

Change of season means driving changes

Driving in autumn requires special precautions. You need to adjust your driving habits to changing conditions.

The days are shorter, which means more driving in the dark. And driving after dark is more hazardous, since there's less visibility. Even during the day there can be reduced visibility. Smoke and haze hang in the air and in some areas people may burn leaves. You might see patches of fog and there's often more rain than usual.

When you consider all these

visibility problems, daytime running lights (low beams or other running lights), make sense. While they don't do much for your vision, they certainly let other drivers see you. You're also prepared, no matter what the weather or light conditions - rain, fog, overcast, dusk.

Daytime running lights will be a feature on all 1990 motor vehicles and their use will soon be made law in Canada. (For special U.S. regulations, see Canadians May Break Law story on this page.)

You can reduce your driving

risks further by following a few simple rules.

Night driving

- * Check headlights, tail-lights and directional signals before starting out at night.

- * Clean headlights and windshield. You'll be more likely to avoid an accident if you can see better.

- * Check to see if headlights are properly aimed - for your view and for other drivers.

- * Give your eyes time to adjust to darkness. After you leave a lighted building, wait a few minutes before driving.

- * Don't drink and drive. Alcohol slows recovery of vision from the effects of glare.

- * Don't wear sunglasses at night. They are not designed for reducing headlight glare.

- * Don't smoke. Nicotine and carbon monoxide can reduce your vision when it's dark. It also puts a film on your windows.

- * Keep your headlights on low beam when other drivers are around.

- * Reduce your speed. Since you can't see as well, you won't have as much time to stop as you would in daylight.

- * Increase your following distance at night.

- * Never stop on any roadway unless it's an emergency. Other drivers can't tell if your car is moving or not until it's too late.

- * Take curves slower at night. Headlights pointing straight ahead will shine off the road, further decreasing your view of the road ahead.

Driving in fog

- * Slow down gradually. If you slow down too fast, a vehicle behind you may not stop in time. But if you don't slow down at all, you may hit the driver in front of you.

- * Don't turn on your high beams. They will cause a glare.

- * Run the windshield wipers and washer.

- * Turn on the defroster and

fan.

- * It may help to roll the side window down part way. Then you can hear road noises including other cars.

- * Try to pick up and follow the right edge of the road for guidance.

- * Avoid hunching forward to see better. You'll see more if you sit normally.

- * Be alert for cars that may have pulled off on to the shoulder.

- * Passing other vehicles in the fog is dangerous. Slow down if someone tries to pass you.

- * If you can't see at all, pull off

Canadians may break law in U.S.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) is concerned that some Canadians travelling in the U.S. will be breaking the law unavoidably.

To lower the incidence of daytime crashes, motor vehicles sold in Canada beginning with 1990 models must be equipped with Daytime Running Lights (DRL) that operate automatically whenever the vehicle is running.

People owning such a vehicle may encounter problems when travelling in the U.S. because of peculiarities in vehicle lighting codes making the lights that meet Canadian standards illegal in some states.

Last October the National Highway Traffic Administration turned down a petition from IIHS seeking reconsideration of the agency's decision not to permit that optional use of DRL in the U.S.

The Institute has asked for a federal standard for manufacturers who might wish to voluntarily install DRL. A federal regulation would preempt state laws that might prohibit their use.

the road. Leave your parking lights on, start your flashers, and sound your horn from time to time.

- * If your vehicle stalls and you can't get it off the road, carefully place warning flares several hundred feet back from the car. Turn on the four-way flashers and leave on the regular lights.

Driving in rain

- * Reduce speed and allow extra following distance. This is true even for light showers. The water can lift accumulated oil from the pavement and cause intermittent "slicks." And roads can be just as slick in light rain as in heavy rain.

- * Keep your defroster running. It will help you keep the inside of your windshield free of moisture.

- * Remember that rain-storm visibility is very poor through your windshield and almost zero on sides and to the rear.

- * Be aware, also, that what you see in the rear view mirror may be distorted by rain on the window.

- * Be careful when passing.

- * Beware of wet leaves. They can be as slippery as ice. Slow down before you get to the leaf-covered spot.

- * Watch for pedestrians. If they're dodging puddles or huddling under umbrellas, they may not see you.

- * Try to avoid driving through large puddles of water. If you must drive through, place your left foot lightly on the brake pedal while you're pressing your right foot on the accelerator. This helps keep water from the brake linings.

