

Plaque remembers Streetsville farmer

By TOM MICHIBATA
Staff *MN March 8, 2000*

A man from Streetsville's past is being honored for his legacy that's touching the hearts of the current generation.

From 1944-60, Rudolph "Opa" Karl owned and operated a farm on a 140-acre tract of land bounded by Thomas St. to the north, Erin Centre Blvd. to the south, Erin Mills Pkwy. to the east and Winston Churchill Blvd. to the west.

On his property, Karl made concerted efforts to preserve the existing 24-acre woodlot now called Sugar Maple Woods that stands west of Glen Erin Dr.

Karl, who moved from the farm to Thorny-Brae Place in Streetsville and died in 1983, was the driving force behind a reforestation project in 1948 sponsored by Streetsville Secondary School. Along with his son Frederick and grandson Frank, he helped plant 1,000 new maple and beech trees. Frank was attending Streetsville Secondary School at the time.

Today those trees stand tall. To mark Karl's efforts the City of Mississauga plans to erect a plaque in his honor at the woodlot. The plaque will be unveiled April 10 when Middlebury Public School holds a ceremony during Earth Week.

The Kindergarten to Grade 4 school that sits



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across from the woodlot on Glen Erin Dr. adopted the woods in 1994 under the municipality's Adopt-A-Park program. The school's 700 students have planted new spruces, white pines and evergreens and continue to look after the upkeep of the area.

"I've asked staff to get a plaque dedicating the woodlot to him," said Ward 9 councillor Pat Saito. "The plaque will be fairly simple in keeping with the surrounding area. It should be part of the existing park sign."

The recognition comes as a result of the efforts of Karl's granddaughter, Elizabeth Churchill, who lives in

Mississauga.

Born in Czechoslovakia in 1898, Karl married there and supported his family of eight children as a hard-working miner.

An outspoken critic of the fascist government of the time, he escaped with his family to northern Saskatchewan in the late 1930s.

Churchill said Karl was a man of principal and benevolence.

"He was a quiet and dedicated family man who earned a lot of respect from those who knew him in the community," said Churchill. "He was known as 'Opa' to a lot of people. Opa means grandfather in German."

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