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VOLUME 5, NO. 41 • 75 CENTS (.70 + .05 GST)

'ACTON'S OWN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER'

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1996

BETWEEN THE COVERS...



Town staff want comments from Actonites before reconstructing part of Fairy Lake

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Apple-pickers heading to Chudleigh's were directed by OPP officers last weekend

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Nov. 16 is the date for this year's Santa Claus Parade, so start working on your float

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No activity bus budget means that many rural Acton students are missing out on sports and cultural events

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Ramosa Council plans to ask for public input on the maintenance of Rockmosa

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Recently the Acton Bowling Lanes was purchased by Gord and Darlene Labombard

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Basement apartment registry studied

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
The Acton Tanner

Town councillors want more information before deciding whether to proceed with a suggestion for a registry for houses with two dwelling units.

Following a spate of fatal fires in basement apartments that did not meet fire and safety codes, the Province authorized municipalities to pass bylaws requiring houses with two units to register so safety standards could be enforced.

Staff estimates that there are over 1,000 illegal second-units in Halton Hills with

approximately 30 to 40 legal units and 100 requests for inspections.

Requests for such a registry have come from real estate lawyers, financial institutions, insurance companies and individual homeowners and tenants and at last Monday's General Committee meeting, staff recommended that the registry be set up and that a one-time fee be collected to cover the cost of administering the registry. Following a long debate councillors decided there were too many unanswered questions and asked for more information.

Staff said there would be a \$5,000 fine for anyone who has two units in their home but doesn't register, and that the issue would be handled on a complaint basis.

Acton Councillor Norm Elliott argued that establishing a registry would be like "opening Pandora's box" and would lead to "neighbours squealing on neighbours," but also said that he was not saying the Town should not have a registry because the people living in the second units deserve public protection and safe units.

"I believe the public will not pay the \$625 registration

fee, people will refuse to comply and enforcement will become a problem. But I still believe it's the way to go," Elliott said.

Councillor Gerald Rennie said that with the major concern being public safety, the Town needs to offer incentives - not disincentives - to people who want to have second units in the houses and suggested a grace period after the registry was set up.

Rennie suggested that if people asked for an inspection within the grace period they would pay a \$75 fee. After the grace period they would pay the \$625 fee and if

they didn't register during that period and the Town received a complaint about their second unit, they would also have to pay the \$625.

"We need to encourage people to do something and volunteer for the initial inspection so health and safety can be ensured," Rennie said.

Fire Chief Bill Cunningham said that with or without a bylaw establishing a registry, the Town is required to do safety inspections on second units.

As to Rennie's suggestion of a grace period, Cunningham said the Province had given people a two-year grace period and urged councillors to act, noting that "there are some apartments out there that aren't safe and we don't know about them all."



FIRE FUND SET UP: Acton's Fontana family is temporarily without a home after this Agnes Street fire early Friday evening. Family members were away for the holiday weekend, but neighbours phoned the fire department (firefighters saved their two pet cats). The Fontana Family Fire Fund has been established at the Bank of Montreal, and Actonites are invited to make a donation to help the Fontanas through this difficult time. (Eve Martin photo)

Pumpkin drive on Sunday

The Pumpkin patch is coming to town!

The Kinsmen Club of Acton will be conducting a "Pumpkin Drive" throughout the town of Acton on Sunday, Oct. 20, between 12 noon and 4 pm.

Kinsmen and Kin Kids will be driving around town with wagon loads of pumpkins, encouraging local residents to select a pumpkin in return for a donation.

All money raised through this project will be used for future community service work.

Be sure to look for the Kinsmen Pumpkin wagons on Sunday and support this newest community service group.

The Historical Halloween Hunt

A Contest sponsored by the Acton BIA and The Acton Tanner



Test your knowledge of some of Acton's ghoulish past. Entry forms can be picked up at the Acton Tanner, Power Entertainment, Acton Pharmacy, Freezer Frenzy, Country Reflections, Acton

Musicland, The Holland Shop and Wetherby's. Contest deadline is October 30th with winners announced Halloween Night. Lots of prizes donated by Acton merchants. Come & join the fun!

