

Housing market now stable

July spelled "r-e-l-i-e-f" for area real estate, according to the Oakville, Milton and District Real Estate Board and steady sales activity, combined with growing consumer confidence, should mean the market will remain stable for the remainder of the year.

The dollar volume of sales last month totalled \$48.2 million, a shade lower than last July's total and slightly higher than June's total of \$45.8 million. Two hundred and fifty-two sales were recorded last month — three more than in July, 1991, and six more than sold in June of this year.

"The market is in fairly good shape right now," says Real Estate Board President Mark Mallalieu. "Conditions are stable and although sales will likely fluctuate somewhat until the end of the year, I think we can all breathe a cautious sigh of relief."

Mr. Mallalieu notes that although the number and dollar volume of sales is holding steady, there were only 534 new property listings registered last month with the Oakville, Milton and District Real Estate Board, down eight per cent from one year ago.

"Most people realize this is not a good time to make a killing in real estate," Mr. Mallalieu says.

"That tends to reduce the number of property listings by people on 'fishing expeditions' to see how much money they can get for their property."



Photo by KAREN SMITH

I would like...

Santa came to town a little early, but not too early for two-year-old Jennifer Hartley of Milton. She visited old St. Nick at National Trust Friday. He was there as part of the Milton Mall bank's MasterCard promotion — quite a change from Christmas cards.

Donate junk for garage sale

Has the rainy weather left you stuck inside cleaning out closets and now you don't know what to do with all those priceless treasures?

The Canadian Mental Health Association would be glad to take them off your hands. The organization is hosting its annual garage sale Sept. 19.

Household goods, junk jewellery, clothes, and other items are needed for the sale.

Items can be dropped off Monday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and Tuesday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. until September 15 at 341 Kerr St. (second floor) in Oakville. For more information, call 845-5044.

New rabies strain heading this way

A new strain of rabies spread mostly by raccoons is making its way toward southern Ontario, although "it's going to be a few years before it gets here," regional councillor Brad Clements told Milton municipal council Monday night.

How few years until the disease afflicts Ontario wildlife "could vary" according to a report released last week by Halton Region's health commissioner, Robert Nosal. Mr. Clements sits on the regional health committee.

Dr. Nosal said the new rabies strain has come north with raccoons from Florida steadily since the 1950s, and has reached western New York state, approximately 80 kilometres from the Canadian border. It's expected in Ontario "by 1994 or 1995."

Ontario traditionally has the highest animal rabies incidence in North America, Dr. Nosal pointed out in his report, with an average 2,000 cases per year. The disease is spread primarily by raccoons and skunks in the province, and skunks will be susceptible to the new raccoon strain, Dr. Nosal noted.

While Ontario animal rabies cases were down in 1991 to their lowest level in 20 years, outbreaks in western New York, primarily in raccoons, were 10 times the normal rate, Dr. Nosal said in his report.

One of the dangers posed by the raccoon outbreak is that the animal has so successfully adapted to living among humans. Dr. Nosal said that

in a recent survey, the Ministry of Natural Resources estimated there are 16 raccoons per square kilometre in an urban area of Scarborough, an east-end Toronto community.

In Halton, 20 animals were confirmed rabid in 1991 and 33 in 1990, Dr. Nosal said, primarily in the more densely populated southern municipalities of Oakville and Burlington.

A Ministry of Natural Resources program which immunizes foxes to rabies through oral vaccines placed in bait hasn't worked with foxes or skunks, Dr. Nosal said. A task force has been struck to come up with vaccine-bait raccoons will accept, as well as to study other methods of controlling the problem.

If raccoon rabies takes hold in Halton, various regional initiatives will be expanded, Dr. Nosal said.

Learn to make natural colours

Learn how colours of nature can be used in making practical articles for daily life at Bronte Creek Provincial Park Sunday, Aug. 30.

How to use natural materials from fields and forests to dye wool, fabric, and basket reed will be demonstrated at Spruce Lane Farm, the park's turn-of-the-century farmhouse.

Participants will take a guided walk at 2 p.m. and learn which plants, berries, and tree barks can be used as dyes.

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