

WEEKEND

KEN NUGENT
Publisher

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Lust for money sacrifices trees

Dear Editor,

Two years ago I telephoned the Georgetown Town Planner expressing concern for a small wood lot on Highway 7 sitting on land that was proposed for a development (Trafalgar Country).

The Town Planner assured me that though the trees had not been protected as 'greenspace' or 'parkland' very few trees would be cut down but rather the homes would be built amongst them.

How naive of me to buy this party line bunk! That delightful woodlot has been razed to the ground to make way for the developer's bulldozers.

Apparently our concern for the environment, and in this case trees, the "lungs of the earth," is mere lip service when the lust for money comes into play.

May I suggest that Halton Hills councillors take a serious look at

LETTERS

to the Editor

the issue of destruction of our natural habitat by developers. The passing of a plan for the protection of such habitat must be included in the Town's official plan.

Sincerely,
Lesley Rowe

Farewell, Herald

Dear Editor:

On behalf of the Georgetown and District Seniors' Association may I use your column to express our heartfelt regret at the sudden closure of the Herald after so many years of public service to Georgetown, and latterly, Halton Hills. It is a loss to the whole community: businesses, service clubs, churches, local government, numerous societies and associations,

youth, sports, educational authorities and just ordinary folks who have grown accustomed to it over a lifetime or just the last few years.

We loved the familiar faces and names we saw in it. Bob Malcolmson, Colin Gibson, Ben Dummett, Lisa Boonstoppel-Pot, Steamer, Carlo Testa, Barbara Halsall and so on, and so on.

Friends and neighbors who'll be missed on Wednesdays. What a service they all did for us.

We in the Georgetown and District Seniors' Association wish to say a special thanks to the Herald staff for helping over the last three years to draw the attention of the community to the need for a seniors recreation centre in Georgetown. We believe we are within sight of success and a large share of the credit goes to the Herald and its people.

Our public relations committee, our writers, our board of directors and our members and supporters thank you and wish you all good luck and God bless you.

W.L. Mellish
President

A special lady

We'd like to add our congratulations to Mrs. Lena Johnston on her selection as Georgetown Lions' 1991 Citizen of the Year.

Lena is one of our many "quiet" residents who make such a tremendous difference to our community. Yet few know of her efforts — volunteering for the Red Cross and her church, driving patients to doctors' appointments, checking up on seniors, working diligently for the Rebekah Lodge and Hospital Auxiliary, just to name a few. Although this award is for 1991, Lena has been doing her good deeds ever since she came to town almost 50 years ago.

"I doubt there is any family in Georgetown who hasn't been affected either directly or indirectly by Lena Johnston's service. She is truly a remarkable woman," says Carl Hansen, chairman of the Lions selection committee.

Lena says she doesn't expect thanks for what she does; she just does it. And we think this makes her a very special person.

So to this very special lady, we salute you.

Paying for protection

Okay, the Region budget figures are in. You're going to paying at least \$313.92 (based on property assessed at \$6,850) in taxes — a \$22.32 or 7.65 per cent increase over '91.

Now before you start burning the telephone lines to your regional councillor, you have to understand what caused the hike. More than half of the budget is a result of a 9.3 per cent increase in the police services budget — a move regional chairman Pete Pomeroy calls "fiscally irresponsible." The police services board decided they needed 12 new police constables and a civilian worker in 1992.

Taxpayers must decide their priorities. If they want more police protection, obviously they will have to swallow the \$23 increase (\$12.81 of it will go to the police). The rest of the increase, just over \$8 goes to recession related impacts — welfare and Children's Aid Society, \$2.50 to the Home for the Aged, nine cents to agencies' grants. The region cut \$2.03 per household out of their own programs like roads, planning and development, administration etc.

If taxpayers don't believe they need more protection then they should be burning the lines to the police services board and telling them like Pomeroy "they should be getting in line with the '90s."

DE LIBERAL PARTY IS UNITED LIKE NEVER BEFORE!



WE'RE READY TO LEAD DE CANADIAN PEOPLE OUT OF 'DIS RECESSION!



IN FACT, I'M GONNA CALL BRIAN MULRONEY RIGHT NOW AND DEMAND AN ELECTION!



ANYBODY GOT A QUARTER?



The secrets of writing fiction -- or facts

I went back to school last week. It wasn't intentional, but I admit I learned a few things.

Last week, Acton High School English teacher Dave McConnell invited me to sit in on a presentation by local writer, Leon Rooke, of Eden Mills.

Leon spoke to the kids about the secrets behind writing creative fiction. He was preparing them to take part in a new pilot project with Simon Fraser University called "Writers in Electronic Residence," better known as WIER.

His presentation was as unique as Leon is himself. From his opening "How are ya?" to laying on the floor "so knocked out I can't get up to greet ya!" he had the students and myself, mesmerized. Almost eating out of the palm of his hand.

"You have to write a story in a man's head," he preached, "Put characters on the pages so your readers can see them — make them want to read — tell them a few terrible secrets. That'll keep 'em reading."

The students were captivated by

his rapid-fire style of lecturing. Not one set of eyes were wandering about the room. Rather they were glued to this author who never stood in one place at the front of the room for more than a few seconds.

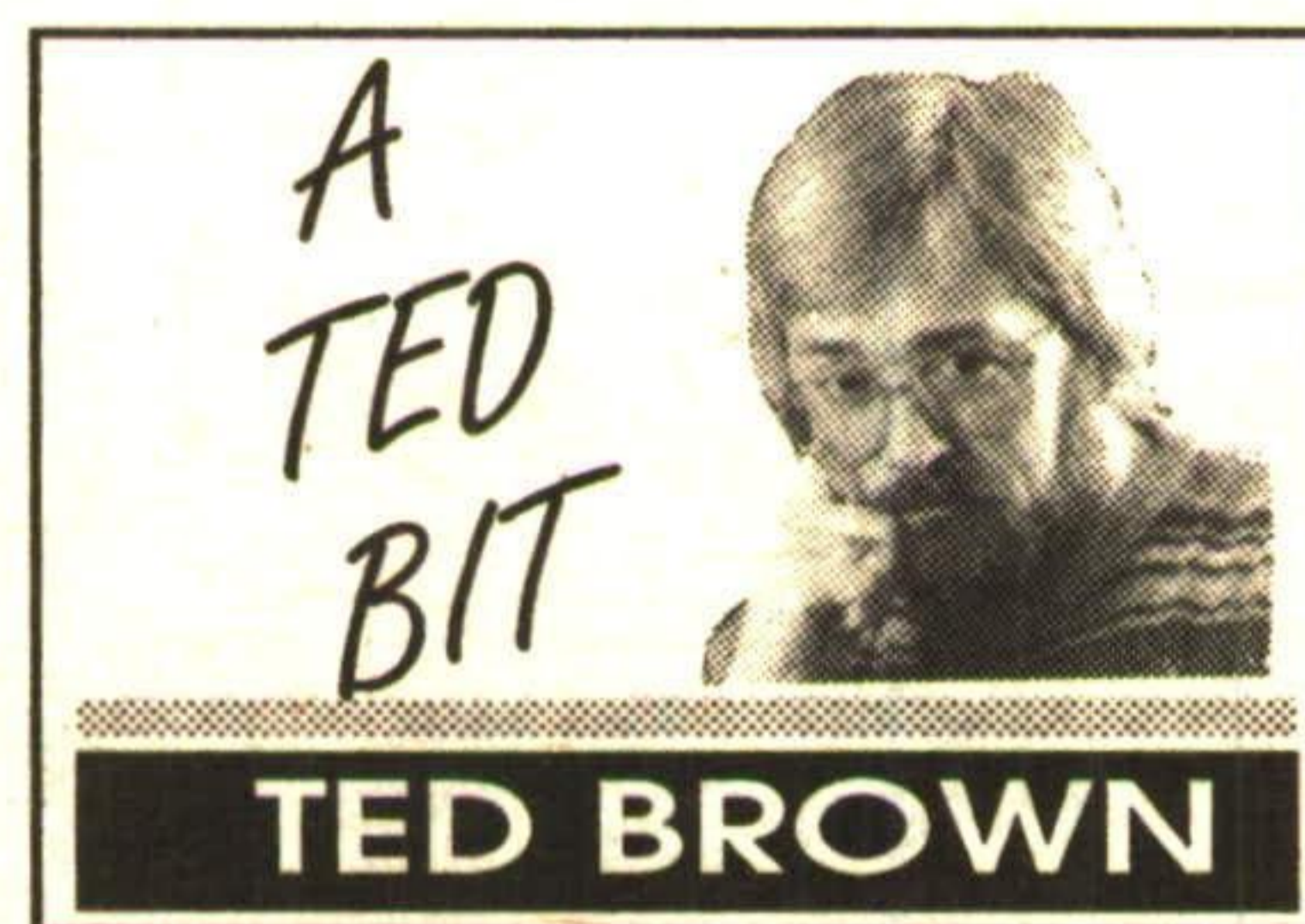
Reading a number of dramatic passages from his own and others' work, Leon illustrated the fine art of forcing readers to remain hooked to his stories.

"People tell stories all the time," he smiles, "The guy in the bar, the person at the donut shop they all share the same quality — 'My life matters, and if you have the patience, I will tell you why.'"

"They (the stories) must summon you to the page, and you know you will leave a changed person."

I listened intently to this man of words. Of course, he talked of writing fiction, and I write for a newspaper (although some have inferred they're closely related.) But I was able to relate to what he said.

I've known that sinking feeling of sitting, staring at that blank computer screen with its irritating blinking cursor, or that blank page



in a typewriter, waiting for some inspiration, in the form of words, to come to me.

But Leon attacks that situation with a fresh approach as well. "I look at it this way; I've made no mistakes yet!"

"We come into this life full of stories," says Leon, "And we learn the oral way to tell stories, how to build tension, how to form that conflict, how to release the right bits of information at precisely the right time."

"And writing a story takes the same talent — make the reader ask 'what happens next?' Harken your reader to the story with authority. It

doesn't have to be true, only believable."

He stressed how writers should attempt to speak as different persons, of different gender, or age.

"Let yourself speak in other voices," he said, "You may be surprised how many different skins can inhabit your flesh."

During his sometimes very colorful presentation, he read from his own book, "Shakespeare's Dog," where he assumed the role of Shakespeare's wife berating him for his irresponsible ways. The class and teachers alike were captivated by his performance.

During a question period at the end of his talk students and teachers asked him of his work. How did he start? Did he write from a plot or just go with the flow? Where did he get his story ideas?

"Some writers work out a plot," he replied, "But many don't. I like to start with a character and let the plot go. The story knows far better what you are doing than you, the writer, does. Let it flow. If you paint yourself into a corner (with the

plot) you can always wait 'til it dries and walk out of it. One can always return to a story later and make changes."

He cited Dylan Thomas' style of writing, that is "throwing a character on the page and letting it run. There is now something there where there once was nothing."

As far as his start in writing, Leon told of observing people while they communicated with each other, and after picking up on the dialogue, he started to recreate the scenarios in his stories. It just grew from there.

"Good fiction requires a few special qualities," he concluded. "It needs conflict, either inner or physical, to move the story; it needs tension to keep it interesting, and language to keep it alive."

"And of course, it requires some color to make it attractive."

So, during an hour and 10 minutes I heard of this author's views on writing.

Conflict, tension, language and color. That's what it's made of.

Just like life, isn't it?