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MILTON FIREFIGHTERS battle the flames in a vacant house on John St. which was damaged by fire Thursday evening. It was the third vacant house in town to be destroyed by fire within a week and the Ontario Fire Marshal's office is investigating.

Arson or vandalism?

Third vacant house burned

Fire swept through a vacant house at 92 John St. in Milton Thursday evening around 11 p.m., gutting the frame house before firefighters could bring the flames under control.

It was the third empty home in Milton and district to be consumed by fire in seven days. A week earlier, two vacant farmhouses south and west of town had been destroyed in separate fires and an investigator from the Ontario Fire Marshal's office still had the first two fires under investigation when the third call came in.

Although there are strong suspicions at least one of the two rural homes was deliberately set on fire, investigator John McKenzie of the FMO, Toronto, said he wasn't yet sure about the John St. fire. "It may have been vandalism," he told The Champion, "and I don't know if there is any connection with the first two fires or not."

Similarities

The investigator told the newspaper there were similarities between the three fires, besides the fact each was an empty home and the fires all started at night. The fire appeared to have started around the base of the stairs leading to a second storey in two of the fires, he explained.

Firefighters were called at 11:02 p.m. Thursday when someone noticed flames in the John St. house, owned by sisters Rosemary and Wendy Demets of 1196 Steeles Ave., but the fire was well underway by then and the brigade was unable to bring it under control immediately. Fire Chief A. E. Clement said. The interior of the home was ruined and the fire got into the walls and roof and the chief suspected it could never be rebuilt.

Milton Police are also investigating the incident.

One was arson

Inspector McKenzie said he feels the first fire, a brick house on Derry Rd. just west of Milton Hospital, was "definitely arson". Besides a fire which appears to have started at the base of the stairs, he suspects there was a second fire set elsewhere in the house about the same time. That call was reported

to the firefighters at 1:27 a.m., April 10.

The second fire, a house on Bell School Line on the escarpment, was reported an hour and a half later. But it was virtually demolished by fire and the FMO investigator

had difficulty attributing a cause.

His investigation continues. Anyone having any information on any of the three fires can contact Chief Clement or inspector McKenzie in confidence.

Wants town washroom on "pay-as-you-go"

According to Milton Mayor Anne MacArthur, town washrooms should be operated on a "pay-as-you-go" basis. "The guy who left this to us left us a problem," she told council when the council considered the budget allowing over \$4,000 for the upkeep and maintenance of the public washrooms on Main St.

The washrooms were built at the request of the late P. L. Robertson who left money to the town to have the building built next to town hall.

Mayor MacArthur felt the toilets should be pay toilets. According to facilities Manager Larry Arbic, the way it works now is, "they go now, we pay later."

Parents to protest Dick School delay to Board on Thursday

Concerned Milton parents are planning a large delegation to Thursday evening's meeting of the Halton Board of Education, to protest delays in improvements to the W. I. Dick Public School which serves the northern ward of the town.

Mrs. Gail Currie of Kingsleigh Ct., who will speak on behalf of the town parents at Thursday's board meeting, said the Board has promised a gymnasium and general purpose room will be added to the Dick School but the Board's attempts to obtain expansion funds fell short of the mark and it appears the Dick project will have to be delayed.

"We feel it should be a priority item. W. I. Dick is the only public school in Halton without a gym and a proper library-resource centre," she said.

Rural parents

Mrs. Bev. Brown will also address the board Thursday.

Hydro increase

Increased rates for hydro service are almost certain for Milton this year. Milton Hydro Manager Oz Hadley said he had no idea how much the increase would be and ventured a guess that the increase wouldn't come before August.

He explained most of the Milton Commission's expenses are attributed to buying power from Ontario Hydro and rate increases from Ontario Hydro have to be reflected in consumer rates.

\$730,276 recreation budget is presented

"It's done beautifully and it will be hard to find where to cut it. You don't need any lessons in whitewashing."

Those were the comments of Mayor Anne MacArthur after she and members of Milton Council spent more than three hours reviewing the Parks and Recreation Department's \$730,276 operational budget. The budget reflects an increase of \$295,891 or 38.35 per cent. The budget projects revenue of \$297,776 leaving a net cost of \$450,500.

Recreation Director Bob Small and Director of Facilities Larry Arbic, said they wanted council, not staff, to make the decisions on where to cut the budget. Mr. Arbic said staff could find themselves in an awkward position if they cut budgets and then a ratepayer would go to a councillor. Arbic said it was at this point that councillors come back and ask why the cuts were made.

The budget includes \$44,023



UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S CLUB BOOKS

ONE LAST LOOK. Megan Thatcher takes a quick look through the books she's about to drop in the University Women's Club book bin at the plaza. The organization sells the donated books for fund raising purposes and would appreciate donations of any books.

Outright grants to seniors to help pay property taxes

Milton Council Monday night approved a plan sponsored by Councillor Don Gordon to provide certain senior citizens with outright grants to help pay their property taxes.

The amount of the grant is to be set by the administration committee and approved at a later date by council, but the figure is expected to be \$100 annually. To qualify for the grant, senior citizens must be 65 years of age by March 31, 1975, be receiving the Guaranteed Income Supplement, own and occupy the property in question and have been constantly assessed as the owner of residential real property in the Town of Milton for not less than five years, immediately preceding March 31, 1975.

No subsidies
Several Ontario municipalities, including Toronto and Oakville, have a similar plan. Its cost must be borne by the general taxpayer as no provincial subsidies are

available to support it. No one knows how many senior citizens may be eligible.

Voting in favor of the plan along with Councillor Gordon were Mayor MacArthur and Councillors Rick Day, Art Melanson, Marjorie Powys and Brad Clements.

