

Keeping air quality high is David Balsillie's job

By ALAN CASSMAN
Herald Special

Georgetown's David Balsillie has travelled a long and distinguished road since the days he spent as a science student at the University of Toronto, preparing for a career he could not at that time readily define.

The newly appointed director of the air resources branch in the Ontario Ministry of the Environment remembers taking what he describes as "middle-of-the-road" subjects before graduating in 1967 with a B.Sc. in Life Sciences, because "I didn't know what I wanted to do."

"Joining the civil service had more to do with fate than anything else," he confesses. "During the summers, I worked in a lab specializing in tree diseases and so I started my graduate work in forest pathology." (Balsillie received an M.Sc., botany, in 1968 and a P.H.D., forest pathology, in 1972).

"When I was ready to graduate the job that was available to me was with the government looking at the effects of air pollution on forest trees in northern Ontario."

As assistant plant pathologist with the Department of Energy and Resource Management in Sudbury, the shape of his career took on clearer dimensions. A growing interest in air quality work prompted him to successfully compete for the position of chief of air quality assessment in the Northeastern Region of Environment Ontario. In 1981 he was appointed supervisor of the atmospheric research and special programs section of the air resources branch.

ONAFARM

The new appointment brought Balsillie, his wife, and his two sons, back to Toronto and eventually to Georgetown. "We lived on a farm up north and we did a lot of hobby



David Balsillie

farming. Because we were used to living in a rural setting, when we returned to Toronto we couldn't see ourselves buying a home in a highly populated centre. We were taken with Georgetown."

The air resources branch of the Ontario Ministry of the Environment carries out various scientific and technical programs designed to improve the technology of air pollution control and to establish air quality standards for air pollutants.

As director of the branch, Balsillie is responsible for the development and implementation of these specialized research programs. "I personally do not work on the projects myself," he explains.

"I administer the staff which is working on the projects, reporting directly to the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Environment."

ACID RAIN

"Presently, the branch is working on such things as acid rain, stack sampling of emission sources, and the monitoring of hazardous substances in the air and the effects of air pollution on plants and soils."

"We have set up an extensive monitoring network for air quality throughout the province and we do air pollution computer modeling of the dispersion of air pollutants. And of course we respond to emergencies when required."

Balsillie played an important role in the containment and clean-up of the 1982 train derailment in Medonte Township near Mount St. Louis. "It took us nine days," he recalls, "to retrieve a tank car that contained hydrogen fluoride and we were concerned about whether the tank would stay together or split and spew its contents all over the place...we gave

technical information to the medical officer of health and to the solicitor general on what would be the concentration of the compound and how far it would spread if a spill occurred."

AIR PROGRAM

Ontario has the largest provincial air program in the country. In consideration of the fact that Ontario is the most industrialized and heavily populated province in Canada, Balsillie feels the quality of Ontario's air is very good.

"The level of air quality control or abatement which has been instituted in this province over the past few years is extremely significant. The installation of air pollution control equipment has been instituted in heavy industry right down to localized activities like municipal incinerators, so that we are able to maintain this quality."

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ABOUT THE HILLS

Library gets talking books

The January meeting of the Club was held at the Lions Hall and there were 20 Lionesses in attendance. The Roll Call was answered with each member telling what their New Year Resolution was.

A motion was made to give a donation to the Library to help with the purchase of talking books for the blind.

A report by the chairman of the Christmas craft auction showed it was a tremendous success. Members from other Lioness Clubs attended and helped the sales.

Since the meeting the club held a "Hard Times Dance" at the Lions Hall. Members were reminded of the various collections that the club makes. Used postage stamps are collected and sent to the Leper Society in Toronto. Campbell's Soup labels help the deaf and Dominion Tapes are exchanged with donations to other charities.

If anyone outside the club is interested in saving these items, members would be pleased to pick them up. Some members will be kept busy during February when they are helping organize the "Drug Abuse" program with other service club members.

After the business meeting was over the members listened to a speaker from North Halton Distress Centre. She talked about a telephone desk device machine which the centre is hoping to obtain for their use when dealing with the deaf.

The Georgetown Lioness Club have offered help in purchasing this equipment. A cheque was presented to her for this purpose.

Quilters' month

February is quilting month. Join Joan Albert's quilting workshops and learn to do the needle dance.

Mrs. Albert will be having a long cabin quilting workshop Feb. 12 and 19 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. and a crazy quilting workshop Feb. 26 and March 5 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Each two-day workshop costs \$8. There is babysitting available at \$3 a day per child.

