



This lucky bird escaped with his life after being struck by a car in Ballinafad last month. The ring-necked pheasant is residing safely in a chicken coop until he regains his strength in the spring. (Herald photo)

Pheasant falls in with fowl friends

By DONNA KELL
Herald Staff

There's something strange about Dick Burke's chicken coop in Ballinafad.

Sure, the eggs are coming out as they always did, but there's a visitor living in the coop who looks a little different from the other birds.

Dick Burke owns a home on 10th Line and has a hobby farm including 10 to 12 chickens. Less than a month ago, Mr. Burke saved the life of a feathered friend who was struck by a car.

The ring-necked pheasant will be eternally grateful. The discovery came one day as Mr. Burke was driving along in his pick-up truck and noticed a colorful bird firmly planted in the centre of the road. Going out to help the bird off the road, Mr. Burke witnessed the little creature being struck by a passing vehicle.

"There was an icy storm the day he was hit," said Mr. Burke. "I didn't know what was wrong with him, why he didn't move."

Mr. Burke took the pheasant home to mend with the chickens. The bird was limping and seemed "all bruised up," when he first arrived. But now "he's almost twice as big as he was, eating the chicken feed."

Mr. Burke took his interest in the unnamed bird a step further. He purchased a book to give him all the information he needs to know about the pheasant, who looks remarkably like a peacock.

Although the pheasant has depleted in numbers in Canada, it cannot be classified as an endangered species because it is a native of China and not Canada, says the local Ministry of the Environment.

"We've been trying to increase their range, but the weather and predators wouldn't allow us to do it," said wildlife management officer, Bruce Buckland. Mr. Buckland agreed that the best thing for pheasants kept temporarily in captivity is to release

them as soon as possible in the spring.

Mr. Burke plans to release his pheasant as soon as the spring thaw comes, to allow the bird to prepare for its summer mating season.

Mr. Burke has tossed around the idea of breeding pheasants, but the Ministry suggests that any breeding of the birds be done with the pheasants in total isolation from other animals.

The pheasant should be raised and released, said Mr. Buckland. "He shouldn't associate with people. He should be fed in isolation."

Feeding wild birds domesticates them and causes them to trust human beings. Not such a bad thing, if humans didn't find the taste of pheasant so inviting.

"It's delicious," said Mr. Buckland. To protect the bird's vulnerability to hunters, Mr. Buckland suggests the pheasant in captivity be released by August to allow the bird to regain some of the wild instincts lost while in human company. The bird would then have several months to recuperate before pheasant hunting season hits for three weeks in the fall.

Pheasant season is short "because the population is so small," said Mr. Buckland.

The Ministry has six or eight people presently raising the birds to propagate the species, but they are careful not to let the birds lose their instincts. The birds adapt very well to people.

But that friendliness could be their undoing, said Mr. Buckland, leaving them open to predators.

Artisans back on track

Herald Special

from the Credit Valley Artisans
Before a new dawn can rise, the Night Must Fall.

This is true with the Credit Valley Artisans. It was in the midst of the Christmas celebrations of 1986 that the Credit Valley Artisans were advised that we could no longer use the Cedarvale Cottage. We were shocked by this news. How could we promote the visual arts in Halton Hills, if we did not have a home to work from? Surely, this was our darkest hour of the night.

We were quite lucky to have been allowed the use of two classrooms at Park School for 1987 and the first six months of 1988. We were able to

Lifestyles

keep promoting art by offering a host of interesting Artisan courses such as weaving, dry flower arranging and stained glass. We could not offer pottery courses as the schedule of the school did not allow enough time.

The Credit Valley Artisans kept going but we always nagged about doubts of the future. How long could we stay at Park School? Would we be allowed back at

Cedarvale Cottage and if so, how would we raise our share of the renovation costs? The annual Credit Valley Artisans membership have always been low cost to remain affordable to any member of the community who wishes to join. We have never before had to raise funds. June, 1988 was our last month at Park School as the classrooms were needed by the school. So we bid goodbye to our young cohabitants. Since then we operated from our homes, still managing to participate at the Georgetown Fall Fair and Halton Hills Open House and we managed to have two Art and Craft shows in the fall.

Public board waits on Jr. K'garten plan

By DONNA KELL
Herald Staff

The Halton Board of Education could be under "political pressure" to launch a junior kindergarten program following the recently-approved Catholic program scheduled to begin in September, according to the public board director.

Director Bob Williams said last week that although a junior kindergarten (JK) program could take "at least a year" to plan, supporters of the public board might demand a program like the JK program offered to Halton Roman Catholic School Board supporters.

"It's just human nature," said Mr. Williams, "what one has, the other one will want."

But the Catholic board denies that political pressure forced their hand in approving a motion to begin a JK program.

"Dufferin-Peel (Roman Catholic Separate School Board) has junior kindergarten, the Hamilton board has junior kindergarten. We're surrounded by boards with junior kindergarten. But that was not our criteria for voting (the motion) in," said Halton Catholic board Superintendent of Curriculum Services, Lou Piovesan.

Mr. Piovesan said the Catholic board approved junior kindergarten in December because "we felt that the program was an excellent program and that it was good to start it at this point."

The Catholic board is now in the process of hiring 20 to 25 teachers needed to staff the new program.

The junior kindergarten issue caused "much debate" and sparked "much discussion," said Mr. Piovesan.

North Halton Catholic trustee

Irene McCauley agreed.

"This has come up regularly at the board for the last six years. The board really felt it was time to initiate the program," she said.

The Separate board had several delegations speaking to the junior kindergarten issue and has had "numerous inquiries" from the public.

But in the public board "there's been little expressed demand for junior kindergarten," said Mr. Williams.

Public interest was stirred during the fall municipal elections when trustees were elected, and several letters requesting junior kindergarten were sent to the public board. But the issue has not come up nor been discussed recently at public board meetings, said Mr. Williams.

If public demand for junior kindergarten increases in the public board, Mr. Williams said he would need more than nine months to plan a junior kindergarten program.

"I don't want to be like my Roman Catholic counterpart, who found out in December about the September junior kindergarten program," he said. "The public school board will need at least a year."

Essentially, this means there is no immediate possibility of junior kindergarten in Halton's public school board.

Finally, the news came that we could move back to the cottage. Cleaning and painting teams were quickly organized by the CVA membership to get the cottage into tip-top condition so that we could start back at the cottage as soon as possible. We have also kept busy getting ready for the benefit performance that Georgetown Little Theatre is performing on our behalf.

The benefit performance will be held on Thursday, Feb. 16, at John Elliott Theatre, 9 Church Street, Georgetown. The tickets are \$10 and curtain time is 8 p.m. Coffee and refreshments will be served after the play.

For further ticket information, contact Linda Parker at 853-0361. The play is a murder mystery by Emyln Williams appropriately called "Night Must Fall." I am sure once this night has fallen, the Credit Valley Artisans will enjoy a glorious dawn.

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