

C.M.H.C. BACKS MERIDIAN

Peter Robinson's job is to give away 200 million dollars.

Mr. Robinson is a national consultant for Robert Andras, the Federal Minister in charge of housing. The \$200 million is to go toward innovative and experimental housing projects across Canada.

Citizen Participation?

Recently, Mr. Robinson came up with a new approach on giving this money away. He decided to consult with some of the people in the area where a new housing project was to be built.

That was his first mistake.

His second mistake was in proposing to finance a project by Meridian Development Company. His third mistake was in consulting people who have had experience with Meridian's methods and plans.

His final mistake was in coming to the people with an almost finalized proposal for Homewood Avenue that left very little room for citizen participation or control.

He should have left well enough alone. The group that met with Mr. Robinson represents many of the agencies and associations in the Don District. They also represent the Social Planning Council, the Planning Board and Co-operative Habitat Association.

The Background

Meridian's proposed building on Homewood Ave. will be thirty stories high, containing bachelor, one and two-bedroom units. It sounds suspiciously similar to the new middle-income building that Meridian has planned for Sherbourne St. (innovative? experimental??)

Meridian originally applied to build it with private funding, but when they heard about Andras' \$200,000,000 fund for experimental low-income housing, they decided to make it a condominium (which means the residents own their own individual units), and let the C.M.H.C., the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation in Ottawa, make special arrangements for selling the units as 'low-income' housing. So it appears that Meridian is now financing their projects with our public funds.

Mr. Robinson hinted that residency could be restricted to local people, and that buying terms could involve no down-payments and low mortgage installments. Observers at the meeting were skeptical, as prices for the average two-bedroom unit would be \$22,000 and \$16,000 for the one-bedroom units (low-income?)

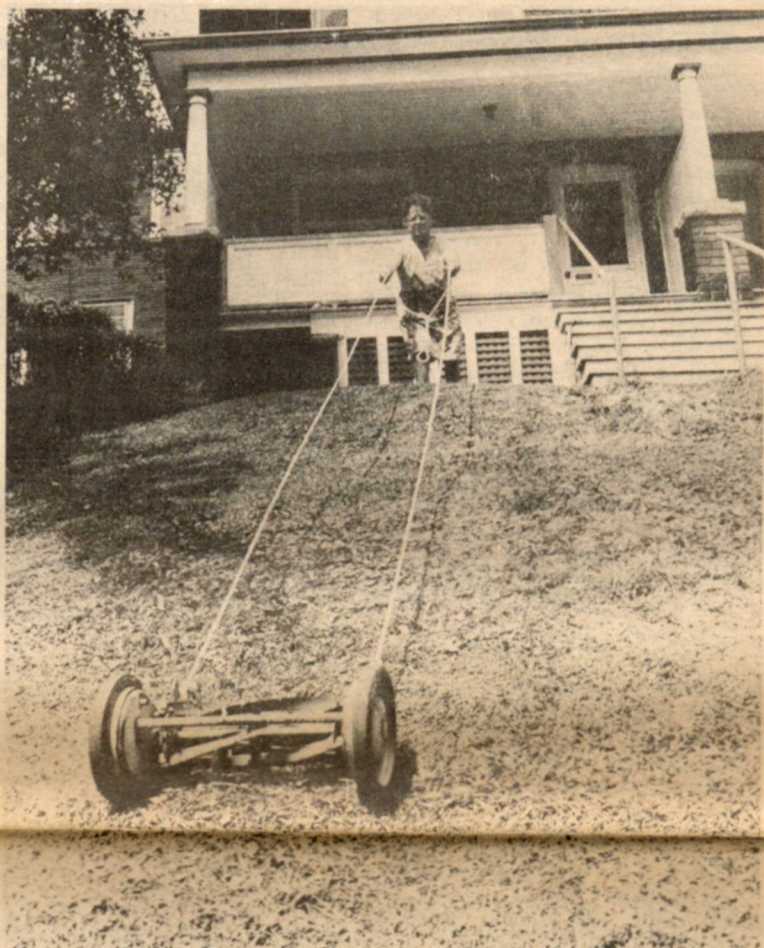
The people who met with Mr.

