Acton's Pat McKenzie seeks ALS chapter

By MAGGIE HANNAH Herald Special

Amyotrophic lateral scierosis (ALS) is a disease which isn't well known in Canada, although it afflicts more people than muscular dystrophy and perhaps even more than multiple scierosis.

G.W. (Pat) McKenzie, former school principal and municipal politician, has found out the difficulties of living with ALS the hard way and he wants to help educate people about the disease.

ALS causes the spinal nerves to malfunction.

Put simply, the nerves stop the flow of messages to the muscles and the body stops functioning property. Other muscles compensate but even-

tually deterioration sets in. Mr. McKenzie found be was walking "like a drunk"; he wanted his feet to go but they wouldn't move properly.

Although his is centred in his legs, Mr. McKenzie said other ALS victims have difficulty with their upper limbs and some ultimately become bedridden or confined to a wheel-

Mr. McKenzie went to his doctor last spring to have a spur removed from his heel. By the time the surgeon finished the operation, he suspected the diagnosis and sent Mr. McKenzie to Guelph neurologist Dr. Ranjit Singh. Dr. Singh confirmed the suspicions and Pat McKenzie's battle was

Doctors tell their patients to go home and put their lives in order because when ALS strikes, their lives will change dramatically as muscles deteriorate.

Mr. McKenzie Isn't the passive type to accept such advice and wanted to know how to fight ALS, which has no known cure.

ALS has been recognized since the 1960s but no cause has been found nor any reliable form of treatment.

Mr. McKenzie takes minerals to supplement his diet. He rides a stationary bicycle to get exercise and he's receiving acupuncture treatments weekly from Dr. Leslie MacKray at Pottageville, near Schomberg. Acupuncture won't cure his

illness, but slice ALS is a deterioration of muscles and nerves, the stimulation of acupuncture won't do any harm, Mr. McKenzie's doctor told

ALS strikes mainly between the ages of 40 and 70. More men have the disease than women and it strikes most commonly at very active people. The disease may progress very rapidly or very slowly. It may even hit

plateaus during which time the patient sees no great change. Mr. McKenzie says he has no pain. He is frustrated to find so many things he once took for granted are now difficult or impossible.

He uses a quad cane to walk and tires quickly. He has had hand controls installed on his car since September so that he could make long drives, like a trip to his daughter's home near Collingwood, without concern that his legs would tire and cramp on the road.



PAT McKENZIE

If he sits or lies too long in one position, his legs cramp and he has to get up and move

He's annoyed, for example at having to leave shovelling his drive to his wife Mary.

While the kindness his neighbors have shown in driving Mrs. McKenzie is very touching, Mr. McKenzie also gets impatient with his own handicap. Last week, for example a neighbor came over in his car to pick him up to come over for an evening of cards. At one time, Mr. McKenzie wouldn't have dreamed of accepting a ride across the atreet just because the wind was a bit strong. Now he has to accept it or stay home. If he fell he

couldn't get up, he said. His doctor advised him to head south to a warmer cilmate and soon he'll be off to Florida.

Doctors advised Mr. McKenzie to keep active as long as possible. Depression is a problem in the beginning but less so since he began working on a history of Trinity United Church to keep occupied.

He also personally canvassed door-to-door for a couple of hours in December for signatures on a petition protesting the use of taxes to retain

. Acton's old town hall. Mr. McKenzie arrived in Acton in 1939 as principal of Robert Little public school and retired from the post in 1973. He was absent from 1943-45 to serve in the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Child star

Sharon Hampson, Canadian children's recording star, will give a free concert for children at the Georgetown Public Library this Saturday (Feb. 6) at 1 p.m. in the

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Herald Special An Acton area scientist has topped 47 nominees to receive one of four major

research fellowships granted to outstanding researchers in He joined the Acton Y men's Canada. club in 1940 and served as international president of the club in 1964-65. He is still a member and co-ordinates student scholarships across

Canada for the organization.

career and served as deputy-

reeve and reeve of Acton and

five years on regional council.

