

Our 'ambassador' rides rough roads to the Klondike

By SANDY CAMPBELL
Herald Staff

On a gravel highway just inside the Yukon Territory border with British Columbia is a sign - Halton Hills, Georgetown, Ontario. The sign is one of about 3,000 nailed to posts at Watson Lake.

This latest sign was nailed on by Murray Ezeard. The 68-year-old Georgetown native drove to Alaska pulling a trailer. He, his wife Helen and two sisters-in-law left June 25 and returned Aug. 8. The trip was 9,200 miles long.

"It was the worst time I ever had in my life and, yet, the best time," Mr. Ezeard said. Many Americans he met on the way from Alaska to their homes in Texas, California, and other states said the same thing: "I'm glad I made the trip but I would never make it again."

"Why don't they (tourist departments) tell the truth about (road) conditions," Mr. Ezeard said.

The Georgetown group spent 17 hours travelling the 300 miles from Fort Nelson, B.C. to Watson Lake, Yukon. That works out to an average speed of 17.7 miles per hour.

Mr. Ezeard estimated about 1,000 miles of the journey north were filled with pot holes, dust and gravel.

The pot holes were as big as a typewriter, he said. The dust was so bad when large trucks passed Mr. Ezeard, he had to pull off the road for three minutes, keep the lights on and hope nobody would hit the van and trailer from behind.

The plans which started two years before the trip did not include flat tires, cracks in the windshield and a bumper pulled off by a trailer hitch that could not stand up to constant jerking caused by rough roads.

The roads were the only major drawback and the reason Mr. Ezeard would never return to Alaska by car. The scenery and the people on the trip were "terrific", Mr. Ezeard said.

Seeing hundreds of 30 to 40-pound king salmon swimming up stream was one of the highlights of the trip. Troublesome Creek, Alaska is where the red salmon prepared to spawn and then die.

"At that point they had come a long way already and still had a way to go," Mr. Ezeard said. The Mount McKinley, Alaska visit was another special part of the trip. Despite the beauty of Mount McKinley, Mr. Ezeard found the scenery of the Yukon more beautiful than Alaska's.



This is the vehicle Murray Ezeard drove to Alaska and back in this summer. His hat is filled with pins from all over North America. He traded Halton pins to tourists for their pins. (Herald photo)

ped off 91 copies of the March 14, 1967 Georgetown Herald at museums, mayor's offices and information booths across the country.

He also took along the deposited Georgetown Centennial coins. There are many hats and lapels in Western Canada, and probably in the United States now, that have Halton Regional pins in them.

Soon there will probably be a similar distribution of Halton Hills memorabilia in eastern Canada. The Ezeards plan to visit Newfoundland next.

Videotaping suspects more reliable: police

Even defence lawyers are satisfied with Halton's latest interrogation techniques which are leading to more confessions. Since July, 1985, Halton Regional Police in Burlington have been videotaping interviews with the accused.

A report from the Law Reform Commission of Canada states defence lawyers are in favor of videotaping because it is more accurate and more reliable than note taking. These advantages outweigh the disadvantage of a judge or jury seeing the accused as they appeared when they were filmed, which is different than they appear in court, the report states.

Results of videotaped interviews in Burlington are compared with those of Oakville where suspect's responses are written down. Burlington police get more confessions than Oakville police, a Halton Regional Police report states.

In 11 months of taping interviews in Burlington, only four per cent of suspects refused to be taped. Seventy-three per cent of suspects confessed, the report states. Both major and minor crimes are being admitted to.

On result of these confessions is a

reduction of time spent in court. The defense council more often enters a plea of guilty after seeing the confession on tape, the report states.

"Much of the early success of the project, of course, is directly attributable to the high professional standards and commitment of the Halton Regional Police Force. Our hope is that the early positive results from the Halton experiment will encourage other police forces throughout the country to establish their own videotape programs," said Stanley Cohen, the Law Reform Commission of Canada's criminal procedure coordinator.

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American twins

CNE parade between Legion friends

What Georgetown Legion members caught on a fishing trip in Massachusetts was so grand Acton Legion members had to go down for a look.

About five years ago members of Georgetown's Legion, Branch 120, were in Plymouth, Massachusetts, on a fishing trip. While there, they stopped into the local Legion, Norm Ward, past-president of Branch 120, said.

Soon after those first conversations at the Plymouth Legion more Georgetown Legion members were making the trip to Plymouth, and Plymouth members were coming to Georgetown. Finally in 1983 the Plymouth Legion, Post 40, voted to twin with Georgetown. The twinning was complete in 1984 when Georgetown voted in favor of twinning with Plymouth, Mr. Ward said.

About that time, Acton made a connection in Massachusetts. Ten to 15 miles from Plymouth is the town of Sandwich, Massachusetts. The Sandwich Legion wanted what many Legions have, someone to twin with. Mr. Ward said. Georgetown looked like a good prospect, even though it was already twinned with Plymouth, Mr. Ward said.

"I felt that (being associated with both Plymouth and Sandwich) was getting too big. I suggested they get in touch with Acton," Mr. Ward said. Acton's response was an enthusiastic one, and since then, a strong bond has developed between Sandwich and Acton.

That is the bones of the fishing story which started being told about five years ago and will continue to be told for a long time. The latest chapter in the tale involves the Warriors Day Parade at the Canadian National Exhibition Saturday.

Legion members from Plymouth and Sandwich were in Georgetown and Acton from Friday to Sunday to meet with their "twins" and be part of the parade. Color guards from Sandwich, Plymouth, Acton and Georgetown marched in the two-hour-long parade.

The greatest advantage to having a twin legion in the United States "is the expression of friendship," Mr. Ward said. Many strong friendships have developed between the Canadians and Americans.

Since being linked with Sandwich, Acton's Jim and Joan Phillip have been to Massachusetts three times.

"Their hospitality was fantastic," Joan Phillip said. So fantastic the Phillips had all 47 Sandwich Legion visitors to their home for a pool party Saturday to show their appreciation.

"They really enjoyed their visit last year. That is why so many are coming this year," Mrs. Phillip said. Last year 20 legion members came from Sandwich to Acton.

While in Halton Hills, the Massachusetts Legion was entertained Friday and Saturday nights, and attended the C.N.E. parade Saturday. The guests left after breakfast at the Georgetown and Acton Legions Sunday morning.

Memorial Day is a big day for American Legions, and, as in the past, Acton and Georgetown Legions will travel to Massachusetts to be part of the May day.

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