- * Check your wipers frequently to be sure they're in good shape. And make sure the washer fluid is full.

- * Even after a heavy rain has stopped, be on the alert for poorly drained streets and highways that may be covered with water too deep for safety at normal speeds.

Dr. Mark Woldnik

Dr. Mark Woldnik wishes to announce the opening of his medical practice at The McCausland Hospital Medical Centre.

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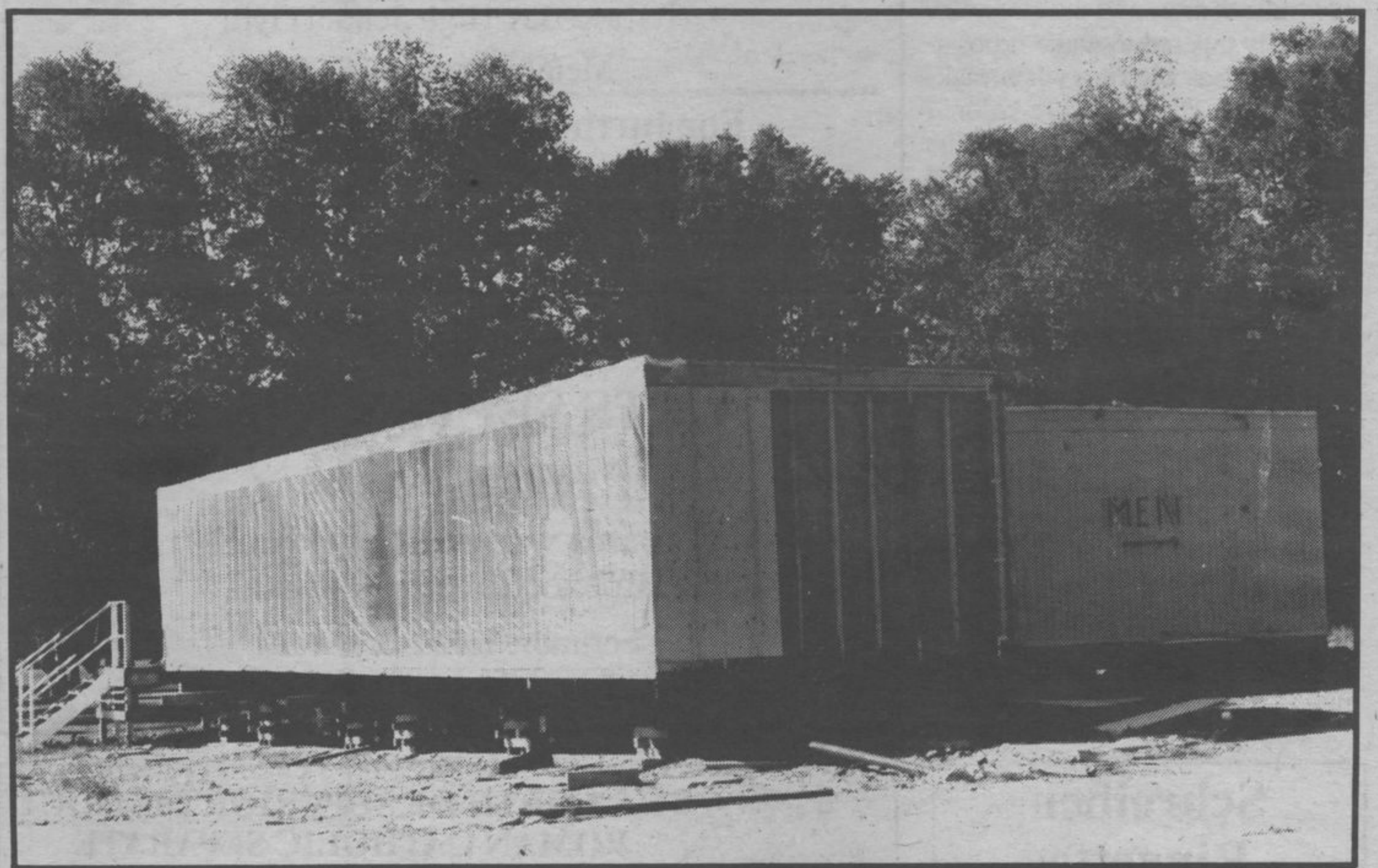
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The portable golf clubhouse buildings are being shipped away to prepare for the permanent building expected to be built next year. Cost of the new club house is expected to be \$280,000. Photo by Dave Chmara

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