Halton Region Conservation

Authority for six years until he

switched to the foundation in

1981. He is also a member of

the Halton Housing Authority.

forming an Ontario chapter of

the ALS Society if one doesn't

already exist. So far, the

California office with which

he's been corresponding hasn't

supplied him with that infor-

mation and as a result he

hopes any ALS victims interested in forming a

chapter will contact him by

writing G.W. McKenzie, 163

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-Courtesy Guelph Mercury

Jeffrey Ave., Acton.

His latest interest is in

He was a member of the

In 1966 he began a political

professor at the University of Toronto, and the first woman to receive the E.W.R. Steacie Memorial Fellowship from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, will spend the next two years working on ways of combatting rust fungl that attacks crops. One of only a dozen female plant pathologists in the world, Mrs. Heath's research is aimed at discovering why some fungi are successful in attacking one plant while

Michele Heath, a bolany always work.

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another plant fights them off. She and her colleagues

around the world have aiready discovered how plants protect themselves. Now she wants to know why that defence mechanism doesn't Plant breeding can be done

to combat rust fungi parasites, she said, but that's only a temporary answer. Eventually the fungi will produce a strain that overcomes the

CORNER

plant's resistance.

The long-term cure would be to find out what makes that resistance fall and then correct that problem.

Mrs. Heath presently splits her time between laboratory research and teaching 1,500 first-year university students.

Thanks to the fellowship, the university can hire a replacement teacher for two years and let her devote herself entirely to her research. In addition to the award equalling the fellow's salary NSERC also gives research grants.

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A native of Bournemouth, England, Mrs. Heath was educated at Westfield College, University of London and Imperial

Fellowship presented by Governor-General

College. Following two years of post-doctoral work in plant pathology at the University of Georgia, she came to Toronto in 1971. She was accepted as professor last

In 1979 Mrs. Heath received the Huxley Memorial Medal from the Imperial College (London) for research achievement and last year she became one of

four senior editors of Physiclogical Plant Pathology.

Mrs. Heath, her husband Brent, and their five-year old daughter have lived on the Halton Hills-Milton town line for seven years.

Mrs. Heath isn't the only researcher in the family. Her husband, a cell biology professor at York University was unsuccessfully nominated for the same fellowship last year.

Nominations are made by university department chairmen and the universities. Mrs. Heath said: Mrs. Heath received her

award .from Governor General Edward Schreyer in Ottawa. The coveted fellowships are the NSERC's most prestigious awards and are annually presented to outstanding young researchers

in Canadian universities. -Courtesy Guelph Mercury

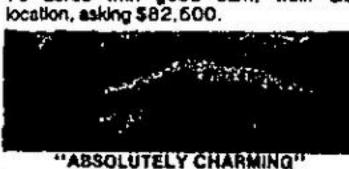
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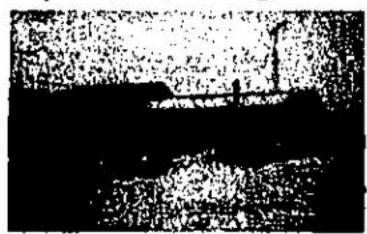


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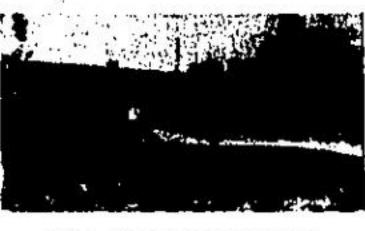


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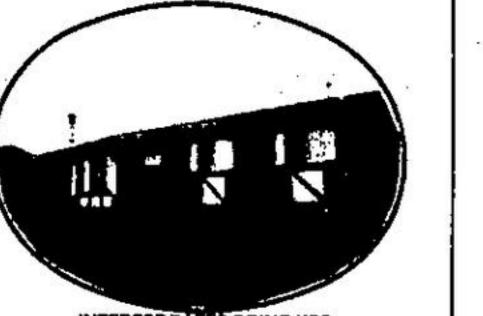
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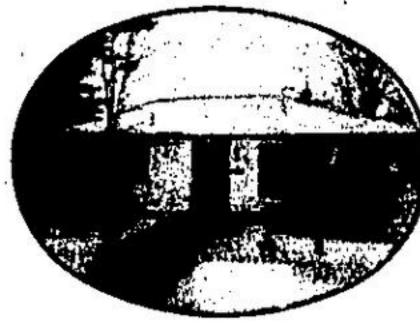
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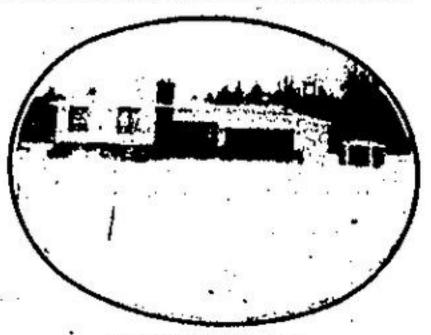
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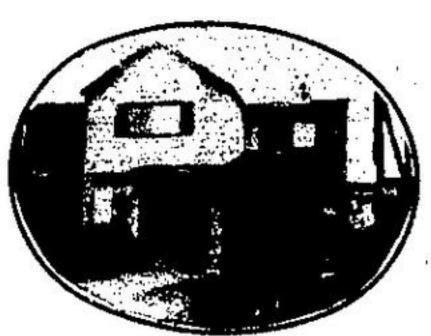
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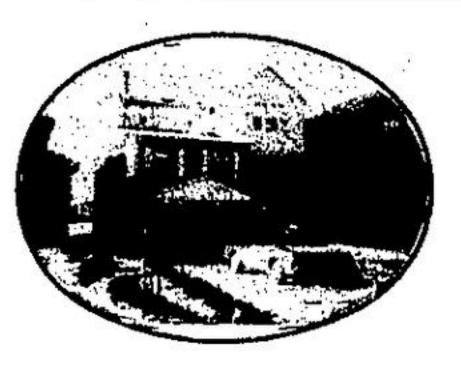
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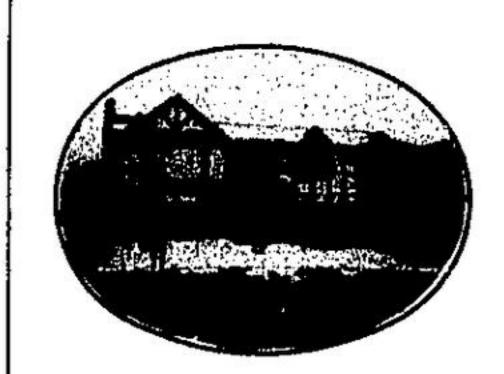


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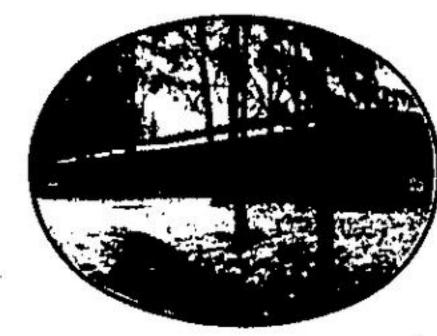
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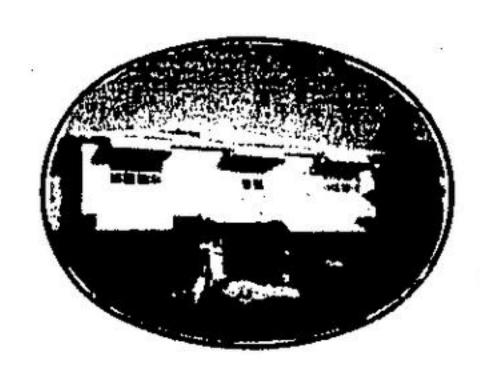
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