Hardy Cup championships which is indicative of Intermediate A hockey supremacy in Canada.

The guarantee is required by the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association to provide expenses to the visiting team from western Canada and to pay the expenses of the series.

The total is based on \$3,500 guarantee per game in the best of five playoff series, which, if the Raiders win the Eastern Canadian Hardy Cup final in Campbellton, New Brunswick, this weekend will begin in Georgetown April 29. If the series ends in three or four games the guarantee may be less than \$17,500.

General manager Bob Hooper told council the team is solvent, but does not have enough funds available to guarantee the series.

He believes that its unlikely a loss would result but if gate receipts are poor during the series the guarantors could stand to lose as much as \$7,000.

The Raiders propose a five point plan to provide some protection for council:

- the Raiders would turn over to the town all game-oriented incomes including profits from its booster club to the town recreation department.
- agree to turn back to the town all funds generated by federal-provincial grants awarded for hosting the Hardy Cup series.
- agree to commit any funds held by the club following the payment of expenses after the Campbellton series to the town.
- seek individual and business guarantors to reduce the

town's potential share of any losses.

-allow the team to be in a position to state how any potential profits may be used.

Raider past president Dave Kentner told council he had contacted eight businessmen Monday and secured \$1,000 in guarantees. He said he hoped to generate more interest among the business community.

Adding that any town guarantee would be employed following private guarantees, Mr. Kentner said "this money (from the town) would be used to meet any potential loss situation."

Mr. Hooper said a Kitchener peewee team recently received \$1,000 for hosting an American team and last year the Eastern Canadian Championship was given a \$6,000 grant.

Mayor Tom Hill however, cautioned that council would be gambling with tax money and "if we lost that there's going to be somebody on our necks."

Coun. Pat Patterson, who attempted without success to declare a conflict on the issue because of knowledge of both CAHA and Ontario Hockey Association operations, criticised the proposal when residents of Ward 2 are facing a 15.9 per cent increase in taxes.

Council was told the money would be guaranteed in the form of a grant, but that the 1977 budget only allowed \$1,000 for grants to recreation activities.

Halton Hills would look "a little ridiculous if we didn't host the Canadian championship," Coun. George Malby said, "even if it does run the risk of financial hardship."

He said later that "Georgetown has proudly supported the Little NHL for many years and has in hockey circles, been made famous"

165 on temporary layoff

United Auto Workers union said Monday 165 employees at the Georgetown Smith and Stone Ltd. plant will be laid off for a one week period effective immediately.

A spokesman for the union said the layoff results from a slow electrical wiring devices market and 14 employees will be placed on indefinite layoff effective April 28.

The most recent layoff follows the layoff two weeks ago of eight employees.

The company which had a total of 231 workers at the end of March manufactures electrical wiring devices such as switches and plugs.



Jubilant Raiders following defeat of Val D'Or

Town rejects board offer to purchase Chapel school

Halton Hills has rejected an offer by the Halton board of education for the purchase of the Chapel Street school.

Council rejected the offer despite the pleas of Councillors Roy Booth and Walter Biehn that the action is "foolish."

Coun. L. Van suggested that the building and about two acres of property behind St. John's United Church to the church elders. The pro-

erty had originally been turned over to the town by the church membership prior to the creation of district and county boards of education.

Mayor Tom Hill commented that council had given the church assurances that if the town purchased the school property, a return of property would take place.

Councillors Biehn, Booth and Marilyn Serjeantson opposed the move.

Strike possible at Disston plant

A strike vote taken Monday by employees of Disston (Canada) Limited could see workers at the Acton plant walking a picket line within three weeks.

Jack Walker, president of the United Steel Workers local representing the 150 Disston employees, said that the voting ran 91 to 8 in favor of strike action.

Union and management met with a conciliation officer on April 12 and spent 14 hours trying to work out a new contract agreement. When the company proposals were brought to the membership at Monday's meeting they were turned down and a strike vote taken.

A major issue in the negotiations is a cost of living clause. Disston says the clause expired with the old contract and it is not willing to renew it. The union is demanding that it be a part of the new contract.

Walker says the company and union are still some distance apart in wage negotiations. They also seek changes in the dental, eye glasses, and hearing aid plans, as well as some changes in the contract wording.

The union must wait for a no board report from the Ministry of labor which should arrive approximately 10 days after the meeting with the conciliation officer. A legal strike can begin 16 days after the report is filled.

The union contract with Disston expired February 1. Wages in the old contract ranged from \$4.51 to \$5.98 an hour.

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