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Maggie impressed by new Joe Clark

By **MAGGIE PETRUSHEVSKY**
The New Tanner

Ever had one of those little coincidences that leaves you shaking your head and asking what brought that on? The old gang from the Guelph Mercury held a reunion last week and after 16

years plus on their staff I had no hesitation in attending. Like all reunions, a big part of the chatter was repeating the stories about "remember when..."

One of the more interesting stories was a recounting of how Joe Clark got the "Joe Who?" label. Seems a Mercury reporter was in the newsroom when the teletype announced that Joe Clark had been elected leader of the Progressive Conservative party. As it was announced by someone reading the printed dispatch the reporter loudly proclaimed the abysmal lack of Clark's profile with a "Joe Who?" reaction. We all know how long that reaction stuck. What most of us - including me - didn't know was where it all began.

A couple of days later I got a call from former Wellington riding PC candidate Marie Adsett inviting me to a roundtable with Joe Clark in Guelph. He was coming for a fund raiser and Marie, with that old reporter instinct, figured the best way to get favourable publicity would be to give the local media a free shot at Joe without the usual debacle of trying to get past the high pressure city crowd.

She was right. Taken away from the television cameras and the Ottawa scrum, Joe is much more impressive than I would have credited. Now of course, my age is showing when I admit I remember the old Joe from 20 years ago.

Even worse, the first political figure I got to interview was his wife, Maureen



Joe Clark

McTier was addressing a gathering at Sheridan College when I was there as a student. Naturally everyone in the journalism program, including me, went to hear her and then talked to her afterwards.

Of course, in those days the attraction was largely the novelty of a politician having a wife who didn't take his name. We weren't smart enough to realize then that it takes a very secure person to give his partner that sort of autonomy. Joe was way before his time and we made sure he suffered for it.

I also got to hear and interview Brian Mulroney when he was in Halton campaigning to unseat Joe as Conservative party leader. At the time I termed Mulroney a "Trudeau wanna-be" and even in hindsight that's still how I see him. He lacked Pierre's charisma (I met him once, too) but more importantly my gut says he lacked Pierre's genuine concern for Canada. I'm not sure he had

Pierre's brains either, but that's probably pure prejudice.

Anyway, poor old Joe got the stuffing beat out of him by this jazzy, big-city fast-talker and wound up right out of politics, almost - if not actually - in disgrace. We all know where Mulroney got us. He decimated the party.

And where does that leave us? Beautiful irony. Back to good old Joe. He may lack the flash but by golly, listening to him Friday, he had the poise, the background in both handling people and knowing his facts, and the sincerity. Did he always have the courage and grace it takes to rescue people who once turned on him? Who knows? But he has it now. And more.

Lester B. Pearson got a medal for his diplomacy because he used it internationally. Joe won't get it because his efforts are internal. He just wants to keep this country together and he's doing it by offering the olive branch to all the parties in opposition.

Listening to the questions in parliament you get the feeling Joe Clark gets under Jean Chretien's skin more than the other leaders. So why does Chretien ignore him and aim all the venom at Stockwell Day? Probably he's making the fatal error of underestimating the veteran as a nobody who will just drift away like before. Don't count on it. The man who should be scaring the Liberals is sitting back, waiting his turn. That turtle just could win the race again one day.

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For the empty-nesters, the two additional bedrooms will be useful guest rooms for visiting grandchildren. For a young couple, they offer space to expand as the family grows.

One of the bedrooms could be used as a bonus room, for crafts, sewing or perhaps a home office, if required.

Inside the entrance, the foyer is open to a generous-sized living room, with plenty of space to entertain friends. A boxed-out window provides the opportunity for a window seat and the gas fireplace gives the room a cosy focus for the winter months.

The kitchen and breakfast room combine to make a spacious area that is sure to be the heart of daily life. The kitchen offers plenty of counter space and a useful pantry and the eating area is quite large enough to accommodate guests.

A door opens on to a good-sized sun deck, which would be the ideal place for outdoor meals during the summer.

The master suite and the two secondary bedrooms occupy one wing of the house, with a three-piece en suite for the master bedroom and the main bathroom shared by the other two bedrooms.

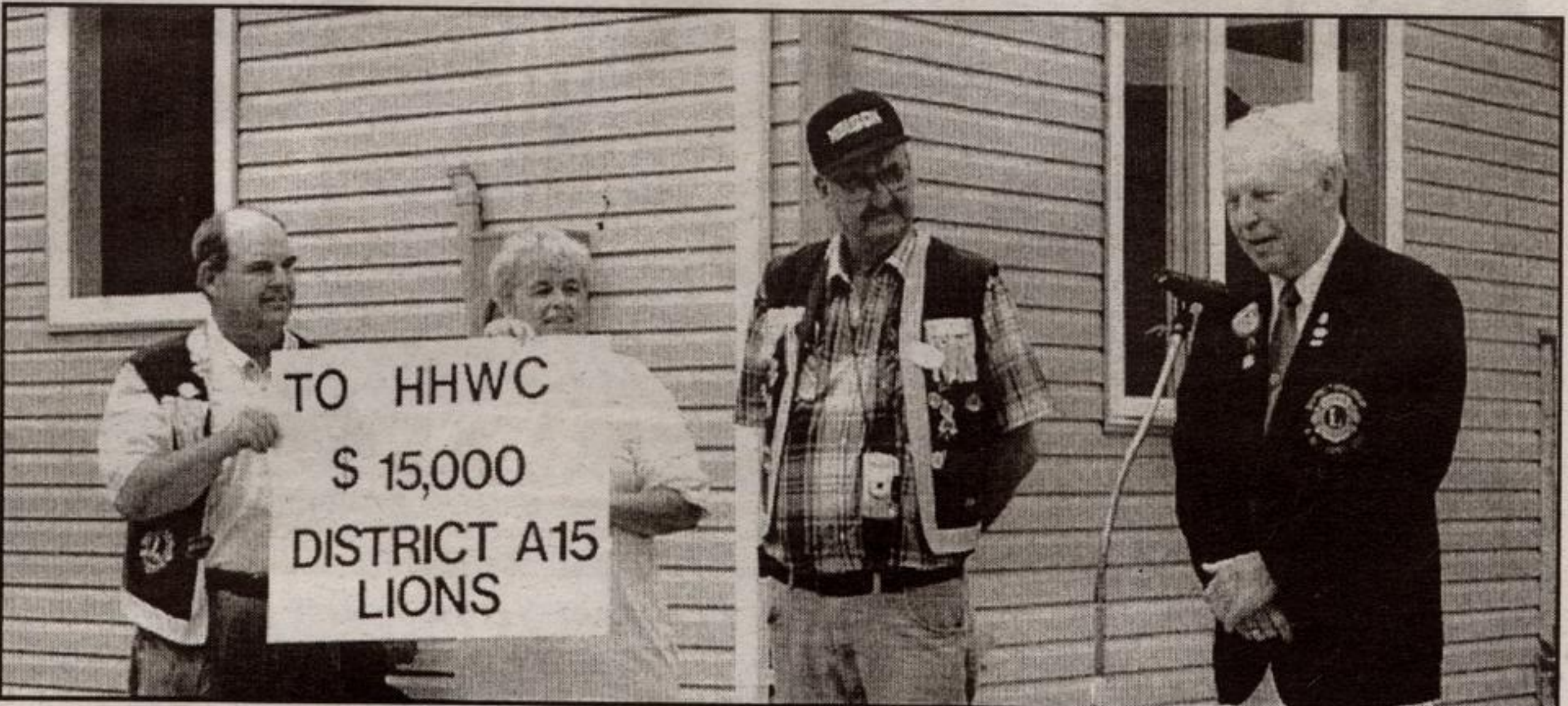
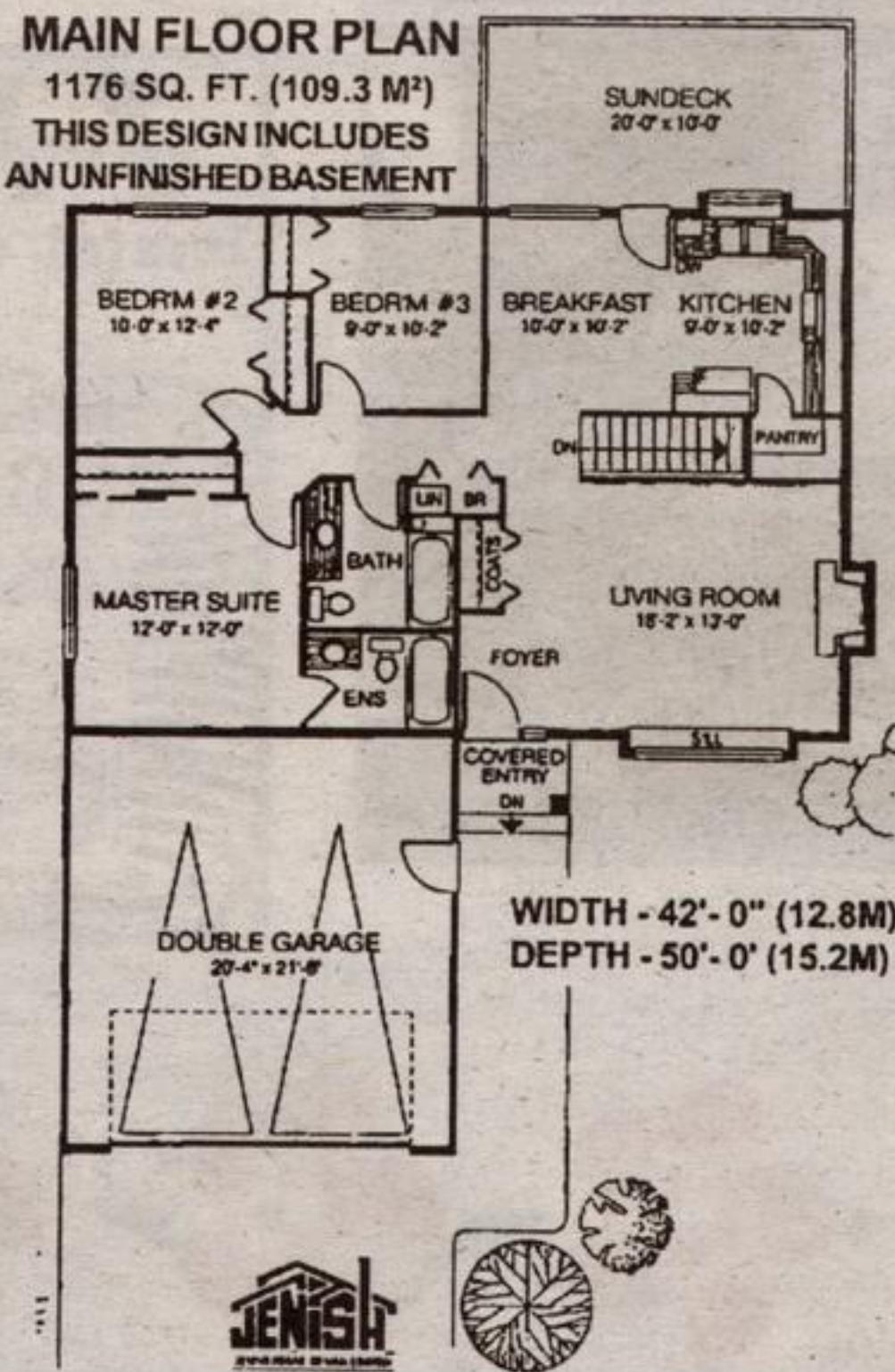
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OFFICIAL DONATION: District A15 governor Dan Moore officially presented Habitat for Humanity Wellington with a \$15,000 donation raised by area Lions clubs. Seen with the cheque are from the left, Rockwood Lion Darryl Nichols, Habitat president Sue Ricketts, and Rockwood Lion president Jim Nellis. - Maggie Petrushevsky photo

Calls tax increase 'shocking'

To the Editor:
Re: Guelph/Eramosa Property Tax Increases

The 2001 property tax increase that is being imposed upon Guelph/Eramosa ratepayers is shocking. The Township needs to raise \$870,000, or the equivalent of 41.9%, more than in 2000. The municipality states that the overall tax increase (including county and provincial taxes) is 8.6%. However, between the increased mill rate and the impact of increased market value assessments done in 2000, some ratepayers are calculating their 2001 taxes with as much as a 40% increase. Indeed, to ignore the impact of market value assessments is shortsighted and simplistic; for many property owners, a double-digit tax increase is the reality.

Almost as alarming as this



property tax increase is Council's lack of commitment to minimizing that increase, which I witnessed firsthand, having attended both budget meetings in May 2001. It was apparent from the first draft budget present to Council by Township staff that the proposed tax increase would be huge and that the increase was due to higher operating expenditures, not capital expenditures. Despite this, no budget cuts were made. Instead, further expenditures were added to the budget with some creative financing used as camouflage. (For example, 40% of the Fourth Line reconstruction project to be completed in 2001 will not be paid until 2002 - we are borrowing against

next year already.)

Also of great concern, was the absolute lack of discussion by Council of the \$125,000 deficit from 2000, or the \$200,000 decrease in our reserve balances.

Ultimately, I am disturbed that a property tax increase of this magnitude is approved by Council with so little critical analysis and zero public discussion. As well, I am left with the sinking feeling that our Township's operating costs are rising out of control.

At home and in my small business, I have to be vigilant with every dollar. I expect the same vigilance with our tax dollars but at least through this budget process, have not seen evidence that Council is doing that job.

Doris Bozzelli,
Rockwood

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