

The bizarre death of 54-pound Metro spinster

By Ellie Tesher Toronto Star
Lillian Hess devoted her life unselfishly to her church and friends in the Beach area of Toronto. Yet, when she died at the age of 80, a doctor described her as "the worst case of malnutrition, dehydration and neglect" he'd ever seen.

For months she had lived in squalor and filth, covered in her own excrement and urine, demented and starved. The tiny pensioner weighed just under 54 pounds when she was admitted to Toronto General Hospital. One doctor said she looked "like a concentration camp victim." She died six weeks later on Dec. 22, 1979.

Her severe malnutrition and neglect

were not the result of abject poverty or extreme isolation.

Miss Hess, a soft-spoken, 4 foot, 10 inch retired school secretary and pianist, owned more than \$118,000 in bank certificates, stocks and property when she died.

In a will dated 18 months before her death, she named Thomas Wardle Jr., alderman for Ward 9 where she lived, as sole executor and trustee of her estate.

She left Wardle personally nearly half her net assets — about \$35,000.

Wardle, who spoke to The Star last night from New Zealand where he is vacationing, said: "I just tried to be a friend

and be helpful . . . We didn't wish people taking advantage of her."

"The Wardle family has known Miss Hess for about 25 years and we always helped her when she asked us to do so," he said.

"About two and a half years ago she asked me to look after her financial dealings. I suggested to her that she make a will."

Wardle, who studied law in England, said he did not know that he was a beneficiary of the will until recently. "I had no part in making the will."

On June 7, 1978, Wardle took Miss Hess to lawyer David Peters to make her will,

and wanted in an outer office while she handed Peters instructions in her own handwriting.

The note used semi-legal language such as "I wish my estate, house and contents . . ." and "I make the following bequests . . ."

Miss Hess left her house at 21 Lee Ave. and the remaining half of her estate to Anita Lucas, a singer she sometimes accompanied on the piano. Mrs. Lucas now lives in Surrey, B.C.

She left \$500 each to two friends plus \$100 each to a Christian Science church and the Monarchist League of Canada.

The will instructs that the remainder go

to Wardle and Mrs. Lucas, "share and share alike."

Wardle told The Star his family had known Mrs. Lucas "for several years, through politics." He said Mrs. Lucas and he were the only people who tried to help Miss Hess in her later years.

Lillian Hess signed her will on June 9, 1978. A month later, on July 14, Wardle and Miss Hess took out joint rental of a safety deposit box at the Toronto-Dominion bank at Queen St. and Lee Ave.

On the rental receipt is a special clause limiting access to the box unless Wardle was present with Miss Hess.

Wardle said he made that arrangement with the bank "to protect her own interests."

Mrs. Lucas, who lived six months in Florida and six months in Toronto, was living with Miss Hess during the period of Wardle's help with Miss Hess' finances.

Mrs. Lucas and her husband Bill visited Miss Hess in April, 1978, intending to buy a house in the Beach area. Instead, they stayed five months before returning to their U.S. home.

In a telephone interview from British Columbia, Mrs. Lucas said she told Miss Hess to "share and share alike."

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WEEKEND WEATHER/Windy, cloudy, no more rain. High 3C. Details, A2

Families flee as Cobourg flooded

A messy muddy clean-up began in downtown Port Hope this morning after the Ganaraska River went on a wild rampage inundating the business section of this town of 10,000 people.

A state of emergency declaration that drove 60 families from their homes in Cobourg fearing a damburst in the worst of widespread floods across Southern Ontario, was lifted about 9 p.m. last night.

The Cobourg families who took shelter overnight in St. Peter's church hall were expected to return to their homes today.

Reeve Boyd Henry declared the state of emergency and ordered everyone to stay clear of downtown late yesterday afternoon. He feared a burst in the dam north of town.

Worst flood

"It would be about the worst flood in the last 100 years," said Mike Wladyka, a local historian and former mayor of Port Hope.

"If it hadn't been for the boys working for the town who cleared the ice out it would have been one heck of a lot worse."

"As it is you'd have to go back to 1936," the former mayor gazing at the water touching the steps of city hall.

A 300-yard wide torrent did several millions of dollars damage to the heart of the town. Nobody was injured and there were no fatalities.

A Sears mail order office on Ontario St. was torn apart by the rushing water. The stock in the store was carried off by the water as were two walls of the building.

Mayor Bill Wyatt said the town plans to ask the province for emergency aid. A special emergency meeting of the town council has been called for this afternoon and Wyatt expects a motion asking for aid to be endorsed unanimously.

Total runoff

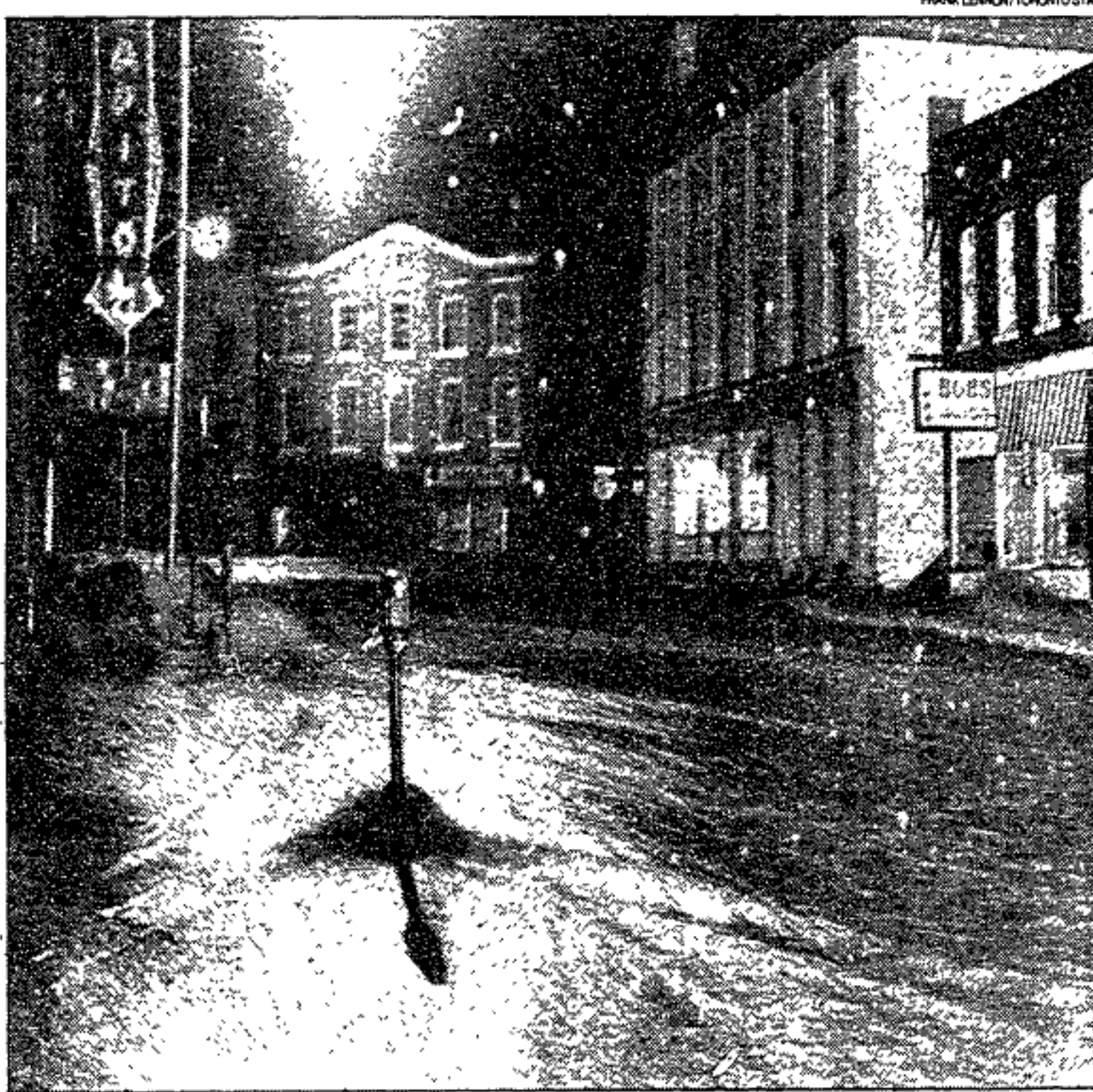
The flash flood caught even the professional flood-watchers off guard. On Thursday, the flood plain committee of the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority said there would be no danger from the river.

Within 24 hours, telephone service to half of Port Hope had been knocked out by the flood.

Peter Gryniwski, a meteorologist with the Ministry of Natural Resources, said the lack of snow this winter is partially responsible for the flooding. "With little snow cover, the frost went exceptionally deep and now the ground isn't able to

See SOUTHERN/page A3

☐ Raft-ride to death on the Don River/A3



Raging torrent: Ganaraska River roars through downtown Port Hope in worst floods to hit the town in memory last night. Clean-up operations started today as water subsided.

Energy crunch, boom in west is good news for our railways

By Michael Hanlon Toronto Star

As Canada's railways go cluckety-cluck into the 1980s, the mood is buoyant in the plush Montreal boardrooms of CN Rail and CP Rail.

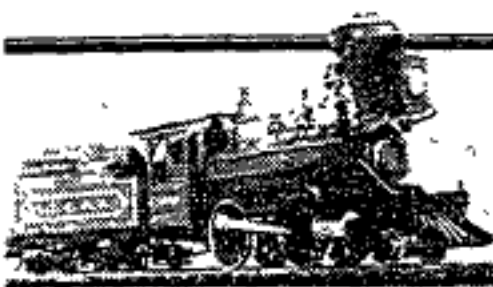
The air of confidence is as thick as the broadloom, the prospects as cosy as the directors' chairs.

You'd think the tracks were made of gold.

The men who run Canada's 50,000 miles of railway track expect this to be the busiest, and most prosperous decade they've ever had.

They see the economic boom in Western Canada bringing them ever-increasing business.

They see the energy crunch driving goods and people away from less efficient modes of travel such as cars and trucks and airplanes, and on to the railways.



The Railway Revival/1

They even sense a change in the rate they're paid to move export grain, a rate that costs them millions of dollars a year because they're compelled by law to haul the grain at prices set by the Crow's Nest Pass Agreement of 1897.

"The '80s belong to the railways," says Ron Lawless, president of CN Rail. "Energy is one of the prime reasons . . .

and rail is the most efficient way to move freight long distances."

William W. Stinson, executive vice-president of CP Rail, predicts "enormous growth potential" for the railways.

J. Frank Roberts, chairman and president of VIA Rail, which runs Canada's passenger services, asks: "What happens when the gas pumps dry up? People will have to turn to rail."

He told a Halifax conference on tourism and the energy crisis last November: "In terms of energy efficiency, the train is the most efficient form of public transportation, closely followed by the bus."

So confident are the railways that they've committed more than a billion dollars to capital expenditures in the next few years.

The most spectacular project is a nine-

See THE '80s/page A8

New home money crisis hits builders

By John Spears and Pat McNenly Toronto Star

Disastrously high mortgage interest rates threaten to shut down Canada's \$15 billion house building industry, builders and industry experts warn.

Home building — which provides 500,000 jobs across Canada directly and indirectly — is "poised on the brink of a virtual total shutdown," says Frank Clayton of Clayton Research Associates Ltd., one of Canada's leading experts in the field.

Meanwhile Doug Hughes, manager of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp.'s Toronto office, says no new housing is being built in the Metro area under the current record-high mortgage rates.

And Toronto Home Builders Association president John Sandusky warns that if the industry is knocked flat, forcing small builders out of business, it will drive the cost of housing up when the market recovers.

Hughes, who oversees the area bounded by Mississauga, Peterborough and Barrie, says he hasn't seen a single application for a new house or rental apartment to be financed under the new mortgage rates, currently at 15 1/2 per cent or higher.

No approvals

Normally "hundreds" of applications for private and rental housing under going mortgage rates would have been received by this time of the year in CMHC's Toronto office, Hughes said.

"But the only thing we have seen are for commitments builders got last year when interest rates were between 12 and 13 per cent," he said. "We haven't issued any approvals for rentals at all."

CMHC holds 18,000 mortgages in the Toronto area, and insures thousands more under the National Housing Act.

Clayton's research shows that housing starts across Canada fell to their lowest level in five years last month.

In Ontario, 78,000 homes were built in 1977, when interest rates averaged slightly more than 10 per cent. That number dropped to 71,000 in 1978, as interest rates jumped nearly 2 per cent in the last half of the year.

Hard to recover

In 1979, interest rates hovered around 11 per cent for the first part of the year, but started to sky-rocket about July. Only 57,000 homes were built in Ontario last year.

Sandusky, president of the Toronto Home Builders Association and a builder himself, warns that continued high interest rates will force builders out of business and make it harder for the industry to recover when conditions finally improve.

Most builders will be able to survive the next 60 to 90 days without difficulty because they'll be financing their businesses with money they've already borrowed at low rates, and are still selling houses financed during the last few years at low mortgage rates, Sandusky said.

But he warned that "we're already losing some of our less efficient builders."

"We're in danger of losing our productive capacity, so when the demand re-

See BUILDERS/page A7

☐ Cosgrove 'hopeful' of help for high mortgages/A7

☐ Now is the time to buy, builder says/E1

Rustlers cash in on demand for wood

By Joe O'Donnell Toronto Star

They cruise rural back roads late at night and on weekends in their pick-up trucks, armed with axes and chainsaws — for a speedy haul of fresh firewood.

They're the latest brand of thief — tree rustlers.

Experienced rustlers can cut down a tree, chop it up and load it in 30 minutes flat, says John Griffiths, York Region forester for the Ontario natural resources ministry.

"Some of the real pros might be able to do the job even faster than that. And the better they get, the more they can swipe and the less chance there is they'll be caught," he says.

Griffiths says tree rustling, once considered insignificant because of the cheap price, plentiful supply and low demand for firewood, has become a mounting problem across the province, including the rural areas around Metro.

"It's the whole fuelwood boom, what with the trend to more fireplaces, wood-burning stoves and furnaces. Everybody realizes the value of wood these days," he says.

"So woodlot owners are a lot more concerned about theft. At one time, they (rustlers) were just pests. Now they're taking money out of the pockets of the private owners."

"And they're mad."

While stolen firewood may be a pain in the pocketbook to private woodlot owners, the ministry has more serious concerns — officials also worry about the impact on valuable forest resources.

Inexperienced thieves who can't judge wood quality are making off with trees such as oak, ash and even black walnut — worth thousands of dollars for fine furniture and lumber produc-

See TREE/page A14

INSIDE SATURDAY'S STAR



Denver's back: Country great John Denver wowed 'em again at the Gardens last night. A2

Metro has a surplus

Metro could get a tax increase of less than 8 per cent this year — slightly less than last year — because of a \$34.7 million operating surplus, says Metro chief administrative officer John Kruger. A3

\$2 a gallon for gas?

It's not at all inconceivable that Canadians will be paying \$2 a gallon for gasoline, by 1985, says former energy minister Ray Hnatyshyn. A6

Harmony for Caravan

A "tremendous threat" to ethnic-group harmony in Metro was averted yesterday when agreement was reached between Caravan and most of the 15 breakaway

pavilions, says Toronto Alderman Arthur Eggleton. A17

Red Wings' coach fired

Detroit Red Wings hockey coach Bobby Kromm was fired yesterday less than 24 hours after owner Bruce Norris told general manager Ted Lindsay to "straighten out" the team. D4

Disease source probed

A mysterious disorder known as Reyes Syndrome that is killing children from Thailand to Toronto may be man-made, the result of normally harmless viruses acting in combination with chemicals that are found in every household. B4

Chrysler aid urgent

Industry Minister Herb Gray attaches "a sense of urgency" to his meeting with

Chrysler President Lee Iacocca Monday about aid for its ailing Windsor operation. A6

Off the ground

Etobicoke mother and pilot Gwen Hems has spent six years working on a hobby she hopes will finally get off the ground next year — she is believed to be the first Canadian woman to ever build her own aircraft. B2

Niagara test for star

"Elephant Man," Broadway's most acclaimed play last season, is a hard act to follow, but star Carole Shelley expects a challenge at Niagara-on-the-Lake. F5

Lena calling it quits

Velvet-voiced Lena Horne, who at 63 is still considered one of the world's most beautiful women, has announced she will

retire this month from the nightclub entertainment circuit after 47 years in show business. A19

Efficient fire trap?

Wood-burning stoves are cutting fuel bills but many aren't much more than ornaments and are causing numerous house fires. E16

Pacemakers safer

Pacemakers are now safe from outside interference, but they do trigger those metal detectors at airports, and if they fit under the arm they can easily be mistaken for a gun. G9

Big bucks in day care

When it comes to day care nurseries the big profits go to the big chain operators, while the mom and pop co-ops struggle to make ends meet. D6

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