

Martin Boomsma (left) and Tom Schenk will host the "Keeping the Memory Alive" tour through Holland and Normandy next May. The two men would like relatives, especially children, of war veterans to join them on the tour.
Photo by Ted Brown

'Remembrance' trip planned

While working together on Georgetown's Remembrance Park project Martin Boomsma and Tom Schenk heard from several relatives of veterans interested in visiting places in Europe where their fathers or brothers had fought.

That sparked the idea to take a group to Europe to visit the battlefields and war cemeteries, and next May the two men plan to do just that.

Georgetown residents Boomsma and Schenk, who were 8 and 15 and living in their native Holland when it was liberated by Canadians during the Second World War, will host the "Keeping the Memory Alive" tour through Holland and Normandy from May 2 to May 16.

"We are trying to make it as meaningful to the group and individuals as possible," said Boomsma who has been researching the liberation of Holland for many years and has a lot of information on where the Canadian regiments were.

They particularly want relatives of veterans, especially their children, to take the tour, which is organized by Verstraete Travel and Cruises of Aurora.

They plan to visit locations of interest to those on the tour, sites where their relatives were in battle, where wounded, or are buried.

The tour will begin in Amsterdam and include a visit to the Keukenhof spring bulb garden and four nights in Zutphen, Holland.

The group will attend the Holten Memorial Service and reception on Remembrance Day in Holland and also visit the hotel where the Nazi surrender was signed.

Two days will be set aside to visit sites of battles and burial sites in Wageningen, Arnhem and Delfzijl, Holland. After a two-hour Rhine cruise the group will stay overnight in Trier, Germany.

The group will spend several days in France and visit the Canadian and American war cemeteries as well as the Juno Beach Centre in France.

The tour price is \$2,895 per person, based on double occupancy.

Anyone interested should call Boomsma at 905-877-5843 or Schenk at 905-877-6839. There is only room left for about 17 more people.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer

Higher rates for use of schools may cause some groups to fold

Local groups, affected dramatically by the school boards' decision to increase rental rates for use of its schools, are facing increased fees, lost memberships and possibly even dissolution.

The decision is the result of the provincial government's funding formula for school boards—the province will fund only education-related use of schools. The boards, already dollar crunching for their own programs, do not have enough money in the budget to operate schools after hours for non-education related activities, and so will now pass on the direct costs of operating the schools after hours to user groups.

It affects more than 80 local user groups in Halton Hills, ranging from communion classes, churches, social clubs, YMCA after-school programs and sports groups with some rent hikes as high as 682 per cent. The new charges will be implemented in September 2002.

Sandra Faber, administrator of the Acton Badminton league gasped when learning from *The Independent & Free Press* the amount of rent increase her group could expect—\$3,000 (314 per cent). The 30 members of the recreational pickup league are currently paying about \$961 a year for rent. The new annual rent for the club will be \$3,980 (a 314 per cent increase).

"I don't know if we'll be able to keep the club open," Faber said. "We're strictly non-profit and we don't have much money left after the season."

She said the members, which range in age from teenagers to seniors, will have to meet to discuss the situation.

Victor Estevan, director of Halton Hills Mens Basketball, a pickup league of about 60 players, agrees his group will be impacted too. Their rent will climb from \$788 a year to \$3,366 a year (327 per cent).

To cover that jump, he anticipates that annual fees of \$40 could be upped to \$120, and that could mean members may drop out. The organization could also consider cutting

back on hours from three nights a week to only one.

He said, "maybe we were getting a break on the rent in the past, but now maybe they've gone too far the other way," and wondered whether the boards should have considered phasing in the rate increases.

The group does have a reserve, he said and anticipates it will be solvent for the next two years, "but after that I don't know."

Carol Harper, Halton Division Commissioner (Acton, Georgetown and Milton) of the Girl Guides of Canada said her organization has been preparing for this, and has also set aside money, but it won't be enough to cover it all.

"It'll definitely make a difference," she said. "It's a massive undertaking that going to affect many units."

While Harper doesn't have the exact figures—she just received official notification from the school boards Tuesday, Harper is sure that it will mean a cost increase to the young girls. For example, she said, girls bring 50 cents a week

now for crafts, but that could increase to \$2. That's a big difference to a little girl, or families in need, said Harper. Even though the organization provides assistance, some people won't ask for it.

George Henderson of North Halton District Scouting Association agrees it'll mean more fees. Each scout pays about \$80 to register and Henderson said the association's dilemma next year will be to keep it affordable, and yet maintain the program.

"That will mean that much more fund-raising the kids will have to do, and that's not what this movement is about. That's the sad thing about it," said the president of the 400-member organization.

Henderson said about two or three units in north Halton will be directly affected including 1st Glen and 5th Georgetown, as all of the rest are sponsored by churches. He noted that units in south Halton will be more affected than here.

—By Cynthia Gamble, staff writer



Local scouts, like those above, will have to pay to use school facilities next fall.

OPP, Halton Police gearing up for annual RIDE patrols

Both Halton Regional Police and OPP will be targeting impaired drivers during their annual Festive RIDE programs.

The OPP RIDE (Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere) program got under way Thursday and Halton's program will begin Tuesday and run through January 1.

Halton Regional Police Sgt. Val Hay

said regional traffic officers will set up RIDE spot checks throughout the region from Tuesday through Sunday and patrol officers will pitch in depending on their availability.

As they did last year, Halton officers will be handing out coupon books at the spot checks.

Last year during the festive RIDE program 950 vehicles were stopped in spot

checks in Halton Hills, 28 roadside tests were administered, one impaired charged was laid, two 12-hour suspensions were issued, and 50 warnings were issued for Highway Traffic Act infractions.

Region-wide Halton Police stopped 18,200 vehicles, administered 93 roadside tests, issued 24 12-hour suspensions and laid 31 impaired charges during last year's holiday season.

During Halton Police budget deliberations recently Chief Ean Algar said police would have a high RIDE profile this festive season but added only half the number of vehicles stopped last year would be checked this year.

Deputy Chief Gary Crowell said many officers are suffering burn-out and aren't applying for paid duty, which RIDE is.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer

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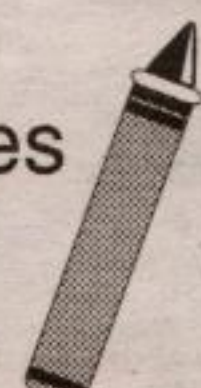
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