Robinson objected to the proposal on several other grounds. First, the most pressing need for housing in that area is for large families. Small units bring greater profit for the developer, and so the Homewood proposal contains no units above the two-bedroom size. Secondly, they objected to the height of the building: again, tall buildings are more profitable to build. Thirdly, they objected to the idea that people would have no significant say in any aspect of the project except the marketing of the units.

New Group Formed

After meeting with Mr. Robinson and Mr. Stewart Bourne of the federal government, the group decided to keep meeting to discover ways they could acquire more control over future federal participation in local housing projects. And they've decided to write directly to Mr. Robert Andras and let him know how they feel about the proposed Meridian project. They are also writing a letter to the City about Meridian's tactics in the area south of St. James Town.

The group that Mr. Robinson brought into being is called the Don District Housing Committee and there will be more news about them later.



Seven News Photo by Charlotte Sykes

Is the High-Rise tide going to force out this kind of ingenuity? Mrs. Gladys Day of Withrow Avenue invented this method of coping with her particular high rise problem.

EVICTIION NOTICES FOR S.S.J.T.

by Roberta Sankey

There are eleven families on Bleeker Street, and some on other streets in the South of St. Jamestown area, who have been given notice by Meridian Property Management to move by the end of this month. Meridian is not ready to build on this site. They have not got sufficient property or the zoning-change necessary to build high-rise.

A lot of these families have no place to go, so they will not be moving. We of the South St. Jamestown Residents' Association are asking for people to stand behind these families. Meridian wants these families out because they believe they have no rights because they are poor. Some of these tenants have been objecting to Meridian's slumlord tactics in the area; Meridian's solution is to get rid of them.

So help these people. To find out about meetings, phone 924-5135 or 924-8887.

Extra

On Tuesday August 11th, the South of St. Jamestown Residents Association met with Philip Roth, general manager of the Meridian Development Corporation. The primary question at this public meeting was the question of the impending demolitions.

The meeting was stormy and hectic, and in the opinion of many people present, Mr. Roth put on an incredible performance. But serious suggestions were made both by Mr. Roth, and by people at the meeting.

The most important of these was that concerning leasing arrangements for the houses. Mr. Roth, when pressed, said that he would not give leases directly to tenants save on a month to month basis. Although such an arrangement would lower rents considerably, it gave no security to the tenant, and gave no guarantee that repairs would be made. Further, it would mean that Meridian could go on demolishing houses when it saw fit.

Many people thought such an arrangement was not fair. After all, they asked, was it not true that even if Meridian applied for rezoning in the next few days it would be a year before that rezoning was approved? Why couldn't a lease be given for at least a year?

Mr. Roth replied by saying that he would be willing to recommend to the directors of Meridian that a lease be given for a year, but on the condition that it was in the name of Alderman John Sewell. He refused to give the same type of lease to tenants themselves, or to a neighbourhood corporation.

That offer turned out to be

the salient point of the meeting. Various other complaints were put up - mostly concerning middle-men and imminent demolition (on the next day Mr. Roth hinted that maybe 45 houses were soon to be demolished) - but no headway was made.

The offer that John Sewell become the landlord of some of the buildings in St. Jamestown is being discussed by Sewell and residents as this paper goes to press. If accepted, and if Mr. Roth and Meridian doesn't back down on the offer, it could mean that Sewell will turn management of the properties over to a corporation of local citizens, and that repairs will be made, rents will be cut in half, and no houses will be demolished. If the matter is resolved satisfactorily, it could mean that tenants have complete say in the management and rent structure of their buildings, and that the community itself will become its own landlord. But we will have to wait and see.

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Broadview Y Site for Housing ?

The YMCA is considering a change in their property and facilities at the Broadview site where they have maintained a building with swimming pool, gym and playing fields for about 60 years.

