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THE ROCKWOOD MILLER

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1997

IN BRIEF...

Surprise party!

An open house to celebrate Jessie Gellatly's 80th birthday will be held at Rockwood United Church this Sunday (Feb. 23) from 2 to 4 pm.

Please bring your best wishes only. And remember - it's a surprise!

Rae at U of G

Former Ontario premier Bob Rae will visit the University of Guelph as a Winegard Visiting Professor later this month.

Rae will visit the department of political studies from Feb. 24 to 27 and will give a public lecture next Wednesday (Feb. 26) in War Memorial Hall at 7:30 pm.

Black history

Guelph Museums presents a first in Wellington County - an exhibit featuring the history of its Black community. The exhibit continues until April 6.

The history dates back to the earliest years of settlement by non First Nations people in this area and follows to the establishment of two Wellington County settlements - Pierpoint and Queen's Bush, and on.

Call the Guelph Civic Museum at 836-1221 for more details.

Local lawyer files suit against Wiarthon Willie

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
The Rockwood Miller

Claiming that Wiarthon Willie - the albino groundhog that predicted spring was just weeks away - intentionally misled the public, Rockwood lawyer Doug Black has filed a class action suit against the woodchuck soothsayer who has come out of his burrow each February 2 for 41 years to predict how much longer winter will last.

"Willie intentionally misled a group of Rockwood residents into believing that spring was imminent," Black explained on Friday, "and he's going to pay."

Black said compensatory damages include the inflated price of summer wear caused by the rush of demand, along with medical and dental costs.

"One member of the group involved in the suit donned his new bathing suit upon hearing Willie's news and dove into the swimming pool," Black said. "When the family peeled him off the ice, he was missing most of his upper teeth and his million dollar smile was ruined."

Another woman told Black she was ashamed when she walked into the hardware store in shorts and bare feet looking for suntan lotion only to be told that Willie's weather prediction was a hoax.

Black said it was clear to him that "somebody has got to pay" when he stepped outside to head for work last week and found that the minus 25 degree weather was anything but spring-like.

"I thought something's

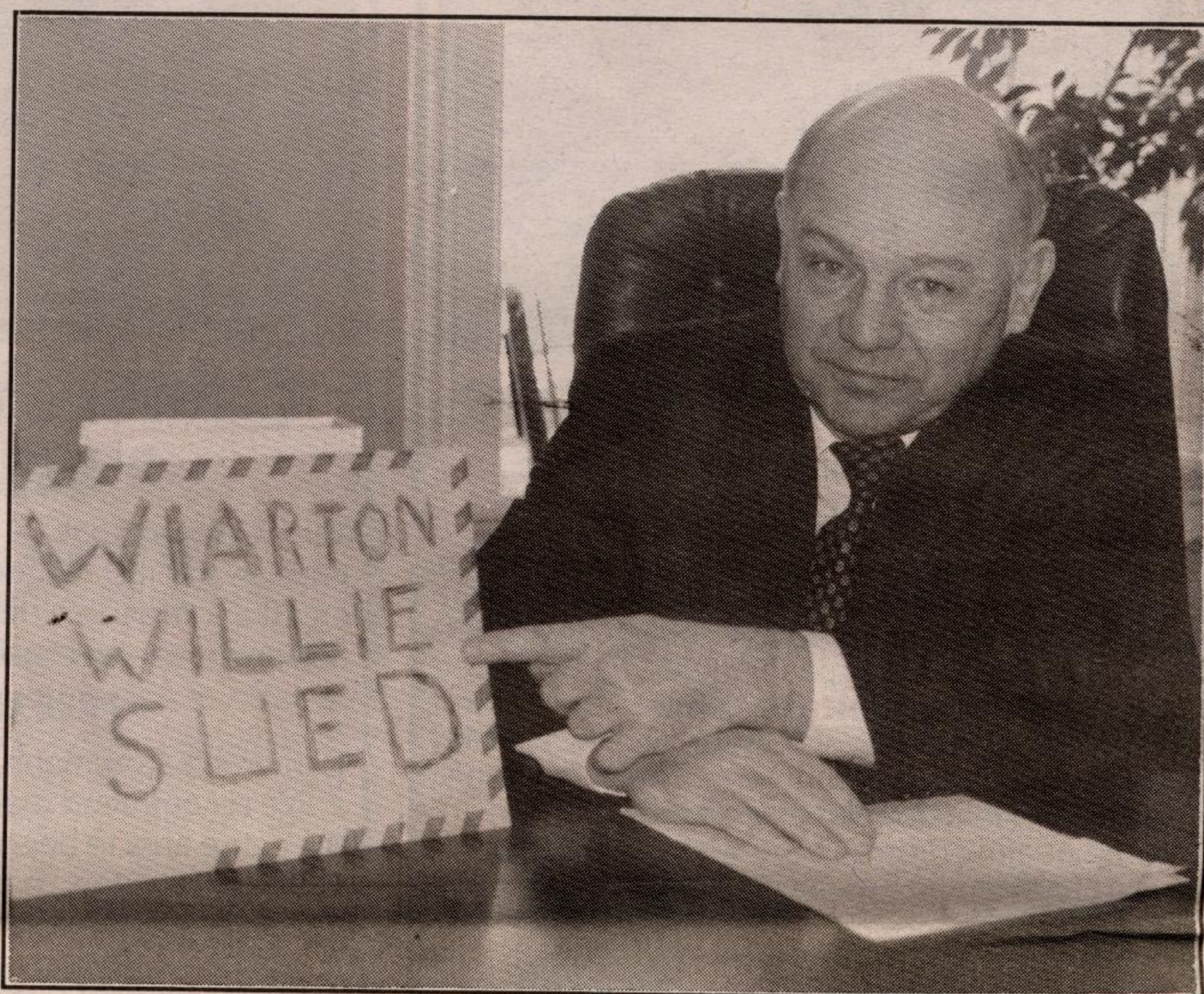
wrong and as lawyers do, started looking for defendants," Black said, tongue firmly planted in his cheek.

"Notice how Wiarthon Willie disappeared right after his prognostication. He knew what was coming and that's part of the reason for the punitive damages - this was next to a fraud, almost. The misleading was intentional and Wiarthon Willie was laughing on television."

Black said the suit faces two problems - first, Wiarthon Willie must be found and served with the papers and secondly, there's the matter of assets because the groundhog has none to speak of.

"It is possible that Wiarthon Willie is even owned by Environment Canada and the evidence is that Environment Canada, feeling the heat from terrible weather forecasting, put Willie up to this in return for a never-ending supply of lettuce. This is conspiracy and makes punitive damages all the more appropriate," Black said.

Officials at Groundhog Central in Wiarthon had not responded to news of the class action suit at press time.



PAY UP! Rockwood lawyer Doug Black is sending a message to Wiarthon Willie and his cohorts - that misleading reports from Groundhog Day ensured Ontarians that spring was just around the corner. Now Willie's being sued by Black. (Eve Martin photo)

OPP search for suspicious male in abduction attempt

Guelph OPP are searching for any information regarding a suspicious male who offered a 15-year-old youth a ride in his pickup truck.

The incident occurred last Monday (Feb. 17) on Maltby Road, in Puslinch Township south of Guelph, at approximately 8:20 am.

The youth was standing in front of his home waiting for the rural school bus to pick him up. A lone male in a pickup truck stopped and spoke to the youth through a rolled down window. The man made several verbal attempts to persuade the youth

to get in the truck and get a ride to school.

The man became frustrated when the youth ran away and would not comply with his request. Police want to speak to the driver and are asking the public to contact the OPP with any information on the suspect or his vehicle.

The suspect is described as white, in his late 30s, with dirty blond hair, clean shaven and wearing a Molson ball cap. He was driving an older model tan Ford F150 which had rust on the door. A partial Ontario licence plate

reads as 337 ---.

Call Guelph OPP at 822-7250 with any information you may have.

Flower power

Put some spring in your step! The Rockwood Gardening Club will have Peter Croezen from Kitchener to talk about orchids and how easy they are to grow, at their next meeting, at the Rockwood Town Hall, tonight (Wednesday) at 8 pm. Everyone is welcome.



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