

Prior to Go Trains there was 'Radial'

Now there's a lot of talk and the possibility of Acton being a GO Train stop when the expansion of GO takes place next year or the year after. It's interesting to know there was once a direct line to Toronto and Guelph on the Toronto Suburban Railway.

Coles' Slaw

with
Hartley Coles



Old-timers will know the Mackenzie and Chapman law offices on Main St. S., just south of Church St., was once the site of the Acton station for the now defunct Toronto Suburban Railway (TSR), or the "radial" as it was known locally.

When I was just out of diapers and into kneepants I can remember taking the "radial" to Eldorado Park which is still operating just east of Huttonville. The park was owned by the railway and special excursions to Eldorado were a highlight for the people of this town and district along the line which stretched from Toronto to Guelph.

The electric powered trains, usually made up of two cars, were the fashion of the times, and were called "radials" because several lines "radiated" out from Toronto.

The first car on the TSR's track made its inaugural trip on April 14, 1917, but as John McDonald mentions in his book Halton Sketches, the Toronto Suburban Street Railway was incorporated in 1894 and operated as a small suburban street railway between Keele and Dundas Streets in Toronto and Weston.

However, in 1911 the line was acquired by those famous railway entrepreneurs Mackenzie and Mann. It then had only 11 miles of track but they soon had plans to extend one line to Guelph.

The Mann of Mackenzie and Mann, of course, was Sir Donald Mann, the Acton railway pioneer who became wealthy through contract work and is now a legendary figure in both railway and popular history.

I would think Sir Donald not only had a vested but a family interest in extending the line to Acton and beyond. Sir Donald's parents lived in Acton and he often used to visit them.

Acton's Early Days relates:

"It was a matter of great pride when Sir Donald and Lady Mann and their little son would come to town in their private (railway) car, and leaving it in the siding near the corner of the farm, go over and spend the day" with his father.

Sir Donald Mann is buried in Fairview Cemetery, Acton, because "Acton was 'home' to Sir Donald Mann," and an impressive tomb stone marks his resting place.

Construction began on the "radial" line extension in July, 1912, and in 1913 grading was completed. Although the road was built to high standards it apparently cost the least investment per mile of any railroad in the world.

You can still see traces of the railway road bed now from at 315 foot wooden trestle in Georgetown, near St. George's Anglican Church right across the downtown, and on to Limehouse where the station stood south of the village on the Fifth Line.

The "radial" also stopped at Dolly Varden on the Fourth line, a few yards from the Grand Trunk (CN) crossing. The stop was named "Scott's Stop" because it was close to Ray Scott's farm.

Next stop was in Acton where the line crossed in front of the Beardmore Tannery and across Elgin, John and Willow Streets. It crossed Main South and Church Sts. Behind the feed mill and then bisected Cameron St. before traversing the Nellis farm by the Legion Hall to cross Fairy Lake on another trestle locally called the "big bridge." Then it continued along The Breezes through the "Gore" to Blue Springs Park, now the Blue Springs Scout Reserve.

It's been told that when the radial motormen reached the sparkling Blue Springs Creek they often produced fishing rods, stopped the train, and angled for some of the fine speckleds and brookies which still inhabit the stream. The line then stretched to Eden Mills where Edgewood Park was the stop before going on to Guelph.

Although the railway was well patronized by local merchants for shipping and receiving goods it had closed operations by August of 1931 during the Great Depression. Car 101 made the last trip on Saturday, August 15 carrying passengers while large crowds gathered at

Continued on Page 7



GIANT TIGER DONATES: Kathy Sanford (centre) of St. Vincent Charities, and Carol Clark (left) of Acton Food Share receive their cheques from Giant Tiger's Alex Boyd following a recent promotion. St. Vincent received \$1,148 and the Food Share received \$924 of the more than \$4,668 that was raised in total for local charities. - Marie Shadbolt Photo

Council response to 'Buy American'

Recently your Council and Halton Regional Council passed unanimous resolutions with respect to the American Stimulus program that President Obama signed on February 17. Our message is simple. We will do Municipal business with any country that does not discriminate against Canada. This is our response to the Buy American policy. Halton Hills is the first community in Canada to do this.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act includes a section that stipulates all iron, steel and manufacturing goods used in projects paid for by stimulus funding must be sourced out from the United States. This essentially squeezes out companies like Canadian Hayward Gordon of Halton Hills and others from bidding on projects in the U.S.

American Companies may bid on Canadian jobs but Canadian companies cannot bid in their backyard.

This is not free trade or fair trade.

A "Buy American" or "Buy Canadian" only approach is not a solution. This is protectionism which contributed to the Great Depression. We need a strong

Mayor's Corner

By Rick Bonnette



collective voice that demands action on the part of our federal government to act in the interest of all to ensure fair trade practices with our free trade partners.

I have sent a letter to the Minister of Education Kathleen Wynne to discuss the MSB land being deemed surplus as well as trying to resolve the school bus situation in Georgetown. Ted Arnott, our M.P.P. has been very supportive. Save Our Buses has done a terrific job collecting letters to be sent to the Minister.

Kudos to Ward 3 Councillor Moya Johnson on being selected to receive a 2009 Urban Leadership Award in the LOCAL HERO category. Local Hero Awards are presented to "individuals or groups whose actions make a difference in the lives of the community". Councillor Johnson has

been a tireless Chair of the Halton Hills Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Congratulations to Hartley Coles for being selected as this year's Acton Citizen of the Year!

On behalf of Council, I welcome the following new businesses to Georgetown: Taste of Mediterranean; Ready to Grill Foods Inc.; and Triton Pools Inc.

I am pleased to announce that the Mayor's Artwall is currently displaying two beautiful large oil paintings by local artist Shirley Deaville, which depicts countryside scenes in Scotland and England.

Keeping it real! I can be reached by telephone at 905-873-2601, ext. 2342, or by e-mail at mayor@haltonhills.ca.



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