

TREE TOPPLED

Millaire rejects cutting claims

Lucien Millaire, Russell Township roads superintendent, has stated emphatically that neither the township nor any of its employees are deriving any direct benefits from municipal tree cutting operations.

Mr. Millaire was reacting to a letter from Marvelville resident Robert McDougall in which concerns were raised over the manner in which the township selects, cuts and disposes of trees on public property.

Citing the recent cutting of a "beautiful, live oak tree" beside the Boundary Road in front of his property, Mr. McDougall said "it appeared to me that the valuable log from this tree was destined for sawmilling into lumber."

He wanted to know how much the log was worth and if Russell Township received the money, noting "it is inconceivable to me that after trimming the felled tree into a log suitable for sawmilling that it would then be removed and merely scrapped for firewood."

Scrapped is exactly what was done with it, Mr. Millaire said. The township recently revised its policy on the disposal of felled trees in response to the growing demand for firewood. Excess branches are trimmed off and the main part of the tree is left for 48 hours after which time, if no one helps themselves to it, it is hauled to a site near the township garbage dump. Although scavengers have been prohibited from the garbage dump, the wood is free to be picked up. Under the old policy, it was



burned along with the garbage.

"I can guarantee that no wood went to any employees and that it didn't go to any sawmill," he said, referring to the tree that was cut in front of Mr. McDougall's. He added that, as in all cases, he personally inspected the tree and determined that it was at least 50 per cent dead and useless for milling.

Admittedly not a tree expert, he felt his decision on which trees to cut was accurate nine out of 10 times and "we'd be spending all our money on professionals if we had to call one in every time there was a tree to be cut."

He allowed that perhaps extra pains could be taken to notify nearby property owners before a tree on township land was cut "but I think we would still have to go ahead and cut in the majority of cases. We do not go around cutting trees with malicious intent."

The right of abutting property owners to the benefits of healthy trees on township land is legislated by bylaw. Benefits include protection against the weather and prevention of soil erosion. The township enacted legislation earlier this year to protect trees on public property against indiscriminate cutting by wood scavengers.

Russell Township Reeve Gaston Patenaude said the controversy of whether the tree should have been cut was a difference of opinion "and I think the roads superintendent is qualified in most cases to be the judge. Even experts are wrong sometimes." As for taking a presumably dead tree to a sawmill. "I can't see it."

Mr. McDougall said that the opinion of a neighbor who is a professional forester was that it was unnecessary to cut the tree.

After pirates, disease

Boat refugees settle in Kenmore

After contending with pirates on the high seas and disease-ridden Indonesian refugee camps, a family of three Vietnamese women has settled into Kenmore.

While life has taken a dramatic turn for the better, the mother and two daughters have some little complications to iron out in their new environment. For example, how to convert a package of dry flakes into vegetable soup. The ladies learned the secret from Rev. Jim Paul as they chatted in the kitchen of their rented home.

Rev. Paul is part of committee drawn from four local churches which banded together to sponsor a "Boat People" family. The committee raised enough money to support the newcomers, who arrived March 3 for a full year.

Refugee mother Ha A Muoi and daughters Diep Sao Linh, 24, and Diep Sao Kenh, 30, have been set up in a tidy home owned by Dwight and Barbara McRuer.

Rev. Paul and a Castor Review

reporter called on the threesome one day recently. Weather conditions were spring-like but frigid by Vietnamese standards.

Linh and Kenh, who have adopted the English names Jenny and Jeanette, speak and understand English which they learned in Saigon. Muoi knows no English and relies on her daughters to keep her posted.

Linh, who does most of the family's talking, told the story. They left Saigon last June 5 after living conditions under the Viet Cong became intolerable. Freedom under the new regime became obsolete, Linh said. Passage was booked aboard a refugee ship bound for Indonesian island camps. The price? Eight gold pieces each. About 350 people were crammed onto the 18-metre long ship, she said. Conditions were so cramped that passengers had to remain squatted most of the time. Whiel the ship was filthy, disease did not set in

during the journey. Three days out, the refugees met another ship whose occupants said they had been sent to take part of the human load and deliver to a camp.

"Many people went on the other ship including my mother," Linh recalled. "But those men had guns and other weapons and they made the people give them everything they owned."

The men on the other ship were Thailanese pirates, she said. There were several other encounters with pirates during the voyage and refugees were robbed of everything of any value including eyeglasses.

"An old woman died after pirates took all of her belongings. I think her heart stopped."

That was the only death during the trip which culminated when a Malaysian Navy boat towed the refugee ship to an island camp.

Before flying to Canada towards the end of February the family was shunted from island camp to island camp over several months. The death rate from malaria and other sicknesses was one refugee a day, Linh said. She feels the family fared well considering the fate of others displaced from Vietnam.

The threesome has gone shopping in Ottawa where Linh discovered that it really is a small world. In a Somerset Street store, she bumped into a friend she attended school with in Saigon. The family's Kenmore neighbors have gone out of their way to make them feel welcome. The newcomers have received several visits and little gifts not to mention heaps of advice on how to adjust to life in Canada.



CASTOR VIETNAMESE VISIT HILL

Kenmore Rev. Jim Paul poses with his new Vietnamese neighbors from left, Ha A Muoi, Diep Sao Kenh, Diep Sao Linh during a recent visit to Parliament Hill. (Estelle Yaternick Photo)

Castor Chatter



One a month, Micheline and the girls get together for some good food, a little wine, and lots of friendly conversation. It's all part of belonging to the Gourmet Club of Russell, brainchild of Micheline Drevniok, which boasts eight members dedicated to sophisticated cuisine. The fledgling club is exclusively female, Mrs. Drevniok's policy a simple: "The men can form their own club. The atmosphere is much more relaxed without them around." The first outing was to Chateau 417 where Mrs. Drevniok said members were treated royally by Chef Peppi who laid on an unforgettable spread and several varieties of wine. Future plans call for visits to several Ottawa restaurants and a day-long train excursion to Montreal to sample that city's culinary delights. Membership is \$25 a month which covers cost of meals; any excess cash will be divided equally at the end of the year.

Declining business has resulted in the closing of McNeill's Variety Store leaving Kenmore without a local spot to pick up a loaf of bread or quart of milk. The closing follows by more than a year the demise of Yves Gravelle's store down the street. Noreen McNeill said business began dropping drastically just before Christmas and never picked up again. Mrs. McNeill was behind the counter for three years and doesn't object to a break from the storekeeping routine. The question being asked around the hamlet now is: Will the gap be filled or will Kenmore remain storeless?

Russell's Old-Time Music Makers are certainly living up to their name. During the past year, the 25 musicians of the group strummed, plunked, tinkled and tooted sweet music together at a dozen dances. The big banquet-dance winding up the second year of operations will be held at the Dr. Frank Kinnaird Community Centre March 21. Outgoing president Lorne Wade will introduce the new executive made up of Hugh Latimer, president; Sterling Presley, vice-president; Ron Conway, secretary; and directors Eddie Jones, Alex Little, Marg Thompson and Jean-Paul St. Pierre. The non-profit group operates on a membership basis. Last year, the more than 200 members raised \$1,200 which was used to buy tables and chairs for the community centre. This year's money has yet to be allocated.

And speaking of music, the Russell Dance Band is going stronger than ever. Band spokesman Walter Cherry said the 11 musicians and songstress Betty Crerar, of Vernon, play regular engagements in the area and as far away as Chesterville and Winchester. "We sometimes play for a modest amount of money but we play mostly for charities," he said. The band is a throwback to the once-popular Russ Hay Orchestra of Russell.

Where does news of the approval of the Boundary Road as a link to Highway 417 leave the North Road? According to Russell Township Reeve Gaston Patenaude, the mile-and-a-half lunar stretch at the top of the North Road could soon become the responsibility of the Ottawa-Carleton region and be upgraded, even paved this summer. The section is now the charge of Cumberland Township. Meanwhile, he said he is trying to persuade the people at Prescott-Russell Counties to pave the remaining miles of the road to Russell.

Public speaking just isn't a grabber for today's teenagers, Metcalfe's Ron Isaac suspects. Otherwise, why haven't Metcalfe and Osgoode Lions been swamped with entires in their effective speaking contest scheduled for March 21. The Lions are having difficulty mustering any interest at all in the contest, restricted to high school students. Ron points out that the local winner who gets \$25 could go on to compete for big prize money at the regional level.

Still in the public speaking category, Sarah-Jean Blair, a 10-year-old Grade 5 student was picked top talker at Greely Public School Feb. 27. Sarah-Jean delivered a whimsical speech on the delight of being a cotton ball. You had to be there.

Russell's Block Parent program, a huge success in itself, has also been instrumental in cementing relations between village residents and Casselman OPP. That comes from a man who knows, Cons. Georges Barre, who helped organize the service and screens applications. Block Parent meetings provided a forum for Cons. Barre to explain difficulties with police work and to field complaints that the OPP was neglecting Russell. The relationship between police and Russell residents has improved considerably as a result, the officer says.

The informal partnership of Barbara Overell and Brenda Maahs is a boon for wholesome food lovers of the Castor. Brenda moved into Barbara's Greely Cheese Shop in November and set up a line of natural foods. In addition to Barbara's Balderson cheese, shoppers can pick up whole flours, spices, herbs, nuts, fresh eggs, honey, and handicrafts fashioned by local artists. Joining forces has been a resounding success, Barbara says.

Never let it be said that Doctor Gerry Heymans isn't quick to break the ice. Doc Heymans, who is inheriting the Russell Village family physician trust from Doctor Frank Kinnaird, had a little get-together at the local community centre to introduce himself to the folks. About 30 potential patients turned out to take a look at the new MD.

POETS OF THE CASTOR Box 359, Russell, Ont.

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