



BIG BREAKFAST: Acton Citizens' Bandmaster George Elliott (seated) stoked up with a hearty Scout breakfast at Trinity United Church before he lead the band in the Santa Claus parade. 1st Acton Cub Andrew Garrett (left) Venturer Chris Inns, leader Jim Garrett and Cub Evan Colvin helped cook a serve the food. - Frances Niblock photo

Santa's parade

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trees and pirates captured the imagination of the judges and was a hit with the crowd. "I've had a bunch of calls from people telling me that it was a great parade and how good the St. Joseph's float was," said organizer Bill Spielvogel in an interview on Sunday.

"There's always a few spots where things get a little slow but all in all, it went well and everybody seemed to have a good time."

Red Dog Café won the best commercial float while the 1st Limehouse Cubs and Beavers won first prize for the best service club float. Robert Little school won the best school float and an entry by Worden View Friends and Families won first in the "other" category. All winners received cheques for \$50.

"All of the groups and people who entered floats did a wonderful job and they all deserve to win but the judges had to decide who would win. I don't envy them their job, but somebody got to do it," Spielvogel said, adding that he can't wait to watch a tape of the parade, because as a passenger in a parade car he didn't get to see too much.



WINNING FLOAT: Pupils at St. Joseph's school decorated their winning float around a Peter Pan theme. - Angela Tyler photo

School space issue not resolved

Some of the excess space at McKenzie-Smith Bennett school may be used for storage as the Halton District School Board attempts to deal with its surplus capacity under the province's new education funding formula.

Although the province has extended the deadline for boards to deal with excess space by one year, Halton board chair Ethel Gardiner said it just postpones the inevitable.

"This gives us a little more breathing space but it doesn't solve our problem because we still have too

much space in some areas and not enough in others," Gardiner said in a recent interview.

While both Acton elementary schools are under capacity, they were recently removed from a possible closure list, mainly because neither school could house all of the students. Gardiner said the plan is to use part of McKenzie-Smith Bennett for maintenance depot storage instead of Speyside school, which is currently for sale.

At a recent meeting with the Minister of Education,

Gardiner and top board staff also asked for additional funding for mould cleanup and special education, programming Gardiner said was hit particularly hard by the province's funding formula.

"In the long run the current formula means less help for children who need special education because we're employing 140 less instructional assistants in our schools," Gardiner said.

Last year the Halton board spent \$33 million on special education programming, this year it received \$8 million less in provincial funding.

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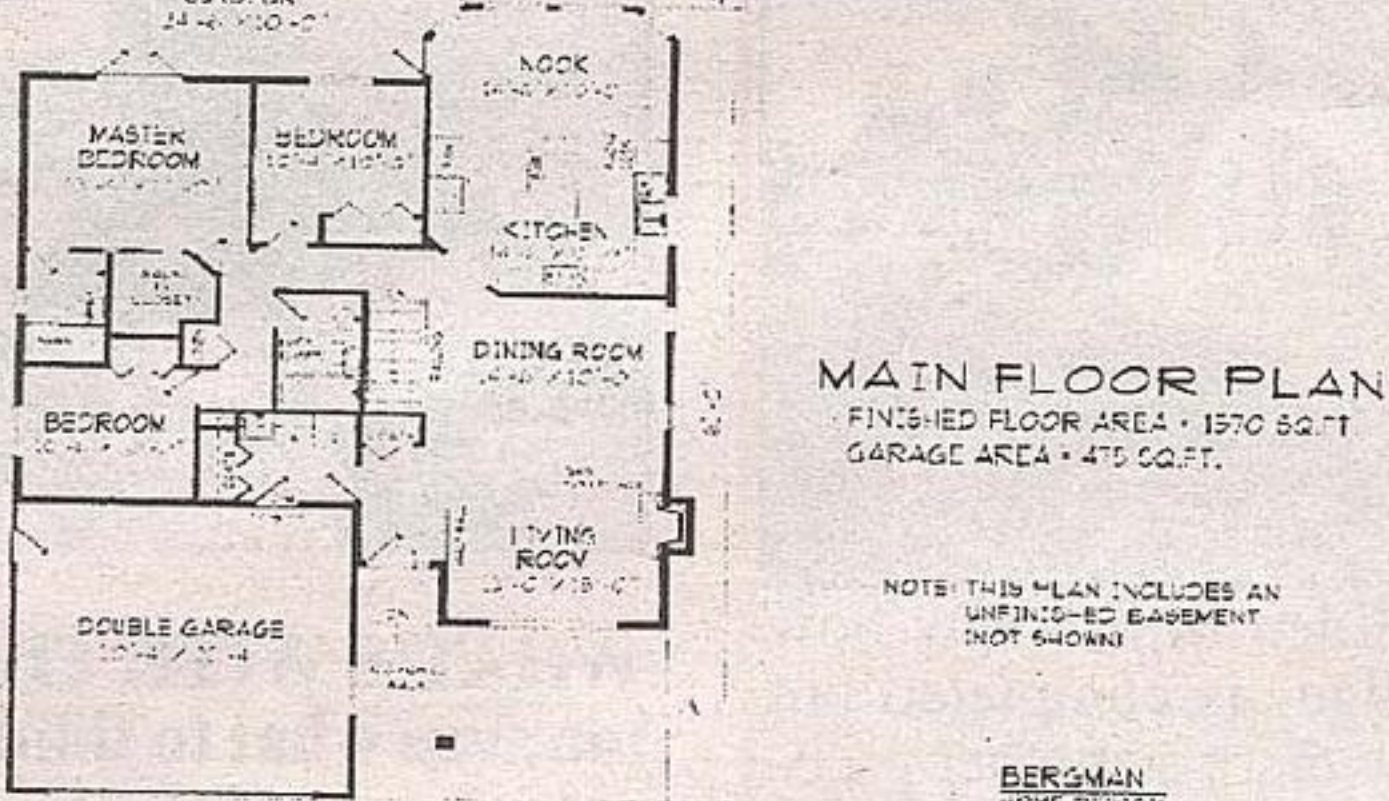
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