

Niagara Escarpment recognized by UN

The Niagara Escarpment has more in common with such exotic locales as the Galapagos Islands in Ecuador and the Sergenti National Park in Tanzania than it might appear.

The escarpment like these two areas before it, has been recognized by the United Nations as having unique natural features and ecological importance.

It joins 276 areas world-wide that have been designated as biosphere reserves by UNESCO - the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

A biosphere reserve has a core of relatively undisturbed land together with nearby zones of cooperation where the land is being used to meet human needs.

The designation recognizes the escarpment as a "working model for sustainable developments," says the information officer for the Niagara Escarpment Commission, Sue Powell. Sustainable development means development that "meets the needs of present day society without compromising the needs of future generations," she said.

The NEC made an application for the designation early last June.

The Niagara Escarpment Plan which regulates the use of the area land is Canada's first large-scale environmental land-use plan.

The designation reaffirms the Niagara Escarpment's "special quality," said Niagara Escarpment Commissioner for Halton, Joe Hewitt.

The escarpment extends 725 kilometres from Queenston near Niagara Falls to Tobermory at the tip of the Bruce Peninsula covering 183,000 hectares, eight counties and regions and 37 municipalities.

The escarpment is Canada's sixth biosphere reserve. The others are Waterton Lakes in Alberta, Riding Mountain in Manitoba, Long Point in Ontario and Charlevoix and Mont St-Hilaire in Quebec.

Jessie Hayes is Georgetown's 1990 citizen of the year

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children when her family lived in a large house on Mary Street. After the house was sold the family moved to the McGibbon Hotel where she lived and worked for 25 years.

She retired last December and now lives on Sargent Road.

During her time at the McGibbon, she came into contact with the elderly and destitute. Taking them into her fold she cooked Christmas dinner for them every year for 15 years with the aid of the town. Town staff gave her baskets of ham and other goodies to cook for the people she cared for. She also started cooking for the annual bantam hockey tournament around

the same time.

Besides all this work, she found the time to donate her catering skills to the Royal Canadian Legion between the late '60s and early '80s.

Her personal life has thrown her a few set-backs. The most substantial being the loss of a kidney seven years ago.

The loss of the kidney aggravated her. "I couldn't do the things I used to do," she said. She kept working to the surprise of her family doctor. He told her not to lift anything heavy, so she kept busy by doing other house-keeping tasks.

Town won't enter debate

Continued from Page 1

pond to any request by the community such as helping them acquire Sacre Coeur School, said Mr. Blais.

"I have never met a feeling of intolerance from anyone in Georgetown," he added.

Mr. Blais says there are about 150 families in Halton Hills whose first language is French. This number translates into about 600 people. But Mr. Blais speculates the number is larger.

He is primarily aware of only the French families connected with Georgetown's French school and the Sacre Coeur Church.

These two institutions act as a focal point for the community, said Mr. Blais. Here people meet to participate in religious and social functions and sports, he explained.

But he thinks the Georgetown French community is worried that numerous Ontario communities have declared themselves English only.

"There is a lot of talk.

"The concerns are more personally felt than collectively," he said.

The principal at Sacre Coeur School, Clarice Steers, and the Halton Roman Catholic School French School Board trustee for Halton Hills, Ken Norman, both agree with Mr. Blais' comments.

"We are saddened and the children are saddened at what is happening to some French-Ontarians," said Ms. Steers.

Mr. Norman said the board is "concerned about the backlash implications."

Communities declaring themselves as English only are sending a message of intolerance to French-speaking people and other minority groups in Ontario, said Mr. Blais.

He suggests Halton Hills politicians declare the town a bilingual community in spirit as an example of co-operation that could be followed by other municipalities.

But Halton Hills councillors give various reasons why the town should stay out of the language debate. Councillor Pam Johnston said the fact she has received no calls from her constituents on the matter means that "they must have more pressing concerns."

"Both sides are adequately dealt with and are happy with the cur-

rent situation," said Coun. Pat McCarthy.

This sentiment was echoed by Coun. Anne Currie. "It's not really an issue. They (the French community) have their school and church; everybody is living in harmony," she said.

Coun. Norm Elliott said although he didn't know the number of French people in Halton Hills, "the town has had no problem with the demand for French service."

The town is involved in more relevant issues such as the 1990 budget and fighting a proposed dump site, said Coun. Marilyn Serjeantson.

Coun. Robert Heaton agreed saying, "councillors have enough on their plate."

Coun. Alf Spence said council should only deal with the issues brought forth by the public. And since none of his constituents have called him on the subject, it's one that should be ignored, he said.

Councillors agree actions taken by the 43 municipalities were not motivated by prejudice. Instead they blamed the province.

It's only a matter of time before the province offloads the cost for its bilingual services in designated areas to the municipalities, said Coun. Rick Bonnette. They have cut unconditional grants to the municipalities for the last three years, he added.

Coun. Bonnette said the province has its priorities in the wrong place. It should concentrate its funding on health care and other financially strapped programs, he said.

Coun. Joe Hewitt said the municipalities "are just trying to send a message to the province that taxpayers can't afford (services in both languages)."

But David Blaney, the executive assistant to North Halton MPP Walt Elliot, says the province has no intention of offloading the cost for provincial bilingual services onto the municipalities. And he said the cost of providing the service in the designated area is \$27.7

million which represents a minute fraction of the province's \$41 billion overall budget.

Just as councillors say the French-language debate is currently a "non-issue" in town they also agree it won't be an issue in the future. And Coun. Elliott seemed to echo the feelings of councillors when he said: "I certainly hope it doesn't ever become an issue."

Councillors differed on where they would stand if the town ever voted on the issue.

Coun. Johnston said although she is a firm believer in bilingualism she would vote in favor of Halton Hills being an English only community. But at the same time if a French-speaking person needed an essential service in French, the town would have to oblige that person, she said.

Coun. Gerald Rennie said he would oppose Halton Hills becoming an English-only community.

Other councillors wouldn't take a position before hearing both sides of the argument.

Man is seriously injured

A 24-year-old Burlington man is in satisfactory condition after being taken to Sunnybrook Hospital by air ambulance following a two-vehicle collision at approximately 3 p.m. Feb. 12.

Scott Jevons was flown to the hospital when he sustained serious injuries to his legs, Halton Regional Police say.

He was driving a Honda southbound on the Fifth Line, while a 36-year-old Rockwood woman was driving her Dodge pick-up truck westbound on Sideroad 25.

The two vehicles collided at the intersection of the two roads. After the Honda collided with the pick-up truck it then crashed into a telephone pole.

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