

Clean sweep honored as custodian retires

By BRUCE STAPLEY
When Morley Davis first set foot inside Ballantrae Public School, he had no plans to stay so long.

However, for Morley, school's out. He recently retired as chief custodian after 18 years.

He'll be missed. When Morley announced his intent to put away his mop and broom, he was flooded with farewell cards from staff and students alike.

The majority acknowledged his efforts above and beyond the call of duty.

While teachers thanked him for installing a shelf here and putting up a chalk board there — for always being there — the children remembered him as a caring grandfather figure.

"I'll always remember how you let me in the school one cold winter day," one pupil wrote. "You did it because you cared. Everyone will remember you at Ballantrae, especially me."

School sweater

Morley was presented with a school sweater by the Grade 8s. The Special Ed students gave him some handcrafts they'd made in class.

Morley says he'll never forget the kids.

"They'd call me Gramps," he remembers fondly. "They'd see me in town and call out 'Hi Gramps'. It would really surprise their parents."

At the same time, Morley recalls administering much-needed discipline on occasions to students who hadn't mastered the art of respect for people and property.

"I remember the time a boy came to the caretakers' office with a broken pencil sharpener. He demanded it be fixed immediately. He very nearly kicked the door down coming in. We dealt with the situation as we saw fit. That lad was a perfect gentleman after that," he says.

Long career
Morley's skills as a caretaker were augmented by his experience as a carpenter in the



Photo: JIM THOMAS

School's out for Ballantrae Public School Chief Custodian Morley Davis. He's retiring after 18 years of service at the school, and was given a fond farewell from staff and students. He's seen a lot since he began working there and says computers brought about the biggest changes for students.

1940s and '50s. He also worked with DeHaviland Aircraft six years and later as a custodian at Summitview Public School in Stouffville for two years.

Morley's duties at Ballantrae included looking after both the main school building and the Vivian Outdoor Resource Centre.

He has watched a steady procession of teachers come and go and has served under six principals.

"It's always been a good place to work and close to home," he states.

Morley was a caretaker at the time of 'the great fire' that destroyed the old school in 1973.

"The children of some of the kids who were here when I first started are coming here now."

Underwear blues

Many common but memorable recollections come to mind like the day a child fell in the mud during the building of the new school. Morley washed his clothes and hung them out to dry in the boiler room. The boy sat in class in his underwear.

What are Morley's plans? Nothing specific, he says. But he sees no problem keeping busy.

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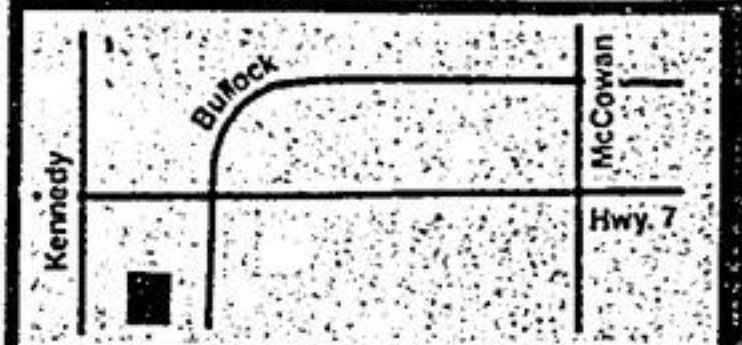


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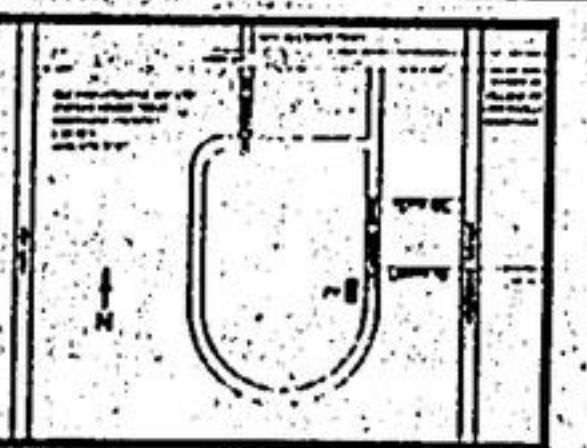
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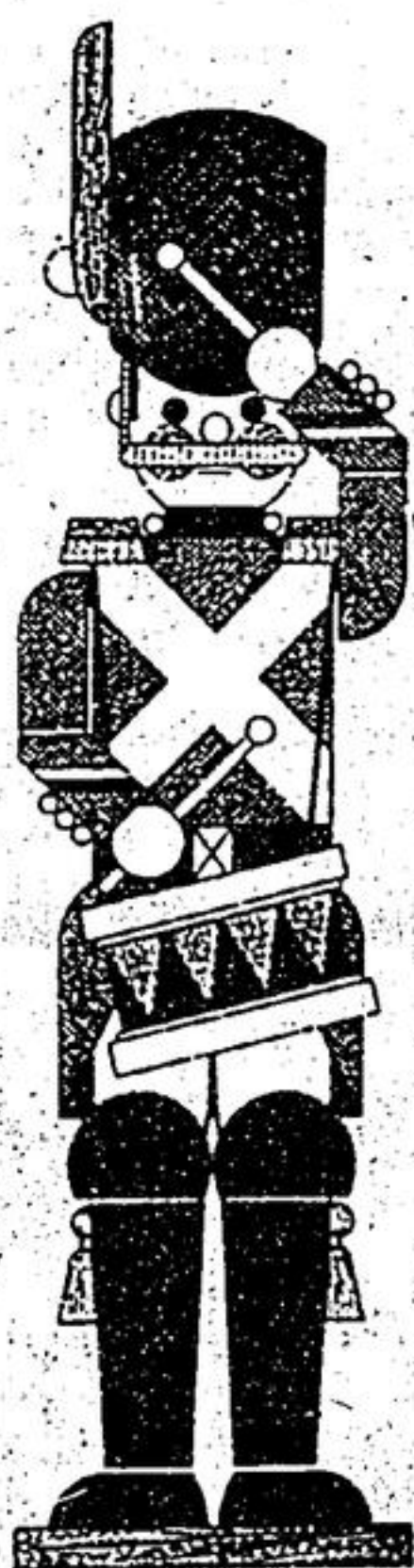
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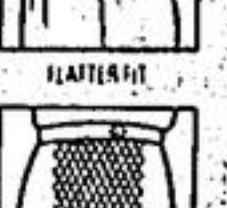
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