To register, call the Halton YMCA at 853-1070 Tuesdays or Thursdays between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Alcoholism study

The provincial Ministry of Health has given approval to the Halton District Health Council to begin a five-month study on the needs pertaining to alcoholics and alcoholism.

The study began in December and it is under the direction of a small task force, with research compiled by Mary Davies.

The purpose of the study is to enable the Health Council to promote the development of a network of institutional and community-based alcohol treatment programs and services.

Region wants its money

The Town of Halton Hills is going to be asked for \$1.5 million in two installments, with the first payment due Feb. 28.

The region wants the money, which is 50 per cent of the amount Halton Hills paid in 1984, for regional services.

The initial payment at the end of this month will help tide the region over with its 1985 programs.

The region's collection dates of Feb. 28 and April 30 are the same dates the town is collecting taxes from its residents.

Once the regional budget is confirmed, in early April, the town will come after the rest of its tax dollars, with appropriate adjustments for overtaxing or undertaxing.



BOARD WALK

If you can't beat your opponent fairly, then why not enhance your odds by cheating a little. This girl is doing just that at the Stewarttown Senior Public School's winter carnival last week.

Her team had trouble getting started in the four-man ski race event, so she took the skis up to the finish line and put them on there.

(Herald photo)

Area schools to close

By ROBIN BAKEWELL
Herald Staff

Halton Hills trustee Betty Fisher thinks one elementary school in Georgetown and two in Esqueping will be closed as a result of a consolidation study.

Mrs. Fisher also feels there will be the twinning of schools in Acton as a result of the study and voiced her opinions at a question and answer period held at Joseph Gibbon Public School, Jan. 22.

Mrs. Fisher said her opinions are based on over a year's involvement with declining enrolment in Halton Hills during which time she said she has "gotten a feel for the situation."

Although the information session was held at Joseph Gibbon school, superintendent of schools, Ron Chatten, put concerned parents at ease.

"This school has the lowest enrolment, but will not necessarily be the one to close," he said.

That decision will be the result of findings from a consolidation committee which is reputed to be one of the largest committees ever formed by the Halton Board of Education.

Included in the committee will be two ratepayers from each school area (at least one parent) who will be supplied with what Mr. Chatten referred to as "a wealth of information."

Enrolment figures, transportation factors, growth expectations, and results from other consolidation studies along with just about everything else that would effect the engineering of the project will be on hand.

The enrolment rate at elementary schools in

Halton Hills is declining at approximately three per cent per year and is expected to continue at that rate until at least 1990.

Mrs. Fisher said no programs would be dropped with the possibility of school closures. She also said students would not be shifted repeatedly, as consolidation could be done in stages, or phased in.

Ratepayers are expected to be elected this month with the closest possible school closure date to be in September, 1986.

All but Georgetown

Oakville Trafalgar is getting one. So is Joseph Brant and Milton hospitals.

In early December provincial Health Minister Keith Norton announced the approval of 42 and 18 chronic care beds to Oakville-Trafalgar and Joseph Brant Hospitals respectively.

Also, ten chronic care beds have been approved for Milton District Hospital.

However, in Georgetown, the hospital's request won't be processed until the nursing home is open and fully operational, says a release from the Halton District Health Council.

Even with the addition of these chronic care beds Halton remains considerably below the Ministry of Health guidelines for chronic care beds, says the Health Council.

Ministry guidelines for a 65 plus population are 11.9 per 1,000; with the additional chronic care beds operational, Halton will have 7.8 per 1,000 population 65 plus.

Georgetown Kiwanis Club Snowball frolicking Feb. 23

By KELLY WILSON
Herald Special

If winter is getting you down, why not attend the first annual Kiwanis Snowball Tournament for some outdoor fun.

The tournament is Saturday, Feb. 23 at the Georgetown Fairgrounds. The money made from the day will be donated to local charities.

What is snowball you ask? It's a baseball game played in the snow with colored balls. Not only are the balls different colors, but you have to run from second to third base wearing snow shoes.

As David Ashbee, co-ordinator of the event, says, "It's going to be a

lot of fun. It's going to be just as much fun watching as playing."

"We're hoping to have ten teams," said Mr. Ashbee. Four teams have already shown interest. Each team of ten must have at least four females, but can have more, he said. We wanted to make sure women were involved, said Mr. Ashbee. The entry fee is \$50 per team. Snowshoes will be provided.

The day starts with a pancake breakfast at seven a.m. Lunch will be available later in the day, as well as refreshments throughout. The snowball games begin at nine a.m. and will continue until three or

four p.m. Skating facilities will also be available.

Each team entered is assured of playing at least two games. The winner of each game continues playing, with the winner of the tournament having played four or five games by the end of the day. The games will be one hour long with two games going on at the same time.

The winning team will receive a \$100 donation to be given to the hospital.

Anyone with a team who is interested in playing in the tournament should contact David Ashbee at 877-3206 or Phil Jones at 577-3631.

New van reduces health risks

By ANI PEDERIAN
Herald Staff

What would you do with \$400,000?

Last week, the region's finance and administration committee heard how plant operations manager Don Morrier intends to spend that amount on water and sewer programs.

With the aid of audio-visual equipment, he put on a slide show of the region's priority programs for 1985.

Most of the new programs are for the region's more populated south, but there were some expenditures for the north as well.

The Georgetown water tower on Guelph Street near Todd Road is long overdue for a paint job, and the budget includes \$50,000 towards that improvement.

As well, there is \$11,500 intended for a van to be used for both water and sewer maintenance in the north.

Currently, the region has one van which is used for both water and sewer maintenance in the north.

Mr. Morrier said a new

van was required for just water use because of the possible health problems with tools going from a sewer to a water job.

With the new vehicle, the water and sewage work is separated and contamination risks are decreased, he said.

The new vehicle will be more efficient as it will be equipped with system drawings and equipment necessary for water service calls.

To Mr. Morrier's disappointment, the hiring of a junior process engineer for repair and maintenance programs was dropped because of budget constraints.

As a result, the public works department will hire temporary contract persons to do the job.

"We've had extreme difficulty in trying to prioritize all of this," Mr. Morrier told councillors. "I can't say we had a unanimous decision, but we made the attempt."

In terms of sewage program spending, the plant operations manager said the north's pump station pumps and motors need to be replaced.

"Those pumps are leaking quite badly. They've reached the point in time where they can't be repaired anymore. They have to be replaced," Mr. Morrier said.

Also included in the \$400,000 budget was 6,000 for professional development. It will help the region's water and sewer supervisory staff keep up to date with changes in union activities, Health and Safety legislation and directions recommended in past management courses.

"There's a great change in technology. We want to be sure our foremen are up in technology," Mr. Morrier said. "We have to ensure they are trained, so they're qualified as competent under the Occupational Health and Safety Act."

The days of autocratic management are gone and have been replaced with parliamentary management, which means staff must be updated on management techniques, he said.

Tower long overdue for a splash of paint

Herald Staff

Most of the \$50,000 the region has budgetted for painting the Georgetown Water Tower is for insurance.

The tall-legged building on Todd Road is rusting and hasn't been painted since 1966.

"The reason the price is that high is because of insurance," Vince Suffoletta of plant operations said. "The painter has to protect himself from potential problems of overspraying and any suits that may be filed."

Directly below and adjacent to the tower is a car dealership.

However, Mr. Suffoletta said in the last two years new methods have been developed for painting such a structure and hopefully insurance costs will be less.

Plant operations manager Don Morrier said he's tried for the past three years to include the paint job in the budget but it never made it because of budget restraints.

However, it's made it into the 1985 budget.

"We cannot dig our heels on this. It's in fairly bad shape. If it's let go any further, we could end up with severe structural problems," Mr. Morrier warned.

The all-steel structure stores a half million gallons of water for times of high demand and emergency.

The inside was painted in 1982, but except for some touch-up painting a few years ago to cover graffiti, the tower's outside hasn't met up with a paintbrush.



THE YANKERS

These youngsters show great determination in the tug-of-war event held at the Stewarttown Senior Public School winter carnival last week. Their determination was not enough however, as they lost this time.

(Herald photo)

IN YOUR OPINION: "How do you feel about six more weeks of winter?"



GARY CUREATZ: "I enjoy the cold and the winter activities. I like everything but freezing rain, weather-wise. It's good to get out."

MRS. VALERIE CUREATZ: "Sure. Why not. I enjoy outdoor sports. You can't get sunburnt in the winter."

JESSIE MCKEE: "Yes! Because I like to ski!"

TRACEY MCKEE: "I love it. I don't know... it's just my favorite season."

BETH WOODWARD: "I don't really mind. I don't mind winter that much."