

City replies to complaints about snow removal

By JOHN STEWART
A total of 20,000 tons of sand, 16,000 tons of salt mix, 57 snow plows, 44 sanders and 12 snow removal crews are involved in trying to keep city streets passable this winter.

City authorities explained the snow-ploughing system this week and replied to the most common complaints it gets from citizens.

This year the city budgeted \$1,750,000 for snow removal. This money is to cover material and labor costs for clearing the five operating districts, each approximately 110 miles.

Road conditions are monitored by checking weather forecasts; inspection by city employees who travel the roads each day; the use of "dawn patrols" consisting of a 4 a.m. foray by a sanding vehicle; reports from regional police and other public

authorities; and use of the radios installed on all city vehicles.

The city owns 24 of the 57 snow plows it uses and 10 of the 20 sidewalk plows. The rest are operated by private individuals under contract to Mississauga.

The entire city road network is broken down into three classifications: arterial roads, such as Highways 5 and 10 and Lakeshore Road; priority roads or collector roads which connect with the arterials; and secondary roads, which are largely residential streets.

Arterial roads get first priority; collector roads second. When all of these roads have been cleared, work begins on secondary roads.

There is no use sanding or

plowing secondary roads before priority or arterial roads are clear for auto use, according to the city.

When there is a snowfall, the first step is to send salt trucks out. Salt is used on arterial and priority roads only.

On the rare occasions when a severe ice storm results in sanding of residential streets a mixture of seven parts sand to one part salt is used. Salt is kept to a minimum "because of environmental reasons."

Snow plows leave the city's district works yards once three to four inches of snow is on the ground.

A heavy snow brings the city's dozen snow-removal crews into action. A crew generally consists of a driver for the front-end loader, two or three truck drivers, a flagman and a foreman.

The crews remove snow from many commercial areas, including those in Port Credit, Cooksville, Clarkson, Streetville and Malton.

Snow is also removed from around the 950 bus stops and 60 bus shelters by another nine operators under contract to the city.

For the first time this season, the works department is also responsible for clearing snow from municipal arenas and community centre parking lots.

City sidewalks are plowed and sanded only after roadways are considered to be in reasonable condition for motorists.

One of the most common questions asked of the engineering department is why the snowplow clears the street once, then returns and "plugs up" driveways again. City authorities explain that the first run by a plow on a

residential street is required to open the road for traffic.

The second pass "is carried out when the schedule permits to plow back the snow onto the boulevard to provide ample room in case of a further snowfall. This also allows for adequate drainage along the city ditch system and curb lines."

It is not practical or feasible to supply snow plows with the equipment necessary to prevent snow from plugging driveways, according to the city.

Sidewalks are not cleared until the roads have been done because roads are given a higher priority and because the same people who operate the snow plowing equipment generally operate the

sidewalk tractors as well.

Anyone with complaints about the road-maintenance program can call the works department 24 hours a day at 279-7600.

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Snow budget 'in good shape'

Mississauga escaped the snow season in the last part of 1976 with only one major storm, so the beleaguered snow-removal budget did not take as bad a beating as might have been expected.

The storm which hit Dec. 27-28 was the only one which exceeded the three-inch mark. City officials were hoping for a light snow season during October, November and December after the snowfall last January, February, March and April nearly depleted budget funds for snow removal.

The municipality had only \$376,000 left last spring to remove the snow for the rest of the year. Because of the shortage, it even stopped removing snow from some commercial districts. Snow was piled up to await melting.

Despite the misgivings, "we're really not in too bad shape," says Angus McDonald, city's director of maintenance engineering.

"This winter we've had a lot of two-inch snowfalls, so we've been able to use a lot of salt versus a lot of plowing," he says. Costs increase considerably when crews to provide plowing must be called in.

Even with the snowfall last week which quit at about five inches "we got a break," McDonald says. "We got away with plowing and salting rather than major snow removal."

The city got about 15 inches more snow in 1976 than the annual average. "We had something like 70 per cent of the snow budget shot on the first 50 per cent of the season," McDonald notes.

At the end of the year, Mississauga had overspent its snow-removal budget by \$100,000. Money was transferred from other approved budgets which had not been completely spent.

Only 8 impaired charges

Police spot checks over the holiday season in Mississauga netted only eight impaired drivers out of 5,234 cars checked.

Supt. Ken Sider of 11 Division said, "We are very pleased with the results. The motorists deserve a lot of credit because obviously the majority were very responsible in the operation of their vehicles."

"I think the average John Q. Citizen is a pretty decent sort of a guy and our statistics prove it," Sider added.

In addition to the eight impaired driving charges, officers working spot checks in Mississauga laid three other criminal charges, 64 Highway Traffic Act charges, issued \$35 warnings for minor violations, and discovered 25 unsafe vehicles.

Most of the Highway Traffic Act charges involve insurance, failing to register change of address or failing to produce an operator's licence. Warnings were issued for defective tail lights, unbuckled seat belts and other minor offences at the discretion of the officers.

No hitch in flu program

The provincial government's decision to discontinue swine-flu inoculation after several reported cases of paralysis in the U.S. had little effect on the program in Peel Region.

Irene Koreac of Peel Health Unit said the order came on the last day of a three-week program which was "literally finished."



Ring in the New Year

Julia Skinner's smile is for her new son Mark Richard who was the first child to be born in 1977 at Mississauga Hospital. Mark Richard arrived at 8.38 Saturday morning and is a new brother for four-year-old Jason Thomas. Julia and her husband Thomas have Dr. J. Reid to thank for delivering their 7 lb. 15 1/2 oz. bundle of joy. The Skinners reside at 2379 Stillmeadow Rd. in Mississauga.

Merchants' optimism guarded

Retail business up over last year

By PAUL WILLIAMS
A Man Called Intrepid, written by Canadian journalist William Stevenson, was the hot seller of the 1976 Christmas shopping season, according to a spokesman for Insight Books at Sheridan Mall.

"French perfume, plastic flowers," Christmas arrangements, model train sets and clothing made of velour fabric were also big sellers in Mississauga stores

as local retailers experienced a successful Christmas selling season.

A random survey of retail outlets throughout the city failed to uncover any disappointment over sales during the busy Christmas-selling season.

Guarded optimism was the general reaction as all merchants reported a good season, with sales up over last year.

Elgin Blair, manager of Insight Books, said it was a "good December. We were up (in sales) about 20 per cent over the previous December."

"We did well," said Ray Novosel of Huron Men's Wear, 2500 Hurontario St. "It was a good Christmas; we've got no complaints."

Novosel had no idea how much business at his store had increased.

A non-committal Stewart Estrin of Factory Carpet Outlet, 1456 Dundas St. E., told The Times: "Our December sales were what we hoped for." However, Estrin wouldn't give out any figures.

For Shona Clark of Merle Norman Cosmetics in Sheridan Mall, the Christmas season was better than anticipated.

"We were up about 25 per cent over last Christmas," she said, "but the customers were different this year. They were more price conscious."

The Christmas season is especially good for florists and things were no different at

Westdale Florists. "Business was up 15 per cent," said the proprietor, Pat Manna. "Price increases of about seven per cent this year had some effect on business, but there were still lots of people buying flowers."

Stu Martin of the Hobby Shack in Rockwood Mall described his Christmas business as "very good." Business increased about 30 per cent and there were about 10 per cent more people in the shop this season.

"We had more people shopping this year and there were no indications that people were more price conscious than last year," Martin said.

John Stefani of Paul Hurley Sports in Clarkson said business was up slightly over last year. "Last year was a good year for everyone in the ski business as all the buyers seemed to stock up on ski equipment."

"Everything has been selling with no particular line doing any better than the next one."

Ski equipment is one area

where prices have not gone up.

"In fact, some ski equipment prices have come down," said Stefani. "It was a good Christmas — in fact, quite good."

Commissions debt free

Hydro increase less for some

Residents in the former towns of Streetsville and Port Credit will not be hit by the average 26 per cent increase in hydro rates that will affect other Mississaugans.

The increase on the average residential home using 1,000 kilowatts of electricity a month will be about 18 per cent in Streetsville and 19.5 per cent in Port Credit.

The increases are not as high because the two smaller commissions can absorb more of the unprecedented 29.4 per cent increase in the cost of wholesale power approved for

Ontario Hydro this year.

Councillor Hazel McCallion, a member of the Streetsville commission and a former mayor of the town, says that only part of the increase must be passed on in Streetsville because other costs have been reduced and all outstanding debentures were paid last year, leaving the commission debt free.

In Port Credit, a general tightening of expenditures and the lack of comparable labor costs to Hydro Mississauga results in the absorbing of some of the increase, according to William

Munden, Mississauga treasurer.

"We also have no new debt charges," he adds. "There haven't been any debentures issued for five years or more."

A program to convert overhead wires to underground has been considerably curtailed in the last few years as well, resulting in lower costs.

Munden explains that Hydro Mississauga, which serves most of the city's residents, is faced with continual growth and must pass along a much higher percent-

age of the wholesale power costs. Of Mississauga Hydro's total annual operating cost, 88 per cent will go for the purchase of power in 1977.

The hydro rates established by the three commissions, which will likely be amalgamated when a current review of the utility structure in Peel region is completed, are fairly comparable.

A residential user consuming 1,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per month will pay a bill of \$25.50 in Streetsville, \$25.83 in Port Credit and \$26.13 in Mississauga.

City man is charged in death of four

A 21-year-old Mississauga man charged with the murders of four people appeared briefly in Kitchener provincial court yesterday morning and was remanded in custody to Jan. 6.

Val Paul Palic of Delmonte Crescent in Malton is charged with the murders of Nicole Wong, 3, her father Henry Wong, 29, Loretta Armstrong, 16, and Randy Biles, 19, all of Kitchener.

Their bodies were found by Annette Schenk, 20, in her blood-spattered Kitchener apartment when she returned from work on New Year's Day. Miss Schenk had left her daughter Nicole with Wong and Miss Armstrong when she went out on a New Year's Eve date with Biles. They all decided to stay the night at the Schenk apartment, and Miss Schenk left for work at 7 a.m. Saturday. When she returned five hours later, all four people were dead.

Inspector John Zettell of Waterloo Regional Police said yesterday that post mortem examinations showed that the two men had died from gunshot wounds, the child was asphyxiated, and Miss Armstrong died from stab wounds. Miss Armstrong was Wong's current girlfriend.

Police believe a man entered Miss Schenk's apartment about a half-hour after she left for work and committed the murders.

A neighbor, Judy Poirier, who lives in an apartment

directly below, said she heard screams and crying from the Schenk apartment, but assumed the people upstairs were having a party or were freaked out on drugs.

When Miss Schenk discovered the bodies at noon, she ran screaming from the apartment to a neighbor, Mrs. William Jamieson, who called police.

Meanwhile, two Metropolitan Toronto police officers were arresting Palic at Transformation of Our Lord Church on Ludstone Drive in Etobicoke.

Palic had spoken to Rev. Garry Lehigh, a newly ordained priest, in his office in the church rectory, and the priest

had convinced him to call police.

Detectives accompanied Palic to a room he had rented in Malton six months ago and seized a gun found there. The officers and Palic then went to several Etobicoke apartment buildings, where they found clothing, ammunition and jewelry in garbage disposal units.

Palic was then taken to the 23rd Division station in Etobicoke, where he was interrogated by Metro police and recently-arrived Waterloo regional detectives. After questioning, he was taken to Kitchener and jailed.

City inquiry not priority

By JOHN STEWART
The "massive healing process" necessary in Mississauga should take precedence over any attempt to pursue the quashed judicial inquiry says Mayor Ron Searle.

Searle said Monday he was "not in any mood for vendettas" and felt the new council should settle into its duties before any action about the inquiry is taken.

"I still get the message loud and clear from a lot of people that they want to know exactly what happened with the inquiry," commented Searle.

Because of the complications due to the Dec. 6 election, the mayor said he has not had time to think through a course of action. He wants to meet with city solicitor Basil Clark first to be brought up to date on the complicated legal status of various civil actions filed as a result of the inquiry.

The inquiry, called by an unanimous vote of council on April 28, 1975 because of what were described as "startling and serious" allegations of bribery, malfeasance, influence peddling and misconduct, was quashed by the Ontario Supreme Court. It said the city of Mississauga could not investigate the Town of Mississauga's affairs and said particular charges should have been included in the calling of the inquiry rather than secret allegations.

Searle has been trying for the last year to get what he calls "full disclosure" of the circumstances of the calling of the inquiry. Several matters still have not been dealt with by any public authority or court including charges in an affidavit by former executive assistant to former mayor Martin Dobkin, Dr. Gordon Watt, that Dobkin suggested the inquiry for political purposes.

The majority of the new city councillors have already indicated that they do not favor further action by the municipality concerning the inquiry.

Mayor Searle says he would be very happy if any of the other current actions can "bring the true facts to light quickly."

Election Thursday for region chief

Lou Parsons, who in 1972 became the first person ever to serve consecutive terms as Peel County warden in this century, will almost certainly be elected regional chairman at the inaugural council meeting tomorrow and begin his second term of office.

If he is chosen by the 20 other members of council, Parsons will become the first ever elected regional chairman. He was appointed chairman in the summer of 1973 by the provincial Progressive Conservative government.

At the last regional council meeting, comments by returning councillors made it obvious that Parsons is virtually guaranteed election. There are no other declared candidates for the position.

Even those who disagree strongly with his political views seem impressed by the former Town of Mississauga reeve's administrative prowess.

The election of a regional chairman will be the highlight

of what is essentially a ceremonial inaugural session. Over 50 former county councillors and wardens have been invited to the meeting which starts at 2 p.m. at the Lester-Pearson Theatre in the regional headquarters building adjacent to the Bramalea City Centre mall.

Since 1950, seven representatives from what is now the City of Mississauga have served as county wardens: K. G. F. Skinner of Port Credit in 1951; Cy Saddington of Port Credit in 1954; W. C. Arch of Streetsville in 1956; Robert Speck of Toronto Township in 1963; Tom McCollum of Port Credit in 1965; J. J. Graham of Streetsville in 1966; and Parsons, who was warden in 1971 and 1972.

For the election of the regional chairman, the clerk of the municipality acts as the chairman of the meeting. There is no secret ballot. If only one candidate is nominated, councillors must indicate whether or not they support him or her.