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MAIN STREET LIGHTING

Volume 5, Issue 9

December, 2002

Farmers and Region at odds

By DONNA DANIELLI

The Region may soon find itself in the midst of a war of words. Halton's two urban and two rural centres for the most part get along, but proposed changes to the Region's Official Plan could soon see rural and urban areas in conflict.

The Region recently hosted a number of public workshops regarding the release of *The Greening of Halton - Smart Growth, Smart Choices* a Directions Report intended to enhance Halton's greenlands.

A key piece of this document calls for 97 per cent of Halton's woodlands to be classified as Significant Woodlands under Category B, in the Region's Official Plan.

The Greenlands B category includes environmentally sensitive areas, areas of natural and scientific interest and regionally designated wetlands.

Greenlands A distinction is reserved for flood plains, provincially designated wetlands, the Lake Ontario shoreline and other areas that are immune to development.

Under this proposal, a total of 22,000 hectares of Halton's landscape would fall under the Greenlands B distinction. That means a 47 per cent increase of the lands already held in this category as

woodlands which also perform other ecological functions.

Under the new proposal, criteria such as erosion control, groundwater quality and quantity, surface quality and quantity, age, size, and connectivity with other natural heritage features, can all qualify woodlands to be classed as significant.

The Greenlands Strategy Workshop held November 11 by The Region divided the attendees into working groups of farmers and rural residents, ratepayers, the development sector, environmental groups and members of the public.

The proposed Greenlands B strategy was heartily approved by both the environmental organizations and the largely urban based members of the public. Supporters urged the Region to take the plan even further by classifying all forests as Greenlands A "to protect the function, not just the land" as one unidentified woman stated, as well as implementing a by-law that would ban cutting down trees without justification from The Region.

The members of the public group insisted The Region "protect the majority from the minority," a point of view the farming community present found offensive.

"It seems as if in Halton, we are

trying to protect against developers," attendee Stephen Baker told Regional staff. "What I'm hearing is that the environmental lobby has lost the fight in Oakville and is now trying to protect every tree in North Halton. I think that you're responding to a loud and virulent environmental group. What we seem to have is an attack on the rural landowners by the urbanites."

Halton Federation of Agriculture President Peter Lambrick agreed with Mr. Baker.

"Developers in the south end of Halton are mowing down the bush, while in the north end we have 30 per cent cover. Why are you impacting the people in the north when it's the developers in the south that are the problem?"

While the Greenlands Strategy Workshop only had about 60 people in attendance, it was standing room only as over 200 farmers crowded into the following day's workshop to voice their disagreement with the proposal.

Not only did farmers argue strongly against the change of over 9,000 hectares of Halton land to Greenlands B designation, they also voiced their objections to plans to introduce the concept of Adjacent

(continued on page 31)



Photo by DONNA DANIELLI

Queen Elizabeth II, as part of her Jubilee Celebration, approved the creation of a Commemorative Medal in honour of the 50th anniversary of her rule. The medal was presented to citizens who significantly contributed to Canada, to their community or to their fellow Canadians. Halton recipients included Hornby's Bert Stewart and Kilbride's Kirk Hughes. Mr. Stewart was honoured for many years of dedicated service to the agriculture industry. Mr. Hughes was honoured as a dedicated volunteer firefighter and training officer for the St. John's Ambulance and as a member of the Social Services Committee for the City of Guelph. Pictured L to R. - MP Julien Reed, Milton Mayor Gord Krantz, Kirk Hughes, Halton Hills Mayor Kathy Gastle, and Bert Stewart.

Inside this Month's Compass

MULL'N IT OVER

Building a home that is healthy, functional, esthetically pleasing and good for the environment can be a challenge. Glenn and Libby Little of Eden Mills have more than succeeded on all fronts in the construction of their straw-bale home.

page 11



IDLE PURSUITS

Campbellville resident Rebekah Cummings can be justifiably proud of her recent CD *My One True Love*, launched at a celebration co-hosted by Hamilton Christian Fellowship, where she performed some new songs in a concert venue.

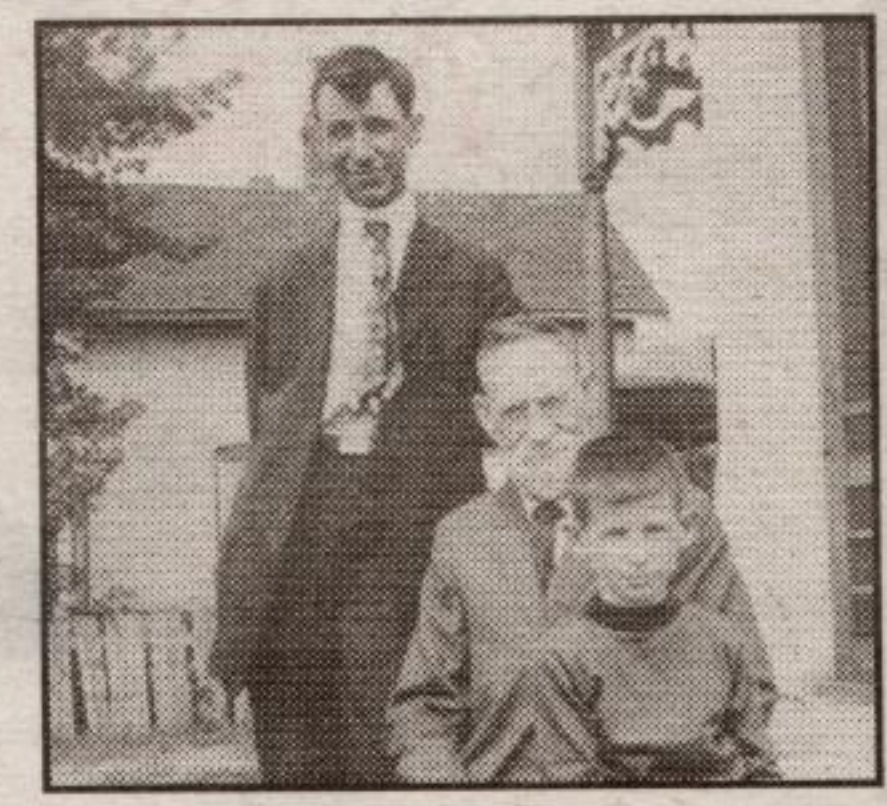
page 29



SHOEBOX MEMORIES

The Reid family came to Canada from County Antrim, Northern Ireland, about 1830 and settled in the Norval area. The family was instrumental in the founding of Union and Norval Presbyterian churches.

page 18



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