Broadview Y has seen better times - when the playing fields were crowded and the Boys' Brigade won prizes for their vegetables grown on the site and exhibited at the Fall Fair held there, one of the largest in southern Ontario, 60 years ago. But now the building with its old equipment has become expensive to maintain; the playing fields aren't that busy except in the summer - artificial ice is too expensive for the neighbourhood demands. Some residents feel that the four dollar membership fee is a deterrent for many children - the day camp this summer has about 400 children which represents the participation from East Toronto and the program is subsidized. The Y and its land look something like a private club.

The Y expects to be able to state what its plans are within a month and has suggested to the Riverdale Community Organization that they meet to discuss the proposal. Mr. Bradley, managing director of the YMCA, feels that the Y should be providing a more functional service to the community. He

mentions the great need in Toronto for dignified family housing and expresses the hope that the local community will become involved.

And the local community very much want to become involved for they naturally have their fears. Housing suggests to them the gloom of highrise above their single family dwellings, the problems of access, litter and the effect on land values, positive and negative, that generally accompany a large increase in population in a small area. They are aware of ready-made examples of these problems.

Citizen participation is real if it means involvement before plans are made. If the Y intends a development that would change the zoning and building types, they should not suggest that something else might happen. The housing corporations, mortgagers, and developers should be aware of what type of facilities they are helping to create. The Y is a private organization and can't be expected to take on the responsibility and the role in community life that should be filled by the City. The situation has the possibilities of a vital addition to the community. The decisions that are made are extremely important for they will point the way for the future of the area.

News in Brief

As some of you probably know, the first editor of Seven News has resigned. After struggling through two issues without an editor, it has become increasingly obvious how important it is to have one. We have a new candidate for the position, Bob Parkins, who is willing to take over now. There will be a meeting of the Ward 7 community paper, Seven News, to discuss and vote on his candidacy, at the Parliament St. Library House, 265 Gerrard St. East, Thursday, August 20 at 7:30. If you have been thinking about getting involved with the paper, here's your chance! Come along and get acquainted.

A meeting to discuss the problem of the Belt Line right-of-way with people in this ward has been called for August 20th at 8.00 p.m. at the Regent Park United Church on Oak St. (S.E. of Parliament and Gerrard in Regent Park North). The Ward 7 aldermen will be there.

Anyone interested in talking about the issue and telling the aldermen what position they should take should attend this meeting.

A Free Information Service is being given at the Neighbourhood Information Post, 265 Gerrard St. E., 924-2543. This is a service for residents of the district and is being given by volunteer residents from the area and a few professionals.

The Neighbourhood Information Post will tell you what is going on in the district and if they don't know, they will find out. The Neighbourhood Information Post will tell you where you can get the best help if you have a problem.

The Post is open Monday to Friday from 9:30 - 11:30, 1:30 - 3:30 and 7:00 - 10:00 except Tuesday evenings.

Free Legal Information is given on Monday and Thursday evenings. The coffee pot is always on, and volunteers would enjoy having you drop in for a chat, to look around, or to answer your enquiry.

Many who use the Subway exit on Chester Ave., just north of Danforth, complain about the fact that they have to take their lives in their hands every time they try and cross Danforth Avenue. Presently there are traffic lights at both Jackman and Logan, but both of these are inconvenient for people using the subway.

A meeting has been called to discuss the issue of relocating the traffic light. It will be held in St. Barnabas Church, Hampton and Danforth, on Wednesday, August 19th, at 8.00 p.m. The aldermen from the ward will be there. Anyone interested in this, or any other issues in that area, should attend this meeting.

Two festivals will be held in the St. Jamestown area during the week of August 17th. In St. Jamestown proper, a week-long festival, sponsored by the local residents and the YMCA will be held for St. Jamestown residents only.

In conjunction with this, and as their contribution to that festival, a second festival will be held on August 22nd and 23rd in the Churchyard of St. Simon's Church on Howard Street.

Festival North as it is called is sponsored by George Brown College, the Social Planning Council and the Inter-faith Community Action Project and is sub-titled, "a marketplace of citizen and community services."

