



A pondering pose

The cast of Stewarttown Public School's production of *Little Orphan Annie*, is certainly a peculiar looking bunch. A good example of what players have to look forward to this week at John Elliott Theatre are, from left, Amy Leask as Miss Hannigan, Chris Dale as Rooter Hannigan, and Emily Hamilton as the vivacious

Lily. The three, along with the rest of the cast, will be onstage tonight (Wednesday) and Thursday evening at the John Elliott Theatre for the final showings of *Little Orphan Annie*. The curtain goes up at 7:30 both evenings. (Herald photo)

Acton man on arctic documentary

By DONNA KELL
Herald Special

An Acton man has made it big on TV. Simon Wilson recorded his trip to the Arctic in the form of a documentary to be telecast on CBC in May.

The film is called "Spirit of the Barrens: Diary of an Arctic Journey". Its focus is on wildlife and plant life, said Simon Wilson, biologist, photographer and now Arctic traveller.

"The purpose of the journey was to document the barren land. People think the Arctic is ice and snow, but it also constitutes the barren land," said Mr. Wilson.

The 'barren land' is where the heart of the voyage took place. Simon Wilson and his crew of four walked from Yellowknife to Coppermine. "It took a total of 100 walking days, which took four months because of weather," said Mr. Wilson.

The trip from Yellowknife to Coppermine saw Mr. Wilson carrying a backpack and pulling a 200 pound sleigh over rocks and snow. He was joined to the sleigh by a rope and

was wearing snowshoes. "It was very gruelling. My knees always hurt from falling on rocks in the boulder fields," said Mr. Wilson.

The pain did bring forth some gain. Simon Wilson's lead photographer, Peter Harmathy, shot 11 hours of 16 mm film footage. It has been cut to 30 minutes for the CBC special.

The film will reveal the animal life of the Arctic above the tree line. "There wasn't a day we didn't see Caribou. We followed them up north. In many cases, we'd have to get off their trail," said Mr. Wilson.

Other animals spotted up north included 80 different types of birds, out of a possible 80 types found in the Arctic, said Mr. Wilson.

Simon Wilson remembers one particular bird, the Ptarmigan, with clarity. "Those birds are special. With all the pain you would go through you're so frustrated and depressed... the Ptarmigan's call is like a sadistic laugh. You laugh at it because you realize things are not that bad. It restores your sense of humor."

A sense of humor is desperately

needed for a group of people, including two women, who had to melt snow and ice for coffee, and consumed dehydrated food during their March to August excursion.

The excursion included hiking along the Yellowknife River. "You could hear the rapids beating against the ice underneath you. We were afraid it would break underneath us," said Mr. Wilson.

Simon Wilson did fall in the water at one point in the trip, ruining his camera equipment for the rest of the voyage. "After falling in Point Lake, I had to use Shawn (Ryan's) camera equipment. Half the trip I was without a camera," said Mr. Wilson.

The journey was given a light touch by the inclusion of a mascot. A weasel visiting the camp where the hikers had set up was soon to become their pet, feeding off various foods at the camp.

The group was visited also by a black bear, whom Simon Wilson did not seem to fear. "The only bear to fear is the Polar Bear. He's a man hunter," said Mr. Wilson. Fortunately, the Polar Bear didn't visit camp.

Temperatures in the Arctic dipped down to -30 to -40 degrees F., on the group's voyage but wildlife was still active. On Lake Takayuk, Simon Wilson climbed into the nest of a Golden Eagle. "It is very dangerous if the mother's around," said Mr. Wilson.

This type of adventure typifies the Arctic journey. At one point, the crew followed wolves for two days through some tricky rapids. "We figured if they could do it, so could we," said Mr. Wilson.

Simon Wilson and his group saw winter change to spring before their eyes.

"Spring had arrived in one night. We saw in the sky hundreds of geese flying... birds chirping frantically... ducks arriving on the lake."

"The misconceptions about the Arctic are false. We'd like to show people how much life is really there," said Mr. Wilson.

He described the plant life in the 'barrenland'.

"There were a great many plants, mostly flowers. The flowers usually form their own micro-climates. A mosquito could live inside there and pollinate the flower," Simon Wilson also noted that inside the plant the temperature was twenty or thirty degrees warmer than the outside temperature.

"Plants would grow in carpets of beautiful colors - yellow gold, purple, white. In the Tussock Bogs, you would have to step from one mound of lichen and moss to another," said Mr. Wilson.

Simon Wilson, in his search for Arctic expression, is like Samuel Hearn, the ancient explorer who walked the same route as Simon, from Yellowknife to Coppermine, 200 years earlier. "He spent his life searching for Coppermine. When he discovered that there was no copper there, he named the place Coppermine as a joke," said Mr. Wilson. It is this sense of humor that preserves one in the North.

Challenge of parenting in the 1980s

Parenting can be a challenging task at the best of times - and in the complex world of the late 1980s, the job can seem even tougher. That's why the Oakville Branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) is offering a free public lecture series, *The Family in the 80s*.

CMHA Director Pearl Wolfe says the lecture series will offer strategies for coping with the myriad of stresses which face a family today.

"Many people these days are faced with single parenting, blended families or juggling parenting with careers. A lot of demands are placed on us to do a job that we expect to do 'naturally'. Everyone needs a little extra help in learning how to cope," Ms. Wolfe said.

The lecture series will be held April 19 and 26 at 7:30 p.m. at the Oakville Public Library, 120 Navy Street.

The April 19 lecture is called "If It's not working, stop doing it - stress management in the family". The speaker is Dr. David M. Posen, an Oakville doctor who specializes in lifestyle counselling, stress management and psychotherapy.

The final lecture on April 26 will be given by Betty Jane Wylie. It's called "Successfully Single - living alone and liking it". Ms. Wylie is a well-known author and journalist who has written extensively on developing the skill of solitude. She deals with the stresses of single parenthood, widowhood and divorce.

Oakville CMHA is especially grateful for the support offered to the lecture series by two local service organizations. The Rotary Club of Oakville Trafalgar and the Maycourt Club of Oakville both have helped sponsor the series.

Oakville CMHA is a branch of a national, voluntary organization. Its aim is to provide community service, public education and social action.

The Oakville Branch has a number of resources on mental health available, including its "Coping" series and children's series of brochures.

Call 845-5044 for more information about CMHA or the lecture series.

Art auction time

The YMCA of Georgetown and district have a novel way to help you redecorate your home for spring.

Its art auction time and April 29 is the date of the annual fundraising event held at Holy Cross Church Auditorium. There will be a preview of the artwork, some by Canadian and international artists, beginning at 7 p.m. The auction begins at 8 p.m. and refreshments will be served.

Tickets cost \$6 in advance and \$7 at the door. Tickets are available at the Y offices in Georgetown and Acton. For more information call 877-8183.

Fashion showcase



Fashions for spring and summer were a hit with those who attended a show Saturday at the Georgetown Christian Reformed Church presented by R.E. McCall and

Petals Ladies Fashions. Models displayed a variety of dresses and suits for the warmer months at the well-attended event. (Herald photo)

Red Cross volunteers prepare for a crisis

Did you know that a team of volunteers is becoming more and more prepared to meet our community's needs in time of a major disaster?

The Red Cross in Georgetown is preparing volunteers to establish and coordinate services within an evacuation and/or reception centre under the direction of the Regional Municipality of Halton Emergency Evacuation and Reception Centre Plan.

The services involve the following: registration and inquiry; food; shelter management; maintenance, security and parking; transportation and notifying and coordinating other volunteer agencies.

The Halton Hills Emergency Response Team was first active in 1975. During that time, volunteers assisted with the Port Credit Refinery fire, the Mississauga "Miracle" and other minor disasters in our area. We were also on stand-by for the forest fires in Kenora. In 1985 we were involved in assisting Grand Valley residents after a tornado struck on May 31. Twenty-seven Acton and 37

Georgetown residents were organized in providing over 280 hours of volunteer assistance. Our radio communications coordinator played an important role in setting up and maintaining communication at the disaster site.

In order to be prepared, the Red Cross provides ongoing training in the form of speakers, films, workshops and mock disaster exercises and various levels of training sessions.

If you are not an active member in the Georgetown and District Red Cross, but would like to receive training and join our Emergency Response Team, just give Bernice, our Branch Secretary, a call: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 877-5233. Experience is not necessary - just a desire to help!

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AT THE MOVIES

By DIAHANN NADEAU
Herald Special

Neil Simon is a playwright for the masses. He doesn't challenge his audiences, he doesn't make them work, he doesn't make them think terribly hard. A Neil Simon play or movie is a wholly pleasant experience; no thrills, no horrors, just a nice laugh. *Biloxi Blues* is a superb example of Simon in action. This is a nice, amusing, and entertaining bit of film. You won't remember much of it in a week, but you'll feel that you received your money's worth at the theatre.

The wholly engaging Matthew Broderick plays Eugene Morris Jerome, a kid out of high school who is inducted into the army in 1945. He has left Brooklyn for Biloxi, Mississippi, where his first experience of 'war is hell' is in the ten weeks of boot-camp. Jerome is Jewish, and a would-be-intellectual, constantly writing down his thoughts in a notebook. He survives the dreaded training by noting everything and having a very good sense of humor.

The drill sergeant is Merwyn Toomey, played by Christopher Walken, and Toomey is weird. He makes the rest of the platoon do push-ups every time Jerome makes a wrong move or says the wrong thing. They do a lot of push-ups in Jerome's unit. The unit is further troubled by Arnold Epstein, another misfit, also from New York and also Jewish. Eugene and Arnold are natural colleagues, but Arnold is far more stubborn and more recalcitrant. Toomey hates them both.

Eugene is determined to lose his virginity on his first 48 hour pass. He visits Rowena, a southern hooker, who is compassionate and comical, and Eugene is so unknowing that this is one of the most amusing yet embarrassing sex scenes I have

ever seen. Surely no near-adult male was ever so naive. (At least, not since John Ruskin a century ago). Anyway, Broderick carries it off beautifully.

The movie is very anecdotal. The plot is virtually non-existent; it is just a series of vignettes, dealing with hardships, friendships, anti-semitism, racism, homophobia, and sex. The unpleasant issues are passed over lightly; no one is being asked to be outraged by intolerance - we are simply made aware that it exists.

Broderick is absolutely delightful as Jerome. He has a persuasive sweetness that is very endearing. Jerome is a wholly likeable character anyway, and Broderick is perfect in the part. (Broderick played the role on Broadway). Christopher Walken is somewhat unconvincing as the nasty sergeant. The performance is perhaps a little too low-key.

When Toomey finally snaps he doesn't really convince us that he is dangerous, no matter how scared Jerome appears to be. Corey Parker is Arnold Epstein, the philosophical misfit who won't let Toomey win. Park Overall (do you elvise this name?) is the charming Rowena.

The movie is directed by Mike Nichols, and he does a good job. The combination of Nichols, Broderick, and Simon insures a pretty good film; mainstream stuff and pure Hollywood; but it is well done. *Biloxi Blues* doesn't leave you blue. It leaves you laughing.

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