

Home for the holidays brings back fond memories

HAVE YOUR SAY

with MAUREEN MCGEE

Whenever I visit Milton, I see

change. As Milton grows and prospers, new businesses open, old ones close, houses change colour and sometimes shape, new streets form and new people live on those streets.

This is no surprise in a community close to Metropolitan Toronto. What

always surprises me is the number of things that don't change.

I can look out the front window of my family home on Woodward Avenue and see the old familiar sights. At the end of the street the old high school still stands now used for primary students. A walk down

Martin Street takes me across the railroad tracks to the Mill Pond. I even see some familiar stores on Main Street.

It is this familiarity which makes it such a delight to come home to Milton for Christmas. I take my husband on long walks through town.

Milton has become a second home for him now. I take him down to W.I. Dick School and try to describe the round kindergarten, now gone. We pass a big, red, brick house and I say "That's where my grade four teacher used to live". We stroll by a white picket fence and I say teasingly "that's where I had my first kiss".

On Main Street, I try to remember exactly where the Roxy Theatre stood. I spent many happy hours there stuffing myself with delicious, fresh, hot popcorn supplied free of charge by an indulgent employer. I still think it's the best job I ever had.

As we walk in the downtown area or in the mall, I search for familiar faces, an old teacher, school chum or neighbour. It doesn't happen often these days, but every once in a while I am rewarded by a brief reunion.

We notice that Milton tries hard to preserve its past by marking houses and historical sites. Some old buildings have been renovated and restored. This helps me and my family keep our memories alive. I think back to my childhood and school days. My mother can remember the days when her father was a local businessman and, at one time, Mayor. Milton will grow and prosper, I'm sure. I only hope it never changes too much.

All over Canada and the United States, people like me will be returning to their hometowns for Christmas. It's part of what makes Christmas such a wonderful season. Some people might not make it home all year, but everyone tries to get home for Christmas.

Some time in 1993 my husband and I will be moving to a small town in Northern Ontario. I am looking forward to returning to small town life. It is a nice town but it's not the place where I grew up. It's not home.

Maureen Magee is a former resident of Milton who lives and works in Toronto.

Historic celebration for society

Old-time customs highlighted a Christmas event held by the Milton Historical Society December 18 at Hugh Foster Hall.

Helen McNeil at the piano and husband Len on the mouth organ led the carol singing.

The program included readings by Lou Bradley and Peggy Reid, and a zany radio skit performed by Walt and Ann Elliot, Peggy Reid and Ken Lamb.

The event brought warm memories for the McNeils. They first met several decades ago while singing with the Bethan, Ont. choir.

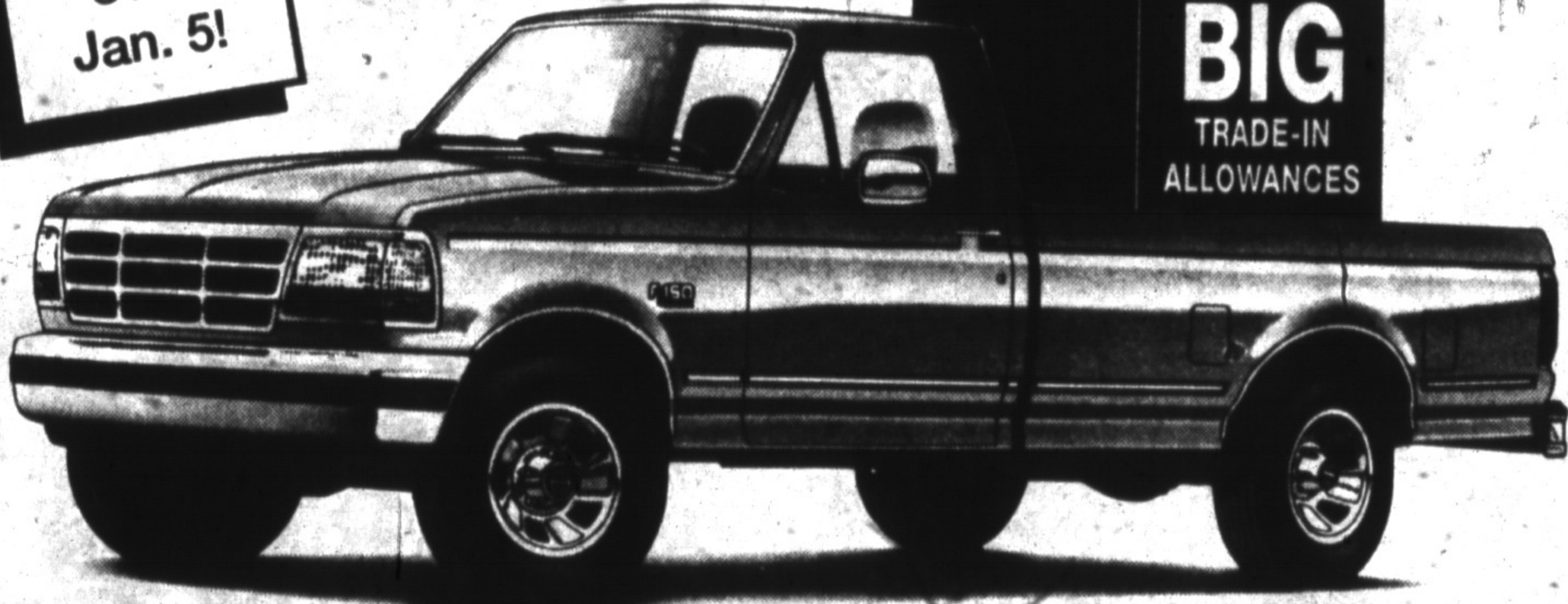
Helen became a well-known music teacher. Len is a former president of the Milton Historical Society and in the mid-1980s was chosen as Milton's Citizen of the Year.

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