Participating in the Festival, with booths in the yard, are Metro Tenant's Association, Neighborhood Information Post, Stop Spadina, Seven News, Pollution Probe, Co-op Day Nurseries Association, Children's Aid Society, Parliament Street Library, the C.R.C. and others.

Outdoor entertainment is also planned and should include Folk Singers, Rock Groups, a Dixieland Band, poetry reading, and Children's theatre. Festival North is free and open to all residents in Ward Six and Seven.

Todmorden Mills Historical Site on Pottery Road in the Don Valley will be the scene of a Gay Nineties Picnic on Sunday, August 16, from 1-6 p.m. Pack a lunch - you can bring the whole family. Or, you will be able to buy cold drinks and coffee for 10 cents, sandwiches from 25-40 cents. Tables will be supplied, croquet games-recorded music in the park. No admission to the park. Admission to the three historical buildings is 50 cents for adults, 25 cents for children. Entrance from Bayview or Broadview Avenues by car; the Broadview bus stops at Pottery Road.

The Christian Youth Centre at Gerrard and Parliament is running a summer program including crafts, Bible stories, gym activities, and Friday picnics. For ages 6-9, the hours are 10.00-12.00 noon; for 10-13, between 2.00 and 4.00 p.m.

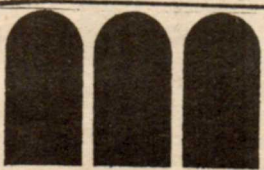
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Penny Carnival and Monte Carlo Night

On Tuesday, August 4th, WoodGreen Community Centre once again operated a Penny Carnival and Monte Carlo night in the Centre for the people in the WoodGreen community. The Monte Carlo and Penny Carnival usually start at 7.30 p.m. and finish at 8.45 but the enthusiasm and desire to "have another chance at it" delayed closing until 9.15 p.m.

A total of approximately 250-300 participants flooded the doors at opening Our next Monte Carlo and Penny Carnival on Tuesday, August 25th at 7.30 p.m. This will be our concluding activity for the summer and here's hoping it will be the best one yet.

Mario Ferri, Family Programme Co-Ordinator.



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Behind Meridian ...

THE SMELL OF SUCCESS

Who are those few individuals who really participate in planning Ward 7? Certainly not the people. Not the planning staff. Sometimes the planning board. More often, developers and a few council men. It is because of this 'balance' of power that the St. Jamestown project first happened, and is continuing to expand to the north and south.

In 1966 a New Plan for Toronto was produced for public discussion ("to achieve the widest public understanding"). The plan called for low density housing in South of St. Jamestown and the area to the north (now Phase Seven). Meetings were held, and people went home believing that their residential area would be preserved. This New Plan was to become part of Toronto's Official Plan.

But before it became official, it was intercepted. On November 27, 1967, the Committee on Buildings and Development asked the Planning Staff to do a special study. Included in their request were two suggestions: (1) that the boundaries of the downtown core area be extended to the Don Valley, and (2) that the high density area be extended east to Parliament St.

Suggestion number one was made on a motion by Alderman Rotenberg. Suggestion number two was the result of a secret discussion, of which no minutes were kept, by a committee set up by Alderman Rotenberg.

Mr. Barker, the chief planner of the City of Toronto, recommended in his report to the Planning Board that the area should remain low density.

Then, on November 8, 1968, the Planning Board met, and a number of curious events occurred. There was a submission made by Mr. Roth of Meridian Property Management. Mr. Ross and Alderman Menzies (both of the Planning Board) asked if Mr. McCallum (of Meridian) could speak for Mr. Roth, but their request was turned down since the Planning never hears deputations. They look at them. So Mr. Ross asked the Board if they would read Mr. McCallum's statement, and they agreed. They also agreed to ask him questions.

Mr. Barker was again asked for his opinion. His answer this time was that higher densities in that area were a possibility, but not without further studies.

Despite Mr. Barker's recommendation, Aldermen Beavis and Menzies then suggested that point 2 from the B & D Committee be accepted (e.g. that the high-density area be extended to Parliament above Carlton, and to Blecker between Carlton and Gerrard). The

Planning Board accepted their suggestion.

However, point 1 was not accepted. This meant that point 2 still had to be subjected to further study before the developer's proposed re-zoning could be carried out by the Planning Board.

It is interesting to note in passing that the Planning Board consists of private citizens and elected aldermen, all nominated to the Board by Council. They are supposed to represent the interests of the community.

With point 2 accepted, the report went back to the Buildings and Development Committee. At this time the existing low-density zoning in the area was still in effect.

By the time the B & D Committee met on November 12, 1968, Alderman Rotenberg (who sits on the Committee) had figured out how to avoid the study. He asked for a seemingly harmless change to one of the maps (4) in the Official Plan. His motion read as follows: "Where by-laws may be passed, pursuant to this plan, to permit such buildings." What this meant was that Council could pass a by-law permitting high density re-zoning between Sherbourne and Parliament without a study by Mr. Barker.

Three points seem clear. First, the Committee must have feared the results of such a study, which would certainly have established that the area was a stable, lower-income community in good condition, as previous studies had already shown. Second, because of Council's power to pass the by-law

independently of the planners, Meridian seems assured of the zoning changes that it needs to build South St. Jamestown and Phase Seven. Third, Alderman Rotenberg has a particular interest in High Rise development.

Citizens like Mr. Roth and Mr. McCallum of Meridian do participate, and they get by with more than a little help from their friends.

Business Men

To Protest

Two delegations from the Ward Seven Business Men's Association plan to appear on August 20th before the Mayor and Executive Committee of City Council at the City Hall.

One delegation will protest the lack of customer parking and the need for parking lots to serve the customers of the businesses in the ward. "In view of the recent increase in summons and tag activity in our shopping areas, we can no longer remain patient," said a statement from the association.

A second delegation plans to protest the long time-lag between demolition and re-development in the ward. "If the old houses are torn down years in advance and the occupants move out of the area, who will our merchants sell to in the interim?"

The delegation proposes that lower housing standards be enforced, in consultation with the developer and the tenants, so that houses can remain standing until such time as the developer is ready to re-build.

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More About Wood Green

by Vern Burnett

In the last issue of Seven News you probably read the article, *Wood Green Magic*, written by Norm Craven. The author was able to bring out all the warmth and human involvement that goes into making WoodGreen, a community centre set apart.

The magic is there now, because back in the early Thirties, the young minister from WoodGreen United Church, Rev. Ray McCleary, had a dream in which he envisioned such a happening. He devoted his life to making that dream come true.

Ray McCleary was a dynamic personality who loved the community and its people and thus became involved in the problems and inspirations of the area.

Between the years 1944 and 1947 he campaigned consistently to raise funds to build the present building. He received support from the City of Toronto, some minimal support from the other levels of Government, and a lot of support from private donors and Industry. In 1947 WoodGreen Centre was constructed on the site at 835 Queen Street East.

The original concept for the Centre was to provide a core of services for the Riverdale Community. It became the living room of the district; people in the area came to relax and chat. There were sewing rooms, meeting-rooms and games rooms.

Mr. McCleary hoped in time to build a health complex to provide accommodation for doctors and dentists who would give free or low-cost service to the community. This part of the dream has not materialized,

although there are doctors who can be consulted, and WoodGreen Centre houses the Metropolitan Toronto Epilepsy Information Centre and the Ontario Epilepsy Association, the only one of its type in Ontario. There is also one of the largest diabetic groups in Toronto, meeting Mondays and Thursdays, at WoodGreen, as well as a mental health clinic which meets every Wednesday for a half day.

Originally WoodGreen was intended as a community centre under the auspices of the WoodGreen United Church, using volunteer help. As the Centre became more and more involved in the problems of the area it became necessary to hire full-time professional staff. The number of areas expanded into the various aspects of social work, with different groups trying to resolve the many problems of the community.

Then in 1961, the Centre severed all official ties with the WoodGreen United Church and became a non-denominational organization, co-operating with all churches in the district.

Senior Citizens were a prime concern of Ray McCleary; much of his program revolved around them. He died in 1966 and the following year the Board of Directors of the WoodGreen Centre completed a 26 storey Senior Citizen apartment building on Logan Ave. and dedicated it in his honour.

This apartment building, the Ray McCleary Towers, is a

separate Corporation with 3 of the 9 WoodGreen Centre Board of Directors serving on its Board.

There are about 300 senior citizens, all from the local area living in the Towers. All with incomes under \$3000.00, all over 60 years of age.

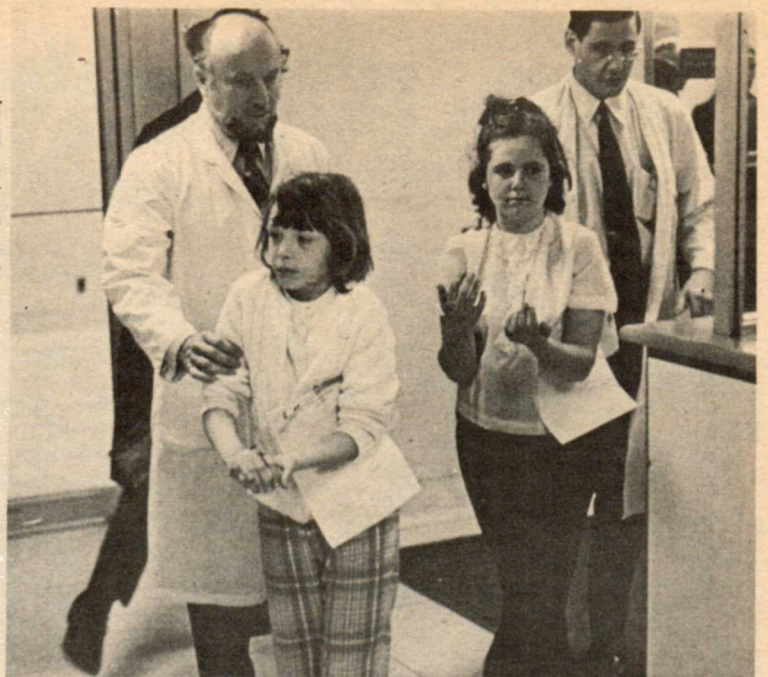
"That was the final phase of Ray McCleary's dream" said Mr. Ken Williams, an Executive Director of the WoodGreen Centre and the Ray McCleary Towers.

The dream and the magic of WoodGreen Centre will continue, I am convinced, after spending 3 hours talking to Ken Williams and touring the building.

He too loves the community and its people. I didn't meet any of the staff or volunteers, but gathered they are all as dedicated to WoodGreen as Mr. Williams is. WoodGreen is going to be renovated and will be like a new building when completed. The space available will be allocated for fuller and more convenient use. An anonymous friend of Woodgreen, who has felt and is adding to the magic of the Centre, is footing the bill. There are some magnificent people living in our world!

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Hanna Whiting and Linda Jackson played their parts well, at WoodGreen Centre during the disaster exercise held by the Hospital For Sick Children.

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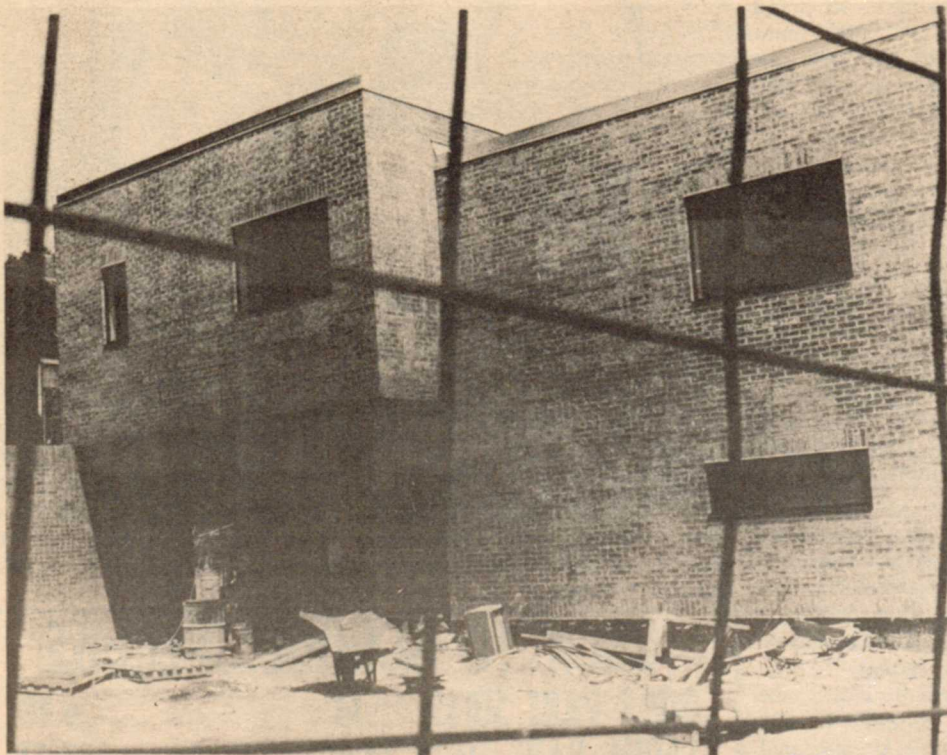
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AUG. 20 TO SEPT 7

Know Your Community Picture Quiz

1. What is It?

2. What Happened?



Seven News Photo by Charlotte Sykes



Seven News Photo by Charlotte Sykes

Ward 7 Sports Round-up

By Joe Ganny
210 Oak St. Apt. 306
363-6894

Aug. 4 at Regent Park: Active Construction came through with a big win in defeating Langa's Auto Electric 2 to zip with John Mulhall giving up only 4 hits and driving in two runs to aid his club to a closer playoff sport.

Aug. 5: Marty Blake drove in two runs to aid Langa's Auto Electric to a 2 to 1 victory over Latimers Brokers. A new face was seen in the pitchers Department of Latimers Brokers with Brian Lancelot tossing some fast ones that even umpire Bill Hiltz had trouble in calling ball and strikes. This lad will be giving the other clubs a lot of action at the plate. Aug. 6: Ward 7, 5; Dexters Shell, 4. Little Ronnie Brown who was brought up from the Junior League, banged out 3 hits for Dexters and looked good at short stop. But even with his good playing it was not enough to aid his club to a victory.

The point standings in this league are as follows, up to and including Aug. 8: Active Const. 16 pts., Dexters Shell 14, Langa's Auto Electric 12, Ward Seven 11, Latimers Brokers 11, and Shoppers Drug Mkt. 8. A lot of praise should be given to Les McCormick, the convenor of this league, for the hard work that he puts into it in keeping all the statistics of the players.

Final week of playoffs, Aug. 17. Ladies Senior League at Regent. This league is booming with talent, with Mary Catherin who is leading the league in the hitting dept. with an average of 683 at the plate. In the home run dept. there is a four way tie with players from Fineline Stat., St. Barts Angels, and Ernie's Roadrunners. The standing as of Aug. 8 are as follows: Fineline Stat. 14, Ernie's Roadrunners 12, St. Barts Angels 6, and Ernie's Pets 6.

Bill Hiltz of St. Barts predicts that the teams that will no doubt make the playoffs will be Fineline Stat. and St. Barts Angels. There will be a few quibs about this prediction. Phone me any evening after 10:30 p.m. or any weekend if you have any sporting events that you wish to have put in the Ward 7 Sports Roundup.

No. 1: Is it a (a) fortress, (b) dungeon (c) community centre?

No. 1: If you guessed (c) you are correct! It is the friendly new Central Neighbourhood House on Ontario St.

No. 2: Was it a (a) gas explosion, (b) terrorist attack (c) city agency?

No. 2: If you guessed (a) or (b) you are wrong! The city agency that struck on Withrow Avenue was none other than the Board of Education.

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