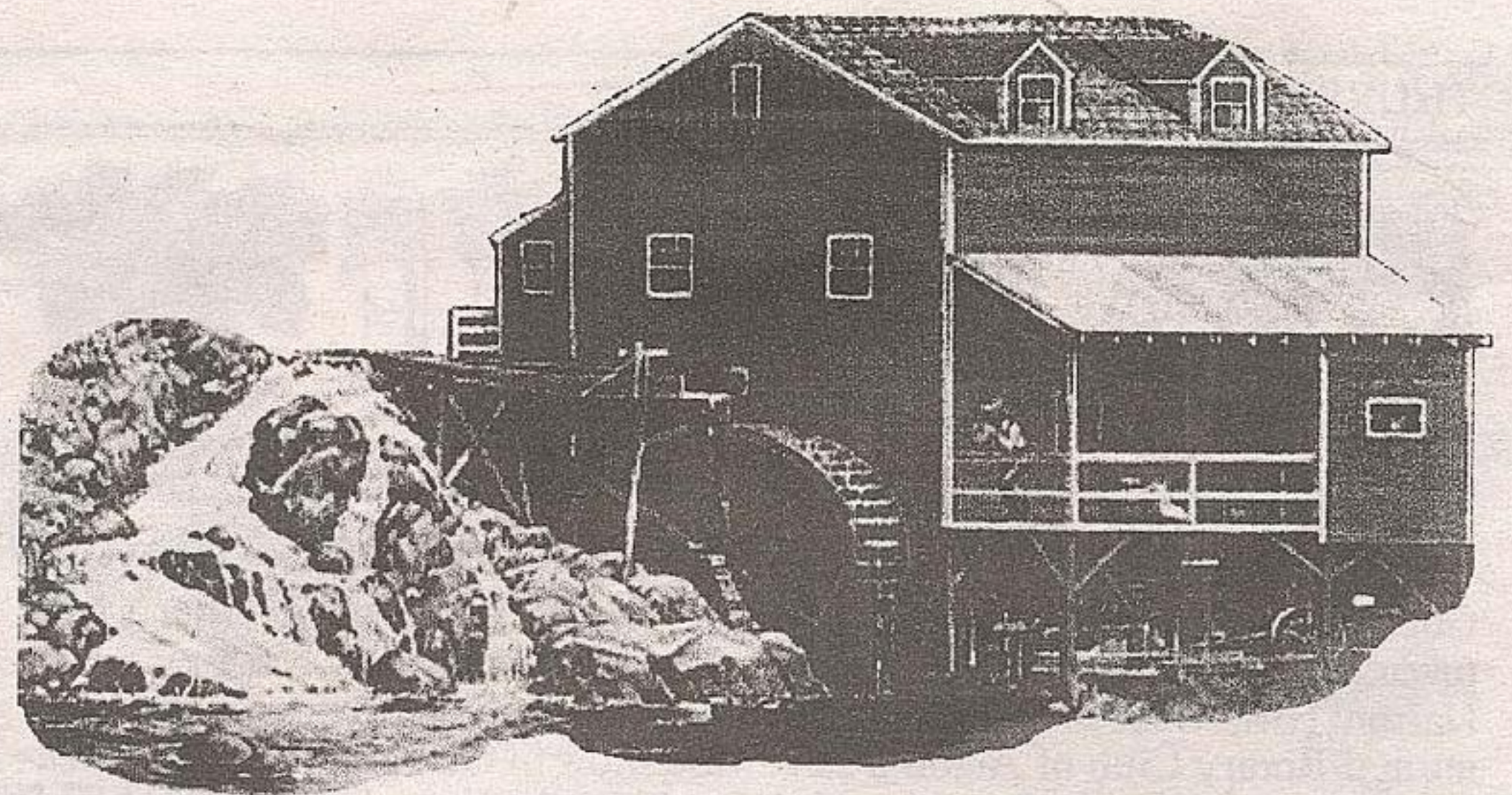


The Rockwood MILLER



Fire protection priority for new councillor



By **FRANCES NIBLOCK**
The Rockwood Miller

Fire protection is the first issue councillor-elect Alan McDonald wants to tackle when the newly restructured Eramosa Guelph Township municipal council takes office in January.

"We have to decide how to administer and apply our fire protection services in the former two townships,"

McDonald said, days after winning the Ward 4 seat in an interim election for the amalgamated township.

Currently, the City of Guelph provides fire services to the Township of Guelph that will become part of the new Eramosa Guelph Township. Eramosa Township has its own volunteer fire department.

McDonald, Eramosa Township's acting deputy

fire chief, thinks Eramosa's fire fighters should become the Eramosa Guelph fire department and handle fire prevention, safety, education, administration, communications and training.

"We Ashould have an automatic aid agreement with the City of Guelph for first response fire protection in the areas we can't provide that response to from the Eramosa station in

Rockwood," McDonald said. Such an agreement ignores municipal boundaries and requires the closest or best able fire department to respond to an emergency.

Presently the average response time by Rockwood firefighters to calls in the Township is 6.1 minutes and the City of Guelph's average is 6.9 minutes for calls in the Township of Guelph. Because of distances in the new

township, crews from Rockwood can't meet those response times to some places in Guelph Township, making the City of Guelph's first response service necessary.

The township amalgamation board asked the Ontario Fire Marshall to create a terms of reference for a fire protection service study.

Don't believe those government ads

To the Editor:

I recently read an editorial written by an OAC student at Centre Wellington District High School I found it interesting to read about the conditions experienced in a secondary school from a student's perspective. I can identify with her frustration expressed about books that are outdated, few in numbers and others beyond repair. I am a teacher-librarian who is employed by the Halton District Board of Education.

The Harris government has spent considerable amounts of money lately promoting their changes in education. In one program Mr. Harris is seen in a classroom outlining what his government is doing to improve education across the province. He refers to a list on the blackboard which highlights

areas of education where money will be spent from the proposed improvements. One item he refers to is the library.

This ad has become little more than a smokescreen that hides what is happening in reality. Board of education contracts are gradually being settled across the province. The issues discussed by the boards are controlled, for the most part, by conditions set out by the ministry of education. The contract for my board has recently been ratified. What has it done for the learning hub of our schools - the library? The teacher-librarian's time in the library has been cut in half. This means for half of the school day libraries could be closed and access for many of our students will be denied. If they can be staffed to stay

open it likely will be done with teachers who have no qualifications in this area and, therefore, will not be able to offer the same level of service to which our students previously had access.

Large schools will be able to keep a full time teacher-librarian while smaller schools (such as mine) will be reduced to half. Harris has also set up the library budget in such a way that the boards of education can drain off the money he designates to this account (and I understand my board is seriously considering this option).

So, how does this impact students? The money will not be there to replace outdated books, the students will not have equal access to learning resources and they will not have an unrestricted opportunity to fully develop their

research skills. With the reality that some schools will have full time libraries staffed with qualified people while other schools will not means that there will be inequality in the educational opportunities of our students across the province. How is this seen as fair for students that will be required to write province-wide tests?

Will such tests truly demonstrate that our students are properly prepared for the workplace or higher levels of education? Don't take for granted that what you see and hear in the Harris government ad campaigns is all it seems to be. Practise the critical thinking skills which we, as teachers and teacher-librarians, work to instill in our students within the classrooms and libraries across the province. Talk to teach-

ROCKWOOD DIGEST

Oliver!

Rockwood residents Christian Landy, Emma Tilson and Jordan Smith - all students of Rockwood music teacher Debbie Tilson - are cast in this weekend's five performances of the Royal City Musical Production of *Oliver!*

Nassagaweya resident Christopher Willes, coached by Tilson, plays the lead role, in the lavish production at Guelph's River Run Centre.

Injury accident

A 34-year old Orangeville

man was charged with disobeying a stop sign following a two-vehicle accident in Eramosa Township last Tuesday.

Police report that Frances Smyj, 36, of Hillsburgh, suffered minor injuries when her 1996 Chevy Lumina was broadsided at the intersection of Highway 24 and Country Road 26 in Eramosa Township.

Sincerely yours,
H. Wayne Bridle.

Rockwood Ridge ready

The three-month construction shut down at the Rockwood Ridge housing development south of Rockwood is over. On Monday, Seaton Group officials said several "complications" which stalled construction have been resolved and depending on the weather, crews could begin building houses before Christmas.

Seaton spokesman Jeremy Grant said part of the delay was due to the deaths of the Jolliffes, the elderly former Rockwood couple who owned the land. The other delay involved working out engineering details in the subdivision agreement with Eramosa Township.



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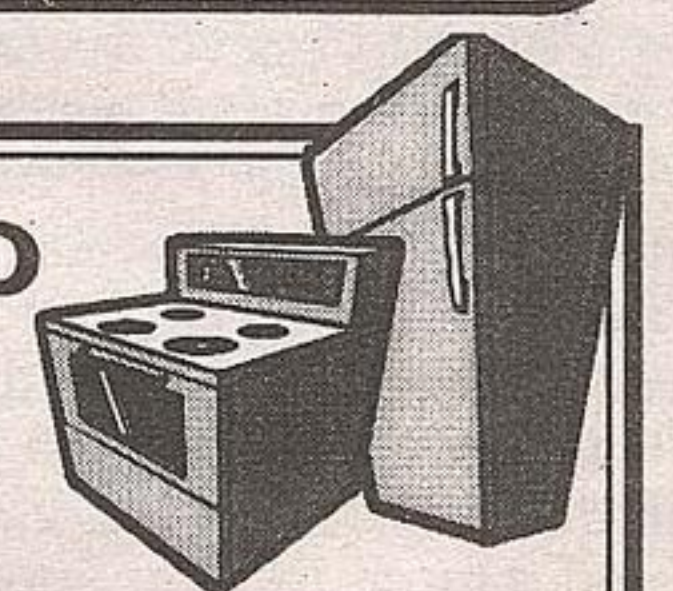
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