In heated opposition were Councillors Russ Powadiuk, Jim Watson, Jim Kerr and Gord Krantz.

Any senior citizen, already can apply for a grant of 50 per

cent of his or her taxes with a maximum of \$150 per year. But this money must be paid back without interest when the property changes hands, and has a registered lien on the property. Six Milton residents participate in it.

Not repaid

The difference with the new plan proposed by Councillor Gordon is that the \$100 or whatever sum granted to each qualified senior citizen would not have to be repaid. Councillor Powadiuk called

the plan "regressive" and "very unfair", saying that "here we are helping the well-to-do (homeowners) and not those who have been renters of homes and apartments all these years, and who have paid their taxes through rents."

Councillor Watson warned that "if we keep giving away taxpayers' money we'll have liens on everyone's property."

He said only six residents were participating in the existing plan because of a lack of publicity, and urged council to have the plan advertised.

See it as lien

Councillors Day and Gordon argued that senior citizens who are property owners don't want to participate in the existing plan because "they regard a lien as a mortgage on the house when it's paid for" since the \$150 must be repaid. "It goes against the way they were brought up," remarked Councillor Day.

Inside today's Champion

Inside the Real Estate Marketplace tabloid section, Dave Pink does a photo-study on the "wheels of industry" in North Halton. Also in today's feature-packed issue:

Classifieds, 8 to 14.
Sports, 15 to 17, including a feature on Pierre Pilote.
Family page, B2.
Editorials, letters, B3.
Milton Chansonettes and director Judy Hunter, B5.
Robert Baldwin School's official opening, B8 and B9.
Beef summary day, B10.
Agricultural museum, and Knox Church history, B12.



AMONG THE GIFTS presented to the new Robert Baldwin School, Wilson Dr. at last week's official opening and dedication ceremonies were a portrait of The Queen given by the local IODE chapter and a painting of sad and happy faces, given by Halton Elementary Teachers Association. Students Susan Yoshida and Greg Newell accepted the gifts on behalf of the student body. For more coverage of the Baldwin opening, see pages B8 and B9.

Campground owners taking town to court

Scotch Block Parks Inc. developer of a proposed campground in the former Nassagaweya, is taking the Town of Milton to court to force the municipality to issue a building permit for the project.

Town Clerk Jack McGeachie told council Monday night two writs were served on the town late last week, and the case will be

heard at an unspecified date in the Supreme Court at Osgoode Hall, Toronto.

He noted the company has retained solicitor Jack Weir and called him the "most knowledgeable municipal solicitor in the province."

Council approved a motion by Councillor Russ Powadiuk, supported by Councillor Gord Krantz, to authorize the town's solicitors to engage a

lawyer to fight the case who is "expert in planning and zoning matters."

On Five Sideroad

The proposed campground, which has been in the wind since 1973, would be called Milton Crazy Horse Campgrounds and be located on Five Sideroad near the Town Line, on the former Ralph Anderson farm.

Area residents against the plan have charged it would include not only a camping sector but also a miniature golf course and a midway.

Mayor Anne MacArthur told council that Halton Region officials believe they are "very definitely involved" in the court case because it concerns access to a regional road.

"The region is prepared to

act," she said, noting that she would be appearing today (Wednesday) before the regional administration committee to urge a united front on the issue.

Residents opposed

Four residents who would be affected by the proposed campground appeared before council to support the town's fight against it, and

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New Recovery House will help alcoholics

Halton Recovery House, a 14-bed detoxification unit and recovery house for male alcoholics in Halton Region, is to open its doors at an undisclosed Milton location on Nov. 1, it was announced Monday.

Rev. Rod Lewis of Milton, chairman of a 30-person steering committee which has been organizing the project since last fall, told a news conference the site of the house may be selected at a public meeting in Milton April 28.

Informal plans indicate the house may operate on a \$70,000 annual budget during its first year of operation, with the Ontario Ministry of Health paying 80 per cent of the tab. The balance would come from contributions solicited across the region.

Special funds from the Federal Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation are available for the capital investment involved in purchasing a house outright or building one, but financial arrangements have not been finalized to date.

Near hospital

The house is to be affiliated with Milton District Hospital which made the initial suggestion for a recovery house to be organized, and the directors of the recovery house could decide to build a special house next to the hospital rather than buy a house in town.

The target population will be Halton residents known to have an alcoholic

problem to the extent that it affects their family, social and work relationships.

Persons who volunteer for treatment will be able to live at the house for three to six months, for example, until they can learn again to function normally in society.

"It will be geared to the needs of the individual so it will vary very much," said Peggy Palmer, director of Halton Region Centre of Addiction Research Foundation.

Damaged structure

Rev. Lewis says the length of treatment "depends on how badly his social structure has been damaged by drinking, for if he's lost his family and job it will take longer."

The patients at Halton Recovery House could leave during the day to work and then return at five o'clock as part of their rehabilitation, the news conference was told, but in such a case he would be required to pay board of possibly \$25 weekly to help pay for its operation.

Palmer said that at the moment there is no place in Halton for alcoholics to be cared for, and agencies must send persons to centres in Toronto and Hamilton.

She said some members of Alcoholics Anonymous do take problem alcoholics into their homes at times, but there is no wide-scale plan.

Is there a need for such a facility? "Yes, indeed" was the reply when the committee

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Sticky warnings

Visitors to Milton Memorial Arena parking in the wrong spots can expect to have a message glued to the windshield indicating that in future, it would be better if they parked in the proper area.

Milton Council directed Recreation Council Director Bob Small and Facilities Manager Larry Arbic to have messages printed on sticky paper and used for cars parked improperly.

The matter came up during a budget meeting Tuesday night when council was considering the parking problem at the new arena. Apparently cars are being parked in zones marked for no parking.