

# Historical holiday at Rockwood's Strange House

**Special to the Rockwood Miller**  
Squire Henry Strange was home for three weekends before Christmas, after an absence of nearly 100 years.

It was 1863 all over again at the Colonel Strange House in Rockwood, and Squire Henry did his best to curb his eccentric habits in deference to his guests and to his wife's insistence that he behave like a gentleman.

Lt. Col. Henry Strange was the

founder of the village of Rockwood. He harnessed the river to provide power to mills, carding machines and looms. His limestone quarries furnished stone for railway bridges being built at the time. By 1860 his wealth justified the handsome cut stone addition, which is now the front of the house.

The house that Henry Strange built for his new bride was humming with activity a few weeks ago, as numerous guests accepted

an invitation to visit the newly renovated historic house.

Village merchants contributed money, talent and/or merchandise to help decorate the house. The list includes: Doodles, Full Circle Gallery, Hog Hill, Knechtel's, Marshal's General Store, Lori-Ann McDermid, McPheds', Pamper Me, Pine and Oak, Ray's Variety, Rockwood Pharmacy, Rumours, and Times and Seasons.

Guests were invited to take tea

and taste the delicious goodies from the kitchens of D.J.'s, Jewels, Out to Lunch, Saunders, and Southern Belles.

The pre-Christmas open house was an apparent success, as the following visitors won door prizes: Hi Fountain of Guelph, Lynn Badger of Rockwood, Steve Roth of Kitchener, Mary Black of Oakville, and Barbara Kerfoot of Oakville.

Owners Inge and Marilyn

Bustard thank the merchants and the many other villagers who contributed their time and energy to the event: the lovely ladies who poured tea in true Victorian style, Squire Strange, the Bartlett Duo, Jack Jackson the piper, and Yvonne's marvellous performance of the Nativity.

The historic house is available for meetings, seminars, weddings and bed and breakfast. For details call 856-2138.

# The Rockwood MILLER

## Bridge safety is partly due to luck: engineer

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK  
The Rockwood Miller

Eramosa Council has been "lucky" that a truck has not fallen through one of the Township's aging and deteriorating bridges.

"There have been municipalities where vehicles have gone through structures," warned the Township consulting engineer at a recent Council meeting as Council debated approval of a long-delayed bridge appraisal report.

Engineer Gary Ezard strongly recommended Council reduce its liability in the event of an accident on a sub-standard bridge by posting load restrictions on 14 of the Township's 29 bridges.

The 10-year bridge rehabilitation-replacement program has a \$5.2 million price tag and addresses long-standing bridge condition problems.

"Basically, nothing has been done since 1978," Ezard said, as he explained that the Province wants bridge assessments done every five years. Eramosa's last appraisal report was done in the late 1970s.

Council's approval of the report begins a process of determining which bridges can be repaired, which must be replaced and where the money to do the work will come from.

Of the 29 bridges in the Township, 83% need immediate structural repairs, only 7% have an adequate travel width and 14 have substandard load capacity.

The report indicates that the bridges are rapidly approaching the end of their useful life and immediate action is needed to make the structures safe.

To further reduce liability in the event of an accident involving a

bridge, the report recommends installing 'narrow bridge' signs and 'one-lane only' signs.

The newly posted five-tonne bridges, like the Bowstring bridge in Eden Mills, can safely carry pick-up trucks, passenger cars and some farm tractors, but it can not handle Township maintenance vehicles, emergency vehicles and school buses.

Repairs have been approved so the tonnage can be increased to handle school buses on all bridges now posted at five tonnes so no school bus routes will have to be changed.

Reeve Rick Hughes said he is not concerned with the majority of bridges that are deficient because of width because most of them are "off the beaten track" and carry only light traffic volumes.

"With the bridges on the major routes, the price tag for replacing five or six of them is enormous," Hughes said in a recent interview.

"The engineer said we should be replacing a bridge every 21 months but to do that will mean a major shift in where tax dollars are going."



**CHURCH CHOIR!** These choir members from the Eden Mills Presbyterian Church entertained a large gathering at the annual year-end resident-family party at the Eden House Care Facility recently. From left: Maisie Lasby, Ev Barden, Beryl Lockett, Sue Blacklock, Dorothy Blacklock and Marg Blacklock on the piano. (Doug Harrison photo)

## Hold-up at Rockwood variety store

An armed robbery at the R&M Shopette on Rockwood's Main Street Thursday night may be connected to a recent string of convenience store hold-ups in Acton.

"We think that there may be a tie-in between the Rockwood and Acton incidents," reported OPP Sgt. Steve Koster on Monday.

According to police, a lone male suspect produced a knife inside

the R&M store on Thursday night at 8:40 and demanded money from the cash drawer. The female clerk complied and the man escaped with an undetermined amount of cash.

The bandit was last seen running south on Main Street.

Police say that a maroon or dark red-coloured compact car may have been involved in the robbery,

as it was seen speeding away from the scene soon after the man ran off.

An OPP canine unit was called in but the search proved unsuccessful.

Police are looking for a male in his 20s, who is approximately 5'6" tall. He wore a grey ski mask and blue jeans during the Rockwood hold-up.

## Losers are winners

The Lucky Losers gave from the heart during Christmas. The group put together two Christmas hampers for two area families.

Contained in the hampers were full Christmas dinners, complete with all the trimmings. There were also Christmas gifts for each family member.

"All our members joined in making this a special Christmas for these families," said Dot Polo, long-time member of the group.

Meanwhile, the Lucky Losers are urging area residents to come out to their next orientation meeting at the Eramosa Community Library, this Thursday at 5:30 pm. It's a great way to shed those unwanted pounds gained over the holidays.

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