

Acton Citizens' Band marches, plays for Fitweek

BY DOUG HARRISON
The Acton Tanner

Some people scurried to their doors, windows and the bottom of their driveways to do their bit of exercise for Canada's Fitweek last Wednesday.

Credit 24 fit members of the Acton Citizens' Band for getting them off their feet as they delighted onlookers with seven marches along six streets on a sunny evening.

"We always have a marching

practice in the spring and Wednesday is our regular practice night, so we continued it all and joined the participation business. We haven't done any parading since Christmas, so it was good to get the members out and used to it again," says George Elliott, bandmaster since 1966.

The Citizens' Band has been busy lately, performing for the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce, joining the 40th anniversary celebration of Decoration Day at the Glen Williams Cemetery, and this weekend they will again perform at Rockwood's Pioneer Day festivities.

While the Citizens' Band, which is in its 122nd year, stops playing for the months of January, February and March, Elliott figures a busy spring and summer schedule has the band playing every two weeks — on average — through the year.

And the band has a new look for their 1994 shows — spanking new uniforms to replace most of the 40-year tattered jackets.

Fluctuating numbers continues

to be the biggest problem with the band.

"We still have the problem of getting people to fill open slots. It's a never-ending job," remarks Elliott, who currently directs 40 members, a far cry from when 20-25 players was considered a big band when Elliott joined the band as a cornet player at 14. "You get people to their capabilities and then they leave.

"It (the up-and-down numbers) will continue until the community gets bigger. When it does grow it will re-introduce new problems, but keeping a continual supply of members won't be as difficult. You're always looking ahead to find reserves."

Of the 40 members who range in age from 12 to 75, many are teenagers who work on Saturday and are therefore unable to accompany the band to certain performances.

Elliott realizes that the band is no longer people's top priority — the result of today's society with so many things (jobs, sports, television) demanding people's time.



SWEET SOUNDS! Acton Citizens' Band member Vi Ascroft marched along six streets with 23 others to celebrate Canada's Fitweek last Wednesday. (Doug Harrison photo)

However, Elliott is fortunate that most of the musicians can play more than one instrument.

"With wind instruments," says Elliott, "the first one is the toughest. After that, I can switch the students to another one in three months."

Not only does playing in a band provide the opportunity to make new friends while improving your musical talent, Elliott says it's great for your mental discipline.

"It takes so much mental ability to read music, march and blow the instrument, that kids' grades will improve," he insists. "That's why schools are maintaining their music programs.

"Plus, we're one of the happier bands around."

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A recent incident brought a request to advise the community about actions they can take when confronted by noisy or unruly parties in their neighbourhood.

Halton Hills By-law #74-137 sub-section 1, provides protection for the inhabitants of a residence against unusual noises likely to disturb them.

This by-law states that the noise must disturb the inhabitants. The police will prepare the charge, but do require the citizen who was disturbed to give evidence in court.

The Trespass to Property Act also provides protection for property owners or tenants when persons, who may be leaving a noisy party, trespass on private property. Under Section 2(1)(b) of this Act, any person must leave property when told by the owner or occupant or authorized agent of either, to leave. Such leaving must be done directly — if they refuse to leave they may be arrested and held for police.

The Criminal Code of Canada states that a person causing a disturbance in a public place by disorderly conduct may be brought before the court. The Criminal Code also states that a person on property belonging to someone else and near a dwellinghouse on that property may be charged with Trespass at Night.

These laws are designed for the protection of the citizens of the community and, in most cases where a citizen complains of a problem, they must be prepared to provide the evidence needed for conviction.

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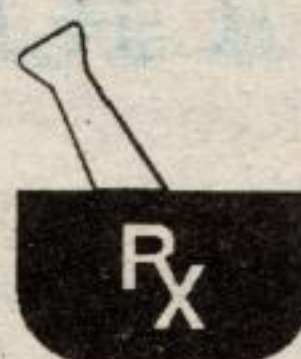
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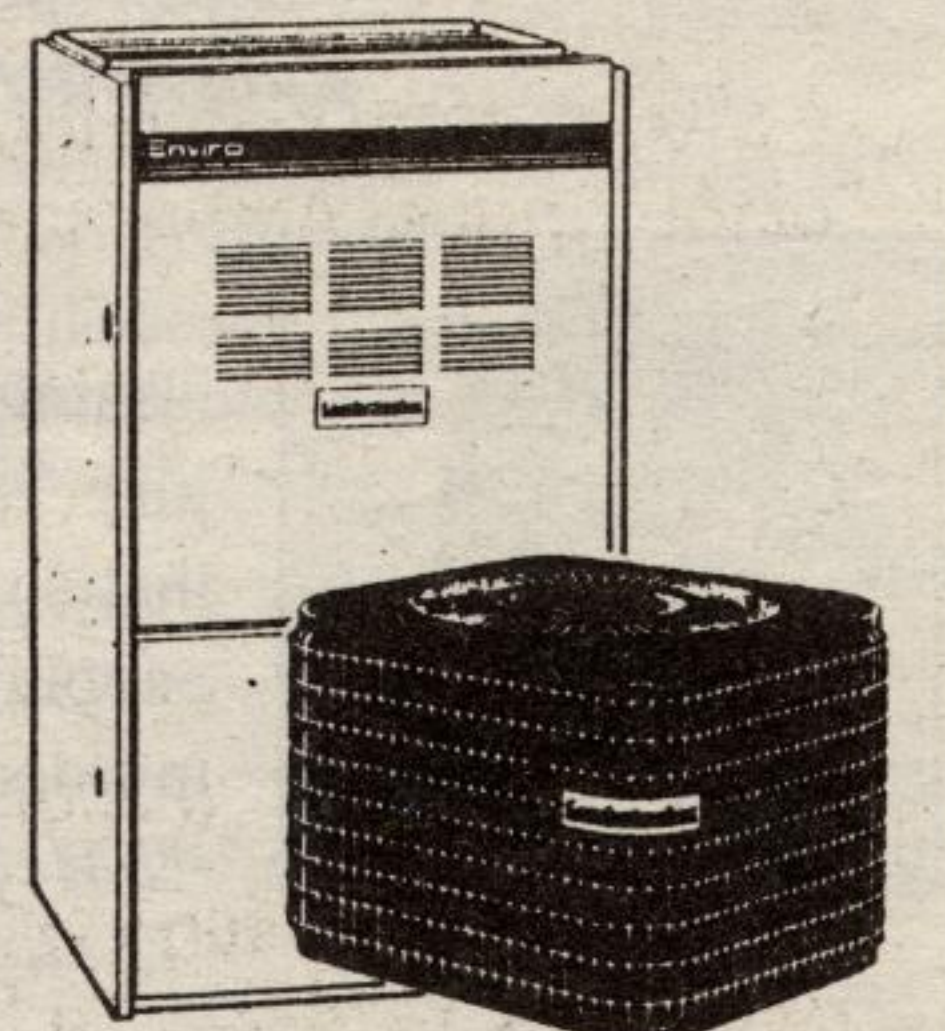
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