

EDITORIAL

Hearings important

The Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) has released a set of proposed amendments to the province's Niagara Escarpment Plan that are now headed for a public hearing. This land use plan has regulated development on the Niagara Escarpment since 1985.

The proposed changes are part of the provincial government's Five-Year Review of the Niagara Escarpment Plan, which began in December, 2000.

The most controversial issue up for discussion is how to regulate the development of wineries of the Niagara Peninsula. The Niagara wine industry is booming, and the wine region has become a major tourist attraction. Many winery owners would like to expand their tourist facilities by building hotels, restaurants and other commercial developments on their farms.

Environmentalists say that is going too far.

"We support the grape growers and vintners on the Escarpment and we've been helping in the struggle to protect their lands from development for over 20 years," said Jason Thorne, Executive Director of the Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment (CONE), an environmental watchdog group. "But today tourism-oriented winery expansions are emerging as the new threat to Niagara's specialty crop lands."

CONE believes that large-scale commercial developments like restaurants and hotels should be directed to nearby towns and villages which have the infrastructure such as sewer and water lines to support them, and where they won't use up valuable agricultural land.

The Niagara wine region isn't the only place threatened by increasingly intensive tourism developments. All along the Escarpment, developers are seeking to capitalize on the growing popularity of the pristine natural areas and open countryside of the Escarpment with spas, restaurants, inns and banquet centres.

The Niagara Escarpment Plan Five-Year Review will be examining how to balance this economic development with the protection of the Escarpment.

It's important to Halton Hills that protection of the Escarpment be maintained since it is our most prominent natural feature. Input from the Town and its citizens is important to the "future of the mountain" as it is called locally. Meetings in Milton in July give residents an opportunity to participate in the future of this world biosphere.

A friend to Acton

Longtime Actonians and highway motorists who recall the late Cam McNab, former Transportation Deputy Minister for Ontario, will mourn his loss from Alzheimer's at 87.

An Acton native (born in 1913), Mr. McNab grew up here and served in World War 2 as a lieutenant with the Royal Canadian Artillery. He joined the old Department of Highways in 1933 as a land surveyor in the depths of the Great Depression. By 1942, he had worked his way up to the Deputy Minister's post.

Mr. McNab helped to build Ontario's major highways and his foresight spearheaded the introduction of GO Transit in the late 1960s, serving as the first chairman. It was under his "watch" that a major contract scandal at the Dept. of Highways was cleaned up and he headed Go from 1974-1980.

He was a friend to his hometown of Acton, visiting here when he could. When highways in this area needed work he saw it was done and as soon as possible. When Acton was left off the map at one point he saw it was put back on, pronto.

Mr. McNab never lived to see the dismantling of the Ontario Highway system, as it is being done now. He can sleep in peace, knowing he contributed much to the betterment of Ontario.



POLISHING THE PEWS: To keep their mind off food, members of the Acton Baptist youth group did some cleaning in the church. During the 30-hour famine to raise money for Third World countries, the group raised over \$2,000. - Angela Tyler photo



An overdue thank you



By ERIKA FORD
The New Tanner

Last week Mike wrote in his column that last fall he had asked for inspiring stories of teachers, and had received none thus far. To answer Mike's request, and because I think they deserve it, I decided I would write about some of the teachers I had during my public school career.

I had a wonderful school career. I loved learning and excelled. Fortunately, I also had amazing teachers. That's why it bothers me now to hear students complain about teachers who just seem to be putting in their time before retirement. I had a few teachers whose classes I didn't relish going to, but for the majority, my teachers were people who loved their job and wanted to instill their love for learning in their students. Every year there was at least one teacher whose name my parents probably still remember for all the stories I told them.

The first teacher who really made an impact on my school life was Jill Pignatell. She was my grade four teacher when I was in a split 4/5 class in Limehouse. I remember the first day of school when she wrote her name on the board. "The 'g' is silent," she said as a few of the kids giggled. I did not have Mrs. Pignatell for very long as they decided the class was too large - something you wouldn't hear now - and the fourth graders were put into the other grade four class.

My fifth year was the year

Calgary had the winter Olympics. Mrs. Pignatell gave out medals for students who did well on tests and projects. They were just yarn and medal-coloured bristol board (as I realized when I found mine last year), but they were the most highly coveted and prized things that semester.

Mrs. Pignatell was the first teacher who told me I could write. We had to write a children's story one time and I remember she read part of mine to the class. It wasn't the first time a teacher had singled me out, and it wasn't the last, but I think it was the only time when pride in myself wasn't overshadowed by embarrassment. She did that. She could make you feel good without causing jealousy in others, probably because she made us all feel special.

I credit Mlle. Florina Rocci, my grade seven and eight French Immersion teacher at Stewarttown, with having the greatest influence upon my personality of all my teachers. I was intelligent and had realized that being one of the smartest kids in class, didn't win you friends. Mlle. Rocci saw something inside of me that wanted out and just needed a little encouragement. We used to joke that she was taking night courses in psychology, because whenever she saw something amiss in a student she would take them out into the hall and ask if everything was all right. She always made it known she was available before, after and during school, even if it

was lunch or recess - another rarity now. I don't know how many of my future teachers appreciated her efforts though; I became a smart, sarcastic class clown.

Mme. J. Harrison, who wasn't a Mme. but a Mlle. although everyone called her Mme, and who never did tell us what the J. stood for, was the most dedicated to her craft I ever had. Mme. Harrison was my French and my Histoire du monde teacher. I had her every year of high school and am damn glad I did. Before Mme. Harrison I hated history, especially Canadian history. I thought it was dry and boring. Mme. Harrison quickly changed my opinion. She had such a passion for the subject, it emanated from her, it hung on the walls like the posters of Europe, and it seeped into us through our chairs. Well, maybe not all of us, but the majority of the class.

Madame made history come alive. Every history teacher before her had taught only the facts of history, not the humanity behind it. When she told us of the gassing of the boys in the trenches, tears ran down her cheeks. She showed us films of the holocaust and you could see her dabbing her eyes with tissues. She must have told those stories and watched those films hundreds of times, and still she was upset by them.

I recently went back to Georgetown High to ask Mme. Harrison if she could translate a bit of German, which